



804 Oak Street, Brainerd, MN 56401

Phone 218-454-6900 | Fax 218-454-6901

---

# English Language Learner Program Plan

## Overview

The purpose of this document is to outline the critical components of the Brainerd Public Schools English Learner program, which is available to students who attend any Pre K-12 and ATLAS school within the district.

## Definition of English Learners

English learners (ELs) are a diverse population of students who are learning English in school. They come from numerous cultural and economic backgrounds and a variety of linguistic backgrounds. ELs demonstrate unique language, academic, and social-emotional needs and require different kinds of support to succeed in the classroom.

ELs are a growing part of the K-12 student population. Between the 2009-10 and 2014-15 school years, the percentage of EL students increased in more than half of the states, with increases of over 40 percent in five states. Under the Every Student Succeeds Act, states must annually assess the English language proficiency of ELs, provide reasonable accommodations for them on state assessments, and develop new accountability systems that include long-term goals and measures of progress for ELs.

## Mission & Program Goals

Brainerd Public Schools is collectively striving toward the following mission for all of our students, including our ELs. This mission is at the heart of our EL programming.

**It is Brainerd Public School's mission, in partnership with the community, to ensure all students achieve their individual potential by providing the highest-quality programs and resources to prepare learners for an ever-changing global society.**

The goal of Brainerd Public Schools EL program is to provide academic English language support to multilingual learners so they can acquire the skills and knowledge to achieve their academic, linguistic, and personal potential. This includes meeting the same challenging academic standards all Minnesota students are expected to meet. The EL Program promotes the beliefs that English learning happens across contents and curricula, all teachers are teachers of English learners, and multilingualism is an asset. Additionally, our English Language licensed teachers provide a variety of evidence-based language instruction to students, along with support and consultation to classroom/content teachers to ensure the success of each and every EL student.

## Staffing

Brainerd Public Schools currently employs three EL licensed teachers to provide direct services to our EL students and coordinate our EL program. As needs change and our population grows, more staff may be added.

EL Licensed Teachers: EL teachers provide direct English language instruction to students in four domains of instruction: Listening, Reading, Speaking and Writing; EL licensed teachers collaborate with classroom/content area teachers and student support staff, to support students' success based on each student's English learning needs; EL teachers align their instruction to grade level expectations and learning standards from ELA, Math, Science, or Social Studies. EL Teachers advocate for new multilingual learners and families. They coordinate schedules and support services for new multilingual learners.

All staff: Staff provide culturally responsive resources and services to EL students and their families;

Administrators: All building principals prioritize and clarify that teachers are integrating language and content in all contexts and are expected to align their instruction to grade-level content and English language development standards. Principals show support for new multilingual learner programming through professional development, clustering/placement decisions, commitment to equity, hiring of multilingual/multicultural staff, and supporting diversity/multiculturalism. Principals provide collaboration time for EL teachers, bilingual liaisons/EAs and classroom teachers to work together.

Mainstream Teachers: All mainstream teachers receive ongoing professional development on integrating language and content, providing language supports, and integrating culturally responsive pedagogy. Teachers identify language objectives for every lesson that include language forms, functions, and target vocabulary. Classroom teachers collaborate with EL teachers and bilingual liaisons to provide emotional, linguistic and academic support for new multilingual learners. Teaching teams discuss student well-being, overall academic achievement, language development, and common learning targets and supports. Teachers will also receive professional development on how to integrate home languages into instruction. Strategies include: use of bilingual texts, bilingual resources for pre-teaching, and bridging charts.

Social Worker/Counselor: Social Workers/Counselors work with new multilingual families to provide needed support services (e.g., translation, interpretation, community resources, etc.).

# Steps in EL Programming

Brainerd Public Schools EL program is characterized by a cyclical process consisting of five steps: identification, program placement, parental notification, service provision, and progress evaluation.

EL Programming				
Step 1: Identification	Step 2: Program Placement	Step 3: Parental Notification	Step 4: Service Provision	Step 5: Ongoing Progress Monitoring
Identify the student as an English Learner (EL) using the state-required criteria - WIDA Screener	Determine proficiency level and place the student in the EL program accordingly	Follow state and federal parental notification procedures for new and continuing students	Provide standards driven, evidence based EL instruction based on the students needs	Use data to determine identification, movement with proficiency level, and/or exit from the EL program

## Step 1: Identification

Identification of students as ELs consists of two parts and includes students who are new to the school system, as well as those continuing within the system.

*Part 1: [Minnesota Home Language Survey \(MNHLS\)](#) [TransAct Surveys in Spanish, Vietnamese, Somali](#)*

All parents and guardians enrolling a new student in the district will be provided the Minnesota Language Survey (MNHLS). A translated survey and interpretation services will be provided to enrolling families as necessary.

The MNHLS asks parents to report the following:

- Languages the student first learned
- Languages the student speaks
- Languages the student understands, and
- Languages the student has consistent exposure to.

The MARSS Secretary will ensure that all questions on the MNHLS are completed and notify the Brainerd Public Schools EL teachers if the parent indicates “other language(s) and English” or “other languages” on the survey.

*Part 2: English Language Proficiency Screener (ELP)*

If the MNHLS indicates the student may be an EL, a Brainerd Public Schools EL teacher will administer the age-appropriate Minnesota language proficiency screener to the student within 30 days of the student's arrival. The WIDA SCREENERS are used for grades K-12. For a student to be considered proficient in English, they must meet the minimum proficiency criteria set forth in Minnesota's eligibility procedures below. A student who does not meet the minimum proficiency criteria is identified as an EL.

### Minimum English Proficiency Criteria

EL Screener	
WIDA	Grades 1-12
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An overall composite score of 4.5 or higher</li> <li>• No single domain score below a 4.0</li> </ul>

## Step 2: Program Placement

### *Initial Placement Procedures*

Once a student has been identified as an EL, the EL teacher will review the student's language proficiency data to determine specific language abilities and needs. This data will be used in LIEP placement decisions to determine, more precisely, the appropriate type or level of service. The level of service is dependent on the screener score, but may take into consideration scores on additional developmentally appropriate measures, which include but are not limited to FastBridge, Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCAs), reading benchmark assessment, and classroom assessments. In addition, educational transcripts and records, including additional services for which the student qualifies, knowledge of the student's home language proficiency, and parent/family input regarding language needs will be considered.

### *Continued Placement Procedures*

Students obtaining an ACCESS for ELLs overall composite score below 4.5 or receiving a score below 3.5 in any one of the four modalities of listening, speaking, reading or writing are automatically eligible for continued EL services.

## Step 3: Parental Notification

The following letters and forms are used by Brainerd Public Schools to communicate with parents or guardians regarding EL services.

### [English Language Learner Program Placement Notification Letter](#)

A Brainerd Public Schools EL Teacher sends the EL notification letter to parents/ guardians within the first 30 days of the school year or within 10 days of initial placement in EL programming. This letter states the federally required components (e.g., reason for identification, English proficiency levels, methods of instruction, program alignment to student's educational strengths and needs, district rates for exit, transition to mainstream, and graduation of ELs, parents' right to withdraw

the student from EL programming). Notification letters are sent in English and in the family's home language. A copy of this letter is kept by the EL teacher. Parent notification mailings include:

- English Learner Parent Notification Letter
- ACCESS and/or WIDA screener results

### [EL Program Exit Letter](#)

Parents or guardians are notified within the first 30 days of the beginning of the school year if students have met the criteria to exit from EL service.

### [Refusal of EL Services](#)

Parents have the right to refuse or withdraw students from EL services at any time. Parents choosing this option are required to sign a Refusal of English Learner Service form annually. The parent may re-enroll the child in EL services upon request.

### [Refusal of Participation in Statewide Testing](#)

Parents retain the right to refuse student participation in statewide assessments including the ACCESS for ELs. Parents who choose to opt out of the ACCESS test must submit a Refusal for Participation in Statewide Assessments form annually.

## **Step 4: Service Provision**

EL services support students in language development and academic content through WIDA and content standards. The 5 WIDA English Language Development standards are used to plan and implement language instruction and assessment for multilingual learners as they learn academic content:

1. Social and Instructional Language
2. Language of Language Arts
3. Language of Mathematics
4. Language of Science
5. Language of Social Studies

### [Scheduling EL Services](#)

The Brainerd Public Schools EL teachers work with administrators, classroom and content teachers and counselors to ensure that all students who qualify for EL services are scheduled appropriately based on language proficiency strengths and needs. Ongoing communication between all educational partners is important as they work together to plan and implement an instructional program that is most beneficial for the social and academic language needs of each English learner. EL services may increase or decrease throughout the school year according to need. EL services are explained in more detail in the Program Description section.

## Step 5: Ongoing Progress Monitoring

Ongoing assessment will determine continued EL identification and movement within levels in the EL program. ELs participate in a statewide English language proficiency assessment called ACCESS (WIDA) on an annual basis. This assessment measures English language development (listening, reading, speaking and writing) in the areas of language arts, math, science, social studies, and social language.

In addition to the ACCESS assessment, the MCA assessment, district assessments, and classroom assessments in English language development/EL, reading, math, science, and social studies, and other core subjects, will be used to monitor a student's progress on an ongoing basis. The Brainerd Public Schools EL Teachers will not determine eligibility for EL services for the following school year until ACCESS results are available and have been analyzed in conjunction with the aforementioned data sources.

### *Program Exit & Reclassification*

An EL who reaches a level of English proficiency that no longer prevents them from fully accessing the curriculum of the school will exit from the EL program. This readiness is determined by the ACCESS assessment. The state guidelines for exiting are as follows:

ACCESS Assessment	
Grade Level	Exit Criteria
K-12	<p>The State of Minnesota has defined English language proficiency to be an overall composite score on the ACCESS test of 4.5 and at least three of the four domain scores (reading, writing, listening, speaking) at 3.5 or higher.</p> <p><i>Note: Students who meet this criteria may be retained in EL services if one domain score is below 3.5 and there is clear and documented evidence that the student still requires EL service. Additional criteria will be consulted in these cases.</i></p>

Once the exit criteria has been met, a Brainerd Public Schools EL teacher notifies the parents/guardians and an exit form is placed in the student's cumulative file. Note: Students can be exited from the EL program at any point in the year, but can only be reclassified at the close of a school year. Therefore, the ACCESS Assessment must be completed by a student who has been exited during the course of the school year.

### *Monitor Status*

Students should also have a successful period of at least two years on a monitor status after exiting the program to ensure exiting readiness. Students who are placed on monitor status receive indirect services. The Brainerd Public Schools EL teacher conducts periodic data reviews to evaluate their academic performance. If needs are discovered, a student may receive direct services following a screening and reenrollment in the EL program, or continue with indirect services. During the monitor period, students should be able to perform in the general education program without significant barriers primarily caused by limited English proficiency.

# Program Description

## Framework for EL Program

Brainerd Public Schools EL program is based on effective practices for English learners within a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework. Following are descriptions of the key components of our framework, which are designed to meet the unique needs of English learners.

Framework for EL Program	
Component	Description
Core/Universal Instruction	Brainerd Public Schools is committed to ensuring all students have access to grade-level curriculum and standards. Most ELs engage in the majority of their education in the core/content classroom. They may receive EL service within general education classrooms through individual or small-group EL service-in-the-classroom. Such service models allow students to develop academic English while at the same time providing access to general education content, curriculum and standards.
WIDA's Guiding Principles of Language Development	These guiding principles of language development and learning exemplify WIDA's overarching foundational beliefs and ever-present Can Do Philosophy.
English Language Development Standards	The English Language Development Standards (see page 8) represent the social, instructional and academic language students use to engage with peers, educators, and the curriculum in schools. The standards highlight the language needed to meet academic expectations as described by state, college and career readiness standards, and other content standards.
Content-Based English Language Development	English learners develop the academic language of language arts, math, science and social studies (above) through the content of Minnesota's K-12 Academic Standards. Effective English Language Development integrates language learning opportunities with content instruction. English as a second language pedagogy supports a language-based approach to content instruction, where teachers prioritize explicit instruction in discipline-specific language (Schleppegrell & deOliveira, 2006).
Goal	Description
Communication & Advocacy	<p>The EL Teacher and classroom teachers will work together to ensure regular communication with multilingual families.</p> <p>Written documents will be translated to ensure accessibility for multilingual families when necessary.</p> <p>Interpreter services for parent-teacher conferences and other meetings will be provided when necessary.</p>
English Language Development Instruction	<p>The EL Teacher will continue to provide instruction based on student proficiency level.</p> <p>Lessons, activities, scaffolds, and supports may be integrated and provided in all lessons.</p>



	<p>Instruction will address all four domains of language, and will be accessible to students of differing proficiency levels.</p> <p>Instruction will be connected to standards and aligned with classroom instruction when possible.</p> <p>Instruction may take place in a pull out or push in model depending on student proficiency level and/or needs.</p> <p>The EL Teacher will be available as needed in order to communicate with students and families and assist in their learning needs.</p>
Collaboration with Mainstream Colleagues	<p>The EL Teacher will ensure consistent collaboration with classroom and content teachers. This may include, but is not limited to:</p> <p>Providing support with scaffolds, modifications, differentiations and content accessibility</p> <p>Providing language structures for student success</p> <p>Meeting directly with teachers who have ELs in their classrooms</p> <p>Be accessible to mainstream teachers for collaboration opportunity</p> <p>Collaborating with Special Education, Intervention, or Title I teachers to align learning structures to meet individual student and family needs.</p>

### English Language Development Standards

01	Social and Instructional Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>English language learners communicate for social and instructional purposes within the school setting.</li> </ul>
02	Language of Language Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>English language learners communicate information, ideas and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of language arts.</li> </ul>
03	Language of Mathematics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>English language learners communicate information, ideas and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of mathematics.</li> </ul>
04	Language of Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>English language learners communicate information, ideas and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of science.</li> </ul>
05	Language of Social Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>English language learners communicate information, ideas and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of social studies.</li> </ul>

## Type & Amount of EL Service

ELs at all proficiency levels are connected with the Brainerd Public Schools EL teachers. The type and amount of instruction a student receives depends on their grade level, proficiency level, and current academic achievement level.

EL instruction focuses on the explicit teaching of listening, reading, speaking, and writing through content. Intentional focus is placed on literacy and specialized vocabulary and academic language across the content areas. The Brainerd Public Schools EL teachers design their instruction around theories of language acquisition and evidence-based practices for teaching ELs. The English Language Development Standards paired with a student's ACCESS scores and resulting "Can Do" statements guide the EL teacher's instruction and provide a touchstone for collaboration with mainstream teachers. In addition, the EL teacher collaborates with other school personnel such as Special Education, Title I, and Gifted and Talented. When appropriate, these services are combined with the EL student's general education program and EL services. For example, a student can receive both EL services and Title I services.

Brainerd Public Schools EL programming provides a continuum of EL services, including services in and outside of the classroom or a combination of both, with a focus on the development of academic language and skills.

- **Service in the classroom** involves the EL Teacher working inside students' core/mainstream classroom to provide language instruction.
- **Small groups** can be used with emergent English learners to acquire basic language skills with peers of similar proficiency levels.
- **Co-Teaching** with the content/classroom teacher in order to promote cohesion, in-class support, and a co-planning instructional model. (Honigsfeld, A. & Dove, M. (2010)

## Amount and Scope of Instruction

Level 1/2: Entering/Beginning. Students receive up to 60 minutes each day of English language instruction that meets English language development standards. Students will also be supported through scaffolding techniques in mainstream classrooms so that each student is able to access the grade-level content.

Level 3/4+: Developing/Expanding. Students receive up to 30 minutes each day of high-intensity English language training through co-teaching. Students will also be supported through scaffolding techniques in mainstream classrooms so that each student is able to access the grade-level content.

## Dual Identification

The EL Coordinator and the Special Education Coordinator together review special needs and referrals for EL identified students. The EL program does not substitute for other educational services for which a student may qualify. Likewise, neither special education services nor tiered reading interventions may substitute for EL services.

If a student demonstrates a possible need for special education services, staff do not delay in beginning the process for special education evaluation as there is no wait-time requirement for multilingual or EL identified students to be evaluated for special education service. Students who are being evaluated for special education support must demonstrate a disability in both languages; identification must not solely be the result of being a culturally or linguistically diverse student. If a team documents evidence that the student's ability/achievement/behavior is significantly below that of a comparable peer, disability screening may be appropriate.

If a student is found to qualify for both EL and Special Education services, the teams will collaborate with grade-level/content-area teachers in all stages of the process of scheduling and programming.

### **Long Term English Learners (LTEL)**

Although there is no official definition for LTEL identification, students who have been officially classified as EL for at least five years may be considered LTEL. Since students in this category often have oral proficiency in English, our focus is on literacy skills, especially writing across the curriculum, to ensure they are succeeding academically.

### **Newcomer EL**

Newcomers are a special population of English learners who have recently arrived in the United States. They bring rich experiences, language, cultures, customs, and backgrounds that can help them adapt and thrive in a new community.

### **Students with Limited or Interrupted Education (SLIFE)**

Beginning with the 2023-24 school year, SLIFE are English learners who have at least two fewer years of schooling than their peers when entering school in the United States. These students are identified and their status is reported as required by the state of Minnesota, and EL services are based on the WIDA Screener and WIDA Access scores.

## **Parental Involvement & Communication**

The parents and guardians of ELs play an important role in their child's educational program, as is true for all students. Therefore, the Brainerd Public Schools EL Teachers and district staff will encourage family involvement in all phases of the EL program.

Early in the school year, the Brainerd Public Schools EL Teachers work with district staff to determine the need for translation and interpretation services based on parent preference and/or knowledge of the parents' comprehension of English to be proactive in arranging for these services. Once a student is receiving EL services, the majority of the communication comes from the student's classroom teachers and school. For pertinent communication that is written, translated versions will be provided on an as needed basis. Similarly, at parent-teacher conferences or other parent meetings, translation services will be provided if needed. Parents

also have access to their students' classroom achievement through the use of Skyward. The EL Teachers will provide useful suggestions for families to help them recognize and meet the language development needs of their children.

An EL student's Individual Learning Plan (ILP) will be communicated to families in several different ways, including when the parent or guardian is initially notified of EL services. Additionally, the district may cover the ILP information with parents or guardians at parent-teacher conferences or other meetings. Visual aids and translation in the home language will provide an opportunity for parent participation.

For ongoing availability of information, a copy of this Brainerd English Language Learner program plan will be posted on the Brainerd Public Schools website. Additional language translations of the document will be made available as needed.

For questions or concerns regarding EL programming, please contact the Brainerd Public Schools EL Teachers directly by visiting the [Teaching and Learning page](#) of the district website.

### ***Related Links***

[English Learner Education WIDA Educator Resources](#)

[English Language Development Standards New Immigrant Fact Sheet](#)

[English Learner Support English Learner Toolkit](#)

[Program Review WIDA Self-Paced eWorkshops](#)

[LEAPS Act Confronting Discrimination Based on Nat'l Origin](#)

[WIDA Minnesota Page Schools' Civil Rights Obligations to English Learners](#)