LEA COMPREHENSIVE ENGLISH LEARNER
DISTRICT PLAN TEMPLATE

Section A: Theory and Goals

The LEA's educational **theory and goals** for its program of services – **to improve the education of English learners by assisting the children to learn English and meet the challenging state academic standards. (Sec. 3102)**

Section B: Identification and Placement Procedures

1) Procedures for identifying the EL Advisory Committee

Athens City Schools annually establishes an EL Advisory Committee for the purpose of program needs assessment, program evaluation, and the development of the Comprehensive English Learners Plan. This committee includes central office administrators, school administrators, school counselors and/or teachers, ESL staff, parents, and community representatives who work with these students and their families in other settings.

The EL Advisory Committee makes recommendations regarding the ESL program.

2) Methods for identification, placement, and assessment

English Learners (ELs) must be identified at the point of enrollment. As part of the registration process, parents and/or students must complete a *Home Language Survey* (HLS) which contains, at a minimum, the following questions:

1. Is a language other than English spoken at home?
2. Is your child's first language a language other than English?
3. What language did your child learn when he/she first began to talk?
4. What language does your child most frequently speak at home?
5. In what country was your child born?
6. Has your child been in U.S. schools for at least three years?

The completed survey becomes part of the student's permanent record and will be available for review during compliance monitoring.

When all responses on the HLS indicate that English is the only language used by the student and by individuals in the home, the student is considered an English-only speaker (non-EL). Procedures established by the school system for placement in the general student population are followed. If any response on the HLS indicates the use of a language other than English by the student or an individual in the home, then further assessment must be conducted to determine the student's English-language proficiency level. However, the presence of a language other than English does not automatically signify that the student is not a competent and proficient speaker of English.

Initial assessment of English language proficiency is conducted using the WIDA Kindergarten Screener or WIDA Screener Online to determine the level of English proficiency and to facilitate appropriate instructional and program placement decisions. Language-minority students identified through the HLS during registration before the beginning of the school year must be assessed for English-language proficiency within thirty (30) days of enrollment. Language-minority students who register after the beginning of the school year must be assessed within ten (10) days of enrollment. The WIDA Screener Online yields an overall composite score based on the language domains tested. The WIDA Kindergarten Screener will be used for kindergarten students and incoming 1st grade students in the first semester. The following guidelines determine eligibility for placement in the English language instruction educational program:

Kindergarten students and 1st grade students in their first semester taking the WIDA Kindergarten Screener:

A student taking the WIDA Kindergarten Screener qualifies for services with an Oral Language score of less than 4.5.

First grade students in the second semester of school and students in grades 2-12 taking the WIDA Screener Online qualify for services with a score that is less than 5.0.

3) Methods and procedures for exiting students from the LIEP and for monitoring progress

Students who reach an overall composite of 4.8 in the reading, writing, listening and speaking domains on the WIDA ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 annual assessment are exited from services and are reclassified as former ELs.

Students who make the required score to exit from ESL services are placed on monitoring status for four academic years. EL stakeholders and teachers communicate regularly to ensure that the exited student is functioning successfully in the mainstream classroom. Students are classified as Former English Learners Monitoring Years 1-4 (FEL 1-4) during this monitoring period. Upon successful completion of four years of monitoring, ELs are classified Former English Learner (FEL) and are no longer included in the LEP subgroup for accountability purposes.

Section C: Programs and Instruction

1) Programs and activities that will be developed, implemented, and administered to ensure ELs acquire academic language as part of the core LIEP

Each school conducts a comprehensive needs assessment, collects and analyzes data from a variety of sources, and uses this data to help inform program selection and to set data-driven goals and strategies for meeting those goals.

A three-part test is used to evaluate the adequacy of the EL program:
Is the program based on an educational theory recognized as sound by some experts in the field or is it considered by experts as a legitimate experimental strategy?
Are the programs and practices, including resources and personnel, reasonably calculated to implement this theory effectively?
Does the school district evaluate its programs and make adjustments where needed to ensure that language barriers are actually being overcome?

Once the needs assessment is conducted, the appropriate program is determined. Athens City Schools utilizes the following core program:
English as a Second Language- Program of techniques, methodology and special curriculum designed to teach ELs explicitly about the English language, including the academic vocabulary needed to access content instruction, and to develop their English language proficiency in all four language domains. ESL programs teach conversational English, grammar, reading, listening comprehension, writing and vocabulary.

Supplemental language services may include one or more of the following:
ESL Push-In- The ESL teacher goes into the regular classroom to work with ELs.
ESL Pull-Out- Students spend part of the school day in a mainstream classroom, but are pulled out for a portion of the day to receive instruction in ESL.
ESL Class Period- Students receive ESL instruction during a regular class period and usually receive course credit.

2) How the LIEP will ensure that ELs develop English proficiency

ELs require instruction that makes content comprehensible while accelerating acquisition of academic language proficiency and literacy. The WIDA ELP Standards facilitate the design of language development objectives that support, guide and develop content knowledge and skills at the appropriate level of English proficiency. Students who are acquiring a new language undergo six stages of language development: Entering, Emerging, Developing, Expanding, Bridging, and Reaching until they attain English proficiency. By implementing the WIDA ELP standards in the classroom, teachers are able to provide ELs with meaningful access to local curriculum as they progress through the stages of language acquisition. Professional development is provided annually within all schools. Teachers and administrators are encouraged to attend state-sponsored professional development.

3) Grading and retention policy and procedures

Grading of ELs is based on the student's level of English proficiency. The teacher ensures this through the continual use of accommodations and assessments according to the student's Individualized English Language Plan (I-ELP). Appropriate instruction and differentiation must be adjusted according to language proficiency level in order to appropriately accommodate the student. Documentation of these components should be maintained by the classroom teacher.

Retention of ELs shall not be based solely upon the level of English language proficiency. Prior to considering retention of an EL, the following points should be addressed in consultation with the EL committee.

- What is the student's level of English language proficiency?
- Has an I-ELP been implemented to document classroom accommodations and student progress?
- To ensure meaningful participation, are classroom accommodations being made in the areas of:
- Teacher lesson delivery at student's level of English proficiency?
- Activities and assignments?
- Homework?
- Formal and informal assessments?
- How much individual English language development instruction is the student receiving during the school day?
- Has an alternate grading strategy been implemented (e.g., portfolio, checklist, teacher observation, rubric assessment on content and language objectives, etc.)?
- Has the student's classroom teacher been adequately trained with EL instructional and assessment strategies specifically designed for students learning English?
- Do report cards indicate that students were graded according to their I-ELP?

4) Specific staffing and other resources to be provided to ELs through the program

Each traditional school within Athens City Schools has an ESL teacher. Staffing is a district decision based on EL student numbers and needs.

ESL P-6 teachers can have:
ESL certification
Foreign language certification
Elementary certification

Secondary ESL teachers can have:
ESL certification
Foreign language certification
Elementary certification
English/language arts certification

Professional development is provided to all ESL teachers. Schools provide professional development and are encouraged to attend state-sponsored professional development relating to ELs.

5) Method for collecting and submitting data

Upon identification and placement, students should be given a code in PowerSchool Special Programs.

EL teachers import newly identified students into PowerSchool Special Programs and complete the I-ELP in order for the student to be designated as an EL in the PowerSchool SIS. EL Teachers regularly check EL data to ensure that it is accurate.

6) Method for evaluating the effectiveness of the program

Athens City Schools conducts an annual program evaluation to determine the effectiveness of the EL program. This process involves collecting and analyzing data to determine if the goals set forth during the comprehensive needs assessment or previous program evaluation were met.

The following are considerations when evaluating effectiveness:
Successful EL programs enable ELs to attain both English proficiency and parity of participation in the standard instructional program within a reasonable period of time.
ACS collects longitudinal data to monitor and compare the performance of current ELs, former ELs, and never-ELs in the standard instructional program. Data is not be limited to ACCESS for ELLs 2.0.
When EL programs do not produce both English proficiency and parity of participation within a reasonable period of time, modifications are made to the EL program.

7) Method of identification and referral of ELs to the Special Services Program including Gifted Ed

Athens City Schools follows procedures for the education of ELs with disabilities in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA).
ELs are eligible to receive special education services on the same basis as all other students. Care is taken to ensure that limited-English proficiency is not the basis of a referral. In order for an EL to be deemed eligible, the Eligibility Committee must determine that the communication disorder exists in the child's native language and is not the result of learning English as a second language. A child may not be determined eligible for special education if the determinant factor is the child's lack of instruction. ELs with disabilities are provided English language acquisition services as determined appropriate by the ESL teacher and the IEP team, and this information is included as part of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) on the Profile Page. Eligible ELs may receive both special education and English language acquisition services concurrently.

Parent participation is a required part of the special education process. To ensure active participation, the school will make every effort to communicate with the child and parent in their native language.

The Alabama State Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, signed a Title VI Resolution Agreement focusing on underrepresented populations in gifted programs in Alabama. The SDE committed to a variety of actions related to screening/referral criteria and procedures, evaluation processes and eligibility criteria, program oversight and technical assistance which will be followed by Athens City Schools.

Section D: Assessment and Accountability

1) Method for holding schools accountable for annually measuring the English proficiency of ELs and for participating in the state-administered testing program

Flexibility given to EL students in their first 12 months of enrollment in U.S. schools pertains to the academic content assessments in reading and language arts for accountability purposes. Participation in reading and language arts, though not required, is also not prohibited. The EL Committee must be included when making decisions about participation in reading and language arts.

All ELs in grades K-12, regardless of the number of years of enrollment in U.S. schools, must participate in *ACCESS for ELLs*, the state-administered English language proficiency test, or *Alternate ACCESS for ELLs*. EL students who participate in *Alternate ACCESS for ELLs* must also be assessed on the *ACAP Alternate*.

Grades 2-3 participate in *ACAP Summative* for Mathematics.
Grades 4-8 participate in *ACAP Summative* for Mathematics, Science (grades 4, 6 and 8 only).
Grade 10 participates in *Pre-ACT* for Mathematics, Science, Reading and English.
Grade 11 participates in *ACT with Writing* for Mathematics, Science, Reading, English and Writing.
Grade 12 participates in *ACT WorkKeys* for Applied Math, Graphic Literacy and Workplace Documents.

The district test coordinator provides annual training to communicate assessment and accountability requirements to schools.

2) Method for holding schools accountable for meeting proficiency in academic achievement

Title I of ESSA requires long-term goals for English learners for increases in the percentage of such students making progress in achieving English Language Proficiency (ELP) as measured by the statewide English language proficiency assessment. Alabama will use ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 to evaluate progress toward English language proficiency. Cumulative Growth is used to calculate the expected progress ELs make toward ELP. Cumulative Growth is when the previous year's growth is compared to the current year's growth target to determine the student's expected level of proficiency. Student growth expectations will increase each year so students meet the proficiency cut score (4.8) within seven years after their initial year. The number of years to achieve proficiency varies based on the student's initial level of proficiency. Students at lower levels of English language proficiency will have more ambitious annual growth targets.

Growth targets are based on the student's prior year ACCESS score and calculated based on the sliding scale provided by the ALSDE.

Data is analyzed in order to determine needs. Each school completes a continuous improvement plan annually, and the plan is monitored monthly.

Section E: Parent, Family, and Community Involvement

1) Methods for promoting parent involvement activities to help improve student achievement

Athens City Schools has hired a bilingual parent and family liaison to help communicate with parents regarding parent involvement activities. Additionally, Athens City Schools will use Talking Points to communicate with parents regarding parent involvement activities.

2) Methods (in a language they can understand) for notification requirements for ELs students regarding

- EL identification, placement, exit, and monitoring

  Athens City Schools uses documents provided by TransAct and Ellevation to ensure that EL parents receive information that meets all requirements of ESSA as stated above.