TEC CONNECTIONS ACADEMY

English Language Learners (ELL) Handbook

2020-2021

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Introduction

Welcome to TEC Connections Academy (TECCA), where we aim to provide all Massachusetts students a quality virtual public school experience. English Learners (ELs) represent a growing population of students at TECCA, as well as in Massachusetts. The goal of our English Learner (EL) program is to offer an education that supports the linguistic and cultural diversity of our students whose first language is not English. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI) and the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974 (EEOA) require districts to put in place appropriate measures for ELs to have access to grade-level standards-based curriculum and instruction while promoting English language acquisition so that ELs meet academic standards as equivalent to their English speaking peers.

Additionally, federal education laws outline program mandates that promote EL family engagement and involvement in their students' education. The Parent and Student Handbook to the English Learner (EL) Program Handbook serves to inform TECCA EL parents and students of the practices and protocols of our EL Program and helps ensure that all students receive a high quality online public education. The EL Handbook provides an overview of policies, practices, and programming for our ELs, which are aligned to both federal and Massachusetts state laws and guidelines. It outlines the responsibilities that public schools have regarding EL students. Additionally, this document provides a program overview for all stakeholders.

Additional TECCA Resources and Supports

- For general expectations refer to the district's general education student handbook.
- Contact Connexus Help: select More tab on toolbar in Connexus. Then Help button
- Webmail Technical Support: computer issues, Connexus, and/or access to the Internet
- School Support: 1-800-382-6010
- Check out your student's Teacher(s) Communication Data View: select student's name from Homepage. See student's courses. Select icon beside teacher's name to view Teacher Communication information.

WIDA, Massachusetts' Resource for English Learning Education

In September 2012, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MA DESE) adopted the EL development standards and assessments of the

World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) Consortium. (https://www.wida.us/standards/eld.aspx)

WIDA Consortium is the state's EL resource for English language development and academic advancement for English learners. WIDA provides language standards for instruction, student assessments, and professional training for educators of ELs.

WIDA English Language Development Standards indicate that ELs communicate for social and instructional purposes within the school setting, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content areas of Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies.

WIDA measures English proficiency based on the features of academic language, including linguistic complexity, language forms and conventions, and vocabulary and syntax usage. The six levels of English language development (ELD) are detailed in WIDA's Description of English Language Proficiency rubric. The sixth level, reaching, designates English language capacity equivalent to non-EL peers.

The WIDA "Can- Do' Descriptors" (www.wida.us/standards/CAN_DOs/) bring awareness to ELs capacity for learning and understanding content instruction according to grade cluster and ELD levels. They are categorized by grade span and are based on a core philosophy that all ELs can actively participate in learning communities when teachers differentiate to accommodate students' ELD levels. Moreover, English language instruction must be provided so that ELs gain English proficiency equivalent to their non-EL peers.

English Language Development (ELD) Levels

Level 1 Entering	EL knows and uses minimal academic language with visual and graphic support.
Level 2 Emerging	EL knows and uses some social English and general academic language with visual and graphic support.
Level 3 Developing	EL knows and uses social English and some specific academic language with visual and graphic support.
Level 4 Expanding	EL knows and uses social English and some technical academic language

Level 5 Bridging	EL knows and uses social English and works with grade-level materials.
Level 6 Reaching	EL knows and uses social and academic language at the highest level measured by the test.

Administering the Survey and Clarifying Responses

Process for Identifying English Learners begins when families begin the enrollment process with Connexus to become part of the TECCA community; All new students are required to complete a Home Language Survey (HLS). This survey is done online and is available in twenty-seven languages. The purpose of the HLS and the intended use of the HLS is stated clearly at the beginning of the survey. When a student's HLS indicates a language other than English, the student will be flagged as a "Potential EL."

Responses to the HLS are located in the Data View, EL Compliance. A parent's preferred language for home communications and meetings is noted for future use. All educators have access to the information on the HLS.

Procedures for analyzing the HLS

The EL Coordinator screens every HLS that indicates a language other than English is spoken at home. With the following exceptions:

- Students reclassified as FELs in their former districts
- Students who took a WIDA screener and did not qualify in the previous district
- Students with ACCESS results from the last calendar year

Additionally, the EL Coordinator communicates with the family via phone and webmail as an additional data point.

Procedure on How to Utilize the Student's Educational Background

TECCA considers previous district records in conjunction with the HLS to determine whether a language proficiency screening test is required. The following items are considered:

- the Home Language/First Language is English and is primarily spoken
- the student is enrolled in US schools since kindergarten/grade 1
- the student has never been in EL services at a previous school
- the student is showing academic success
- the student has passed his/her MCAS

Furthermore, TECCA defines these policies clearly and maintains the consistency of the practices.

Students who have been ELs in their previous districts are placed in the EL program. They are provided EL services unless there is documentation that the student has been reclassified as FELs (Former English Limited).

Procedure to Identify FELs (Former English Limited)

The EL Coordinator reviews the student's HLS and state testing history. A call and/or email with a record request is sent to the previous school district. Additionally, a webmail and/or a call is made to speak with the parent. If a student were a FEL in the monitoring phase, the four-year monitoring phase would be continued at TECCA. Educators are made aware of the FELs, the students are monitored, and EL services are provided as needed.

Procedure to Administer the Screening and Record-Keeping

Students in kindergarten and the first half of grade 1 receive the MODEL test and are EL if the Oral proficiency level in both Listening and Speaking is below a level 5. Students in the second half of grade 1 to grade 12 received the WIDA Online Screener. Students who score an Overall Composite Proficiency Level less than 4.5, and Composite Literacy Proficiency of level less than 4.5 will be EL students receiving services. Parents will then be notified of the Online Screener results.

When the English Language proficiency screening takes, place parents are notified of the results in their preferred language no later than 10 days after the beginning of school and within 2 weeks when the student enrolls in the school during the school year.

The student's Online Screener results are entered into the Connexus Data View, EL Compliance. A PDF of the Screener results page is uploaded to the student file. If the student took the screener paper version, a hardcopy would be filed in the student's cumulative folder, and a PDF would be placed in the Data View, EL Compliance.

Students determined to be EL are coded as such in all future Student Information Management System (SIMS) reports.

Informing Parents

Parents of newly enrolled ELs are notified of Online Screener results and program placement decisions no later than 30 days after the beginning of the school year or within two weeks if the student enrolls in the school during the school year.

Parents are also notified of their right to "opt-out" of EL services. If requested on the Home Language Survey (HLS), such notifications are provided in the parents' home language. Parents may decide to opt-out of EL services. In these cases, parents must sign an opt-out form, which remains on file with the student's records. When a parent decides to opt-out of EL services, the student is placed in general education classes with SEI-endorsed teachers and is provided access to grade-level standards and curriculum equivalent to their English speaking peers. Regardless of the parents'' decision to opt-out of services, all ELs are required to take the annual ACCESS assessment, the state-mandated English language proficiency test. TECCA will continue to monitor the student's progress and provide EL support as necessary.

Services for English Language Learners

When a student is determined to be an EL student, they will be put into the ELL program. Responsibilities for EL students in the program will be as follows:

- Livelessons with an EL teacher (Listen under Achieve LL) 4 times a week.
- Completion of at least 3 Achieve activities on the Achieve website every week.

Completion of these services will culminate in a grade. The grade will be based on attendance as well as completion of Achieve activities. This grade will be factored into the student's ELA (English Language Arts) grade, counting for 50% of their ELA grade.

District Training of Personnel Involved

All test administrators must complete the WIDA Online Training Courses. They must take and pass the certification quizzes for the tests they will administer and pass with a score of 80% or above. Recertification is required for all tests.
All teachers who instruct ELL students in any of their classes have taken a course to be certified in SEI (Sheltered English Immersion).