

Blended Learning Academies
Multilingual Learner Program Handbook
School Year 2026–2027

Lansing, MI | Livonia, MI
www.blendedlearningacademies.org



**BLENDED LEARNING
ACADEMIES**

School Year 2026–2027

Blended Learning Academies Multilingual Learner Program Handbook

Introduction

Blended Learning Academies provides every child, regardless of national origin or first language, with a meaningful education. Students who are Multilingual Learners (MLs) are provided instructional services through an English as a Second or Other Language program model designed to meet their unique needs. This handbook of program policies and procedures ensures consistency for all students.

Mission Statement

Blended Learning Academies supports the emotional and academic needs of 9-12th grade students in an educational environment that encourages all students to meet their intellectual and personal potential.

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Registration/Identification Using Home Language Survey

The Home Language Survey (HLS) approved by the Michigan Department of Education is included in the Blended Learning Academies' registration form completed at a student's initial registration into U.S. schools. A copy of the completed HLS is placed in the student's permanent (CA-60) files. If, according to the Home Language Survey, a student is identified as speaking a primary language other than English or as having a language other than English spoken in the home, the student may be eligible for ML Program services. The Multilingual Learner Teacher Consultant will assess the student to determine eligibility for services as outlined by the Michigan Department of Education's English Learner Program Entrance and Exit Protocol.

Initial Assessment to Determine Program Eligibility

If enrollment occurs at the beginning of the academic year, a student who is identified as potentially eligible from the Home Language Survey will be screened within the first 30 school days of the year. After the first 30 days of the academic year, a student who is identified as potentially eligible from the Home Language Survey will be assessed within ten (10) school days of enrollment in our district, to determine their eligibility. In Michigan, the WIDA Screener is used to determine English Language proficiency in four domains, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Eligibility For Blended Learning Academies ML Program Services

The Michigan Department of Education sets the Entrance and Exit Protocols for English Learners. A student in grades 1-12 who scores 1 (Entering) through 5 (Bridging) on the WIDA Screener is eligible for ML Program Support.

WIDA English Language Proficiency Levels

- Level 1 – Entering
- Level 2 – Emerging
- Level 3 – Developing
- Level 4 – Expanding
- Level 5 – Bridging
- Level 6 – Reaching

Placement in Blended Learning Academies' Multilingual Learner Program

Blended Learning Academies provides an instructional program to meet the language and academic content needs of English Learners (ELs) enrolled in the district. Each student's context and abilities are unique, and thus their needs are met differently. Our program provides language and academic content support to ELs through English as a Second Language Instruction.

Types of Service Available

Blended Learning Academies' Multilingual Learner Program is an English As a Second or Other Language program model. Multiple service types are utilized to meet student needs, including the following:

Push In: EL Program staff go into the classroom with the student during instruction to assist the student's comprehension and completion of course requirements.

Pull Out: EL Program staff pull students, individually or in small groups, from class to tailor instruction so that content is comprehensible. Scheduling for Pull Out service is a collaborative effort so students aren't missing essential curriculum and activities.

Consultation: EL Program staff collaborate with the classroom/content area teacher to implement accommodations, communicate regularly with teachers regarding student progress, and provide professional development opportunities, resources, and instructional modeling specific to students who are learning English.

Exiting From Program Services

Once a K-12 student is identified as an EL per the Michigan Department of Education's Entrance and Exit Protocol, they remain classified as English Learners (ELs), eligible for Language Assistance Program services until they attain an overall score of 4.8 on the WIDA ACCESS for ELLs, which is administered annually.

Monitoring Former English Learners (FELs)

After a student attains a WIDA score of 4.8 and exits the program, they are considered a Former English Learner (FEL) for four years. During those 4 years, districts are required to monitor academic achievement including grades, attendance, and standardized test scores. If, during the four-year monitoring period, the student is struggling academically, the Administration Team will meet to determine what further assistance is warranted, and if the student should be reentered into the ML Program, or if other services are appropriate.

Parental Notification

Blended Learning Academies informs the parents/guardians of Multilingual Learners (MLs) identified for participation in the school's English as a Second or Other Language program. Notifications are sent via USPS upon initial enrollment. Additionally, once the English Learner (EL) takes the WIDA Access assessment, the results are sent home at the beginning of every school year until the student meets the English language proficiency criteria required to exit the program, as determined by the Michigan Department of Education.

ELs Who Are Struggling Learners

When indicators suggest an English Learner (EL) is having difficulties attaining linguistic,

academic and social expectations unrelated to the student's English language proficiency, the student will be referred to the Administration Team to determine intervention strategies.

Student Records

Each English Learner has a folder maintained by the school, as required by the Michigan Department of Education, called a CA60. The folder contains various student records including the following, which are related to the student's English Learner status and program eligibility:

- Home language survey
- Parent notification letter
- WIDA ACCESS for ELLs & WIDA Screener testing results

Glossary of Terms

BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills) - The term used to refer to social English language skills. Research indicates that it takes 1-3 years to acquire functional social language skills. (Cummins, 1981)

CA-60 - The name of the official file for students which contains documents including those related to English Learner status, in addition to birth certificate, immunization records, registration documents, standardized test scores, report cards, and other official school documents. When a student changes schools, this file is forwarded to the new school.

CALP - Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency refers to the language skills necessary for academic success. Research indicates that it takes a student 3-7 (often more) years to acquire academic language skills. (Cummins, 1981)

Co-Teaching - Co-teaching occurs when content area teachers and ESL/Bilingual endorsed teachers collaborate to plan instruction for Multilingual Learners.

ELs (English Learners) - refers to students whose first language is not English, and encompasses both students who are just beginning to learn English and those who have already developed considerable proficiency. The term underscores the fact that, in addition to meeting all the academic challenges that face their monolingual peers, these students are learning English.

ELD (English Language Development) - ELD instruction refers to teaching components of the English language including grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, listening, speaking, reading, writing, and comprehension. Often, ELD is integrated into content.

ESL (English as a Second Language) - A structured language acquisition program designed to instruct a student in all domains of the English language.

ESL/ML Teacher - The EL/ML teacher has specific training and knowledge about second language acquisition, which was obtained to earn a certification endorsement from the Michigan Department of Education. The EL/ML teacher provides instruction and/or support

services to multilingual learners, including consultative services to classroom teachers.

ESSA - The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) is the most recent reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).

FEL (Former English Learner) - The term used to refer to a student who has attained English language proficiency, as set by the State of Michigan, and subsequently exited the language assistance program. Once a student exits EL status and is categorized as a FEL, academic progress is monitored for four school years.

LAP (Language Assistance Program) - Under Title VI and the Equal Education Opportunities Act, Local Educational Agencies must provide a language assistance program that is effective—educationally sound and proven successful. Consistent with the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, section 3124, the Department does not recommend any particular curricula, program of instruction, or instructional materials, nor does it prohibit any language instruction educational program used with ELs that is consistent with Title III of the ESEA and other laws, including Title VI and the EEOA.

Multilingual Learner (ML) - One of the newer acronyms used to refer to students whose first language is a language other than English. It is asset-based terminology, emphasizing skills students possess.

MTSS - MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Supports) is a comprehensive framework of research-based strategies designed to meet the individual needs and assets of the whole child. At Blended Learning Academies, all students, including MLs, fall under the MTSS umbrella to ensure student needs are met.

WIDA (World Class Instructional Design and Assessment) - WIDA, an organization of consortium states, advances academic language development and academic achievement for linguistically diverse students through high-quality standards, assessments, research, and professional development for educators.

WIDA ACCESS for ELLs - WIDA ACCESS is a summative assessment selected by the Michigan Department of Education to measure a student's English language proficiency. Assessment data help to determine service eligibility exit criteria for MLs.

WIDA Screener - The WIDA Screener is used to assess the English proficiency of newly enrolled students in grades K-12.

Contextual Information For Language Assistance Programs

Federal Definition of English Learners (ELs)

The term "English learner," when used with respect to an individual, means an individual:

- (A) who is aged 3 through 21;
- (B) who is enrolled or preparing to enroll in an elementary school or secondary school;
- (C) (i) who was not born in the United States or whose native language is a language other than English;
(ii) (I) who is a Native American or Alaska Native, or a native resident of the outlying

- areas; and
- (II) who comes from an environment where a language other than English has had a significant impact on the individual's level of English language proficiency; or
- (iii) who is migratory, whose native language is a language other than English, and who comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant; and
- (D) whose difficulties in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language may be sufficient to deny the individual —
 - (i) the ability to meet the challenging State academic standards;
 - (ii) the ability to successfully achieve in classrooms where the language of instruction is English; or
 - (iii) the opportunity to participate fully in society. (ESEA Section 8101(20))

To be classified as EL, an individual must meet the criteria of A, B, C and D in the definition above. To meet the criteria for C, an individual can meet the criteria of any of i, ii, or iii. If the criterion to meet C is ii, then the individual must meet the criteria of both I and II. To meet the criteria for D, an individual must be denied one of the three listed (i, ii, or iii).

Programs For English Learners

Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the EEOA, all States and Local Educational Agencies must ensure that ELs can participate meaningfully and equally in educational programs and services. Students who meet the protocol requirements as English Learners (ELs) must be provided with language assistance program services, in addition to the basic/core education services (adopted by the local board of education) that all students in the Local Educational Agency receive. Language assistance program services must provide meaningful access to the core curriculum and provide direct English language instruction. The intensity of language assistance program services provided is directly related to the individual student's level of proficiency. The lower the English proficiency of a student, the more intense the language assistance program services should be. The language assistance program services could include research-based models such as bilingual education, ESL/ELD programs, and/or sheltered instruction. These federally required language assistance program services ensure that ELs have equitable access to the local board of education-adopted curriculum provided to all students and acquire English language proficiency.

Assessments Required of EL Students

Title I Law requires that all EL students are assessed annually.

(b) Academic Standards, Academic Assessments, and Accountability –

(7) Academic Assessments of English Language Proficiency - Each state plan shall demonstrate that local educational agencies in the state will, beginning not later than school year 2002–2003, provide for an annual assessment of English proficiency (measuring students' oral language, reading, and writing skills in English) of all students with limited English proficiency in the schools served by the state educational agency. (NCLB/ESEA Title I, Section 1111(b)(7))

❖ ESSA requires states:

➤ to the extent practical, provide content area assessments in an appropriate language and form for ELs (ESEA Section 1111(b)(2)(B)(vii)(III))

➤ identify languages present to a significant extent in the state for which assessments are needed but not available and then work to develop those assessments (ESEA Section 1111(b)(2)(F))

❖ ESSA requires districts and schools:

➤ to implement reasonable adaptations and accommodations for students with diverse learning needs (inclusive of ELs who may also be students with disabilities) necessary to measure the achievement of such students relative to state content standards (ESSA Section 1111(b)(2)(B)(iii))

❖ ESSA allows states:

➤ to provide partial exclusion from content area assessment participation and accountability for ELs enrolled in the US for 12 months or less (ESEA Section 1111(b)(3)(A))

Federal Law

There exists a substantial body of Federal law which establishes the rights of the Limited English Proficient student, and which defines the legal responsibilities of school districts serving these students. Note: The term Limited English Proficient is a historic term, where English Learner (EL) is the currently accepted term and is therefore used throughout this document. EL is meant to counter the negative connotations of Limited English Proficient. Administrators and school boards who are responsible for local policies and programs can turn to this body of law for guidance and direction.

It includes the following:

- 1868 Constitution of the United States, Fourteenth Amendment - "... No State shall ...deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws."
- 1964 Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 - "No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance."

Two U.S. Supreme Court rulings, one interpreting the Fourteenth Amendment and one interpreting the Civil Rights Act of 1964, have exercised considerable influence over the educational rights of language minority students. These cases may be summarized as follows:

- 1974 *Lau v. Nichols* - The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that a school district's failure to provide English language instruction to LEP students denied them a meaningful opportunity to participate in the district's educational program in violation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; the Court further noted that equality of opportunity is not provided by giving the LEP student the same facilities, textbooks, teachers, and curriculum that non-LEP students receive.
- 1982 *Plyler v. Doe* - The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution prohibits states from denying a free public education to undocumented immigrant children regardless of their immigrant status. The Court emphatically declared that school systems are not agents for enforcing immigration law and determined that the

burden undocumented aliens may place on an educational system is not an accepted argument for excluding or denying educational service to any student.