

SEE CHAPTER 13- RESOURCES — FOR ADDITIONAL SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Section 8.2 English Learners (EL) and English to Speakers of Other Languages programs (ESOL)

Note: In most education programs, the terms used will change periodically. The term “English Language Learners” (ELL) is still in widespread use, especially on forms that have not been updated and reprinted yet.

Although the nature of the RTI Pyramid indicates all students begin at Tier 1 and move upward through the tiers only if the interventions at the previous tiers are not sufficient to allow them to achieve, neither the Office for Civil Rights nor Title III under NCLB permits delayed eligibility testing for language minority students. Neither should language assistance be delayed in order to allow students to progress "normally" through the tiers. These students face unique obstacles, due to their lack of English proficiency, and it is essential that they receive immediate services and assistance in order to provide them with the educational support they require. (See section on Eligibility, next page)

Eligibility for ESOL services automatically should be considered a Tier 4 Intervention.

- For the purposes of serving the student effectively and efficiently, the English Learner enters the Pyramid at Tier 4 and as the student progresses with language development and academic proficiency, the level of interventions needed to support the student will decrease accordingly.
- However, it is also important to remember that many ESOL students spend most of their school day in the general classroom with accommodations provided according to the ELL/TPC (Test Participation Committee). During this time in the general classroom, ESOL students should receive the same Tier 1 interventions as other students in the class.
- The accommodations provided in the Presentation or Response categories of the ELL/TPC are considered Tier 2 interventions appropriate to the student's English language proficiency needs, and improvement in language development and academic achievement should be noted as data for progress monitoring results.

For the purposes of ESOL services as support for second language acquisition and development, the RTI Pyramid functions as a regressive model, rather than as a model of progressive interventions. As students near grade-level proficiency, Tier 1 interventions, appropriate for all students, may be the only additional support needed.

Educators are attuned to the fact that ELs need immediate social and content language development and support and understand the need to provide ELs with more targeted interventions than those to be provided to all students. **Although Tier 2 is a good entry level for many at-risk groups, the specially designed learning focus of Tier 4, with its emphasis on specialized programs and specialized instructional delivery and methodology, describes the basic tenets of ESOL instruction.**

In addition, although ELs are considered to be at the Tier 4 level when eligible for ESOL services, this does not preclude those ELs who are found to need additional support from receiving it through the SST process or, when they meet eligibility criteria, through Special Education. These programs would support and supplement the specialized language acquisition interventions of the ESOL program, as well as address any other learning problems that may have been identified.

Additional Information regarding the Title III ESOL program can be found on the Georgia Department of Education website. Especially note the link to the extensive *2011-12 ESOL/Title III Resource Guide*: http://www.gadoe.org/ci_iap_esol.aspx

Q & A Regarding ESOL Instruction:

1. **Can we adjust our amount of time for our ESOL segments so that they fit our RTI model?**
The ESOL Program is a state-funded mandate that carries an FTE weight. In order to earn state funding for ESOL services, segments must meet the minimum allotted time designated in the *2011-12 ESOL/Title III Resource Guide*.
2. **What is the advantage of “sheltered” instruction?** Sheltered instruction is a content area course with a class composed only of ELs and taught by a teacher who holds certification in the appropriate content area, along with the ESOL endorsement or ESOL certification. This model allows the students to benefit from instruction that is targeted specifically to their needs as English learners and ensures that the CCGPS for the content course are being met.

Purpose of the ESOL Program:

The English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program is designed to serve students in grades K-12 whose first language is one other than English and who have been determined to lack grade-level social and academic English language proficiency. The program is designed to provide students with targeted language support during the lengthy process of second language acquisition.

English learners face unique challenges in the classroom as they strive to learn academic content at the same time they are developing their initial English language skills. Many of these students have a history of interrupted or limited formal schooling; therefore, they may not have had the opportunity to develop literacy skills and content knowledge in their primary or home language.

Eligibility:

Upon enrollment in a school, all students entering grades K-12 should be administered the Home Language Survey to determine if a student has exposure to a language other than English. Students whose answers on the Home Language Survey indicate a primary, first or home language other than English must be assessed for eligibility for ESOL services. The Home Language Survey may consist of variations of the following three questions:

What language(s) did the student first learn to speak?

What language(s) does the student speak at home?

What language(s) does the student speak most often?

Any student who answers one or more of the 3 questions with a language other than English must be screened using the WIDA-Access Proficiency Test (W-APT) to determine eligibility for language assistance services. The W-APT screener, developed by the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) and the WIDA Consortium, of which Georgia is a member, is a research-based instrument utilized by the 27 states that are members of the WIDA Consortium.

In grades 1-12, students who score less than a proficiency level of 5.0 on the W-APT are considered to be English Learners (ELs) and are eligible for ESOL services. Such students will need language and academic support during the language development process.

Support may be individualized or may be offered through classes or resources available to all students, such as before-or after-school tutoring, preview sessions, or support courses. The ESOL teacher, in collaboration with the content teachers, guidance counselor and appropriate administrators, can and should assist in determining and designing appropriate interventions and supports for ELs. Working in collaboration, these professionals serve the educational interests of the ELs in the capacity of the Test Participation Committee (TPC) to ensure that ELs are properly supported during the language development period.

ESOL Instructional Delivery Models:

There are six state approved instructional models through which ESOL students are served.

- Pull-out model – students are taken out of a general education class for the purpose of receiving small group language instruction from the ESOL teacher
- Push-in model (within reading, language arts, mathematics, science or social studies) – students remain in their core academic class where they receive content instruction from their content area teacher along with targeted language instruction from the ESOL teacher
- A cluster center to which students are transported for instruction – students from two or more schools are grouped in a center designed to provide intensive language assistance
- A resource center/laboratory – students receive language assistance in a group setting supplemented by multimedia materials
- A scheduled class period – students at the middle and high school levels receive language assistance and/or content instruction in a class composed only of ELs
- An innovative delivery model approved in advance by the Georgia Department of Education through a process described in the ESOL/Title III Resource Guide

Assessment:

English Learners (ELs) must be assessed for proficiency on an annual basis, using the state approved assessment, ACCESS for ELLs. If students reach a Composite Proficiency Level of 5.0 or higher on Tier C of the ACCESS and meet or exceed standards on the state reading assessment they are considered proficient in English and will be exited from the program. If students score 5.0 on Tier C but do not meet standards on the state reading assessment or score between 4.0 and 4.9 on Tier C and meet or exceed standards on the grade level state reading assessment, a Language Assessment Conference (LAC) may be convened to determine whether the student should be exited from language assistance services. All students who exit the ESOL program must be monitored for two calendar years following their program exit.