

# English Language Learning



*A guide  
for  
school districts*



**T**he requirements for districts receiving funds from Title III of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 could be challenging to school district administrators who are expected to implement the programs. This document gives guidance to school districts that are required to provide high-quality language instruction to English Language Learners (ELLs). A longer version of issues addressed here can be found in the Policy section of the U.S. Department of Education website at <http://ed.gov> or in the “Educating Linguistically Diverse Students” handbook found on the Missouri Migrant Education and English Language Learning (MELL) website at [dese.mo.gov/qs/me/ell](http://dese.mo.gov/qs/me/ell).

## **Programs and activities**

Title III funds are used to provide high-quality language instruction that demonstrates effectiveness in increasing English proficiency and student achievement in the core academic subject areas. Methods of instruction should provide evidence that the programs chosen are based on scientific research in teaching ELLs. This scientific research should involve the application of rigorous, systematic and objective procedures to obtain reliable and valid knowledge relevant to educational programs and activities. Refer to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), Section 9101 (37), for details. Programs and activities must demonstrate effectiveness in helping ELLs attain English proficiency and meet the same challenging state academic content and student achievement standards as expected of all other students. Districts must notify parents no later than 30 days after the beginning of the school year if a child is participating in a language program. If a child enters a program during the school year, the time frame is two weeks. Districts must also notify parents of any failure of the program to make progress on the annual measurable objectives no later than 30 days after such a failure occurs. There is a two-year follow-up requirement after ELLs are no longer receiving services.

## Parental involvement

Districts must implement effective means of outreach to parents of ELLs to encourage active participation in helping their children to learn English and to achieve high levels in core academic content and academic achievement standards.

## Biennial evaluation

Districts that receive Title III funds must have in place a biennial evaluation report including the following information:

- ☑ a description of the programs and activities conducted during the two immediately preceding fiscal years
- ☑ a description of the progress made by ELLs in learning English and meeting challenging state academic content and student achievement standards
- ☑ the number and percentage of children attaining English proficiency at the end of each school year
- ☑ a description of the progress made by students in meeting challenging state academic content and student achievement standards for each of the two years after students are no longer receiving services
- ☑ the percentage of children that: 1) are making progress in attaining English language proficiency, 2) have transitioned into classrooms not tailored to ELLs, 3) are meeting the same challenging state academic content and student achievement standards as all other children, and 4) are not receiving waivers for reading or language arts assessments.

## Consortium and Section 3114 (a)/(b)

A school district that would not otherwise qualify for a subgrant under Section 3114 (a) because

the district does not qualify for an award of at least \$10,000 may form a consortium with another district and designate the fiscal agent.

## Required information to parents

Sample parental notification forms and a sample cover letter that districts may modify to fit local needs are provided on the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education website. To the extent possible, the information should be in a language that the parent can understand. The information sent to parents must include:

- ☑ reasons for identifying their child as being an ELL and for placing their child in a language-instruction educational program for ELLs.
- ☑ the child's level of English proficiency, including how the level was assessed and the status of the child's academic achievement.
- ☑ the method of instruction that will be used in the program, including a description of other alternative programs.
- ☑ how the program will meet the child's educational strengths and needs.
- ☑ how the program will help the child learn English and reach academic achievement standards.
- ☑ the program exit requirements, including the expected rate of transition and the expected rate of graduation from secondary school.
- ☑ how the program will meet the objectives of an Individualized Education Program (IEP) for a child with a disability.
- ☑ their rights, including written guidance that: 1) specifies the right that parents have to immediately remove their child

from a language-instruction educational program upon their request, 2) describes the options parents have to decline to enroll their child in such a program or to choose another program or method of instruction if available, and 3) assists parents in selecting among various programs and methods of instruction if more than one program or method is offered.

## Professional development

Districts must provide high-quality professional development to teachers (including those in classrooms that are not the setting for language-instruction programs), principals, administrators, and other school or community-based organizational personnel. The professional development must be:

- ☑ designed to improve the instruction and assessment of ELLs.
- ☑ designed to enhance the ability of teachers to understand and use curricula, assessment measures and instruction strategies for ELLs.
- ☑ focused on scientifically based research demonstrating the effectiveness of professional development in increasing children's English proficiency or in substantially increasing the subject-matter knowledge, teaching knowledge and teaching skills of teachers. Professional development must be of sufficient intensity and duration to have a positive and lasting impact on the teacher's performance in the classroom (excluding activities such as one-day or short-term workshops and conferences unless the activity is a component of an established, comprehensive professional-development program for an individual teacher).

## ELL teachers and aides

It is incompliant to put a bilingual/ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) aide or paraprofessional in charge of a classroom that is not under the supervision of a certified teacher. The approach commonly used for teaching in Missouri is ESOL. Title III of the NCLB Act requires that all teachers in language-instruction educational programs for ELLs be fluent in English and any other language used by that program, including written and oral communication skills. This does not mean that teachers should be fluent in all ELLs' languages. This is especially true for bilingual education programs. For the ESOL approach, the English fluency of teachers must meet the requirement.

## Statewide assessment tool: WIDA

To comply with Title III of the NCLB Act, the state of Missouri has adopted WIDA as the statewide assessment tool to measure the yearly English language proficiency progress of ELLs. WIDA assesses proficiency in speaking, listening, reading and writing. All students receiving ELL services are required to take WIDA. Refer to the administration manual for details.

## Missouri Assessment Program (MAP)

Student progress toward attaining academic standards is primarily measured by the MAP tests, which should be administered to ELLs to provide instructionally useful information. No ELL should be exempted from taking the MAP after enrolling in a Missouri school. The NCLB Act requires that all ELLs be given the MAP tests. For details, contact the Department toll-free at 800-845-3545.

## Consultation with private schools

Title III allows students and staff at private schools to receive services through ESEA programs. Part A of Title III indicates the list of programs under which private schools may equitably participate to receive educational services or benefits. In addition, the NCLB Act specifies that these educational services must be provided by the school district to private schools in a timely manner and that consultations with private school officials must occur during the design and development stages of the education programs, as well as throughout the period of implementation.

**T**o assist school districts in overcoming educational challenges, a list of \_\_\_\_\_ resources is available in the "Educating Linguistically Diverse Students" handbook found on the MELL website at [dese.mo.gov/qs/me/ell](http://dese.mo.gov/qs/me/ell). School districts must submit their programs and the progress made by students in learning English, meeting state standards and attaining English proficiency to the Department every second fiscal year. Refer to the handbook for definitions.



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