

Benson Public Schools
District #777
ENGLISH LEARNERS (EL) PROGRAM

The mission of Benson Public Schools is “To create lifelong learning opportunities in a positive, inclusive environment where all individuals experience success as respectful, responsible, and productive citizens of a global community.” The EL department views its purpose to provide students who fit the state requirements for EL instruction with the skills necessary for success in school and in a global world. Our goal is to enable all English learners (EL) to take full advantage of their education by achieving academic language proficiency in Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing.

While EL students face new challenges, they also contribute new cultural and linguistic dimensions in our schools. In planning to meet their needs, we can benefit from their strengths to enrich our schools and community.

Minnesota’s Definition of an EL Student

As defined in the Minnesota Education for Limited English Proficiency Act (M.S.124D.59), EL students are students in grades Kindergarten through 12 who meet the following criteria:

- a) The pupil, as declared by parent/guardian:
 1. First learned a language other than English,
 2. Comes from a home where the language usually spoken is other than English,
 3. Usually speaks a language other than English
- b) The pupil is determined by: developmentally appropriate measures, which might include observations, teacher judgment, parent recommendations, or developmentally appropriate assessment instruments, to lack the necessary English skills to participate fully in classes taught in English.

Identification Process for EL Students

For the academic success of a student with limited English proficiency, it is important to properly identify and place students for EL services. The identification process will include the following:

1. Completion of the *Home Language Questionnaire* (a copy of this can be found in Appendix A) by parent/guardian of all new students in BensonPublic Schools. (A positive response to items on the questionnaire does not identify a student as limited

English proficient; it merely helps to identify students who potentially should be considered to be EL students.)

2. Assessments in the areas of reading, writing, listening, and speaking will be considered when determining student proficiency. The assessment tools used are the W-APT, MODEL, or ACCESS. These will be administered by the EL teacher.

This identification will happen within 30 days of the beginning of a new school year, or within ten days if the child enters the district during the course of the year. Benson Public Schools will make every effort to provide parents with materials and communication in their native language. The identification process will be shared with parents during the enrollment process.

Eligibility Criteria and Procedures/Program Entrance K-12

1. Indication of another language on the Home Language Questionnaire.
2. For students in grades 1 (semester 2)-12 scoring below a 5 overall on the W-APT or MODEL.
3. For students in Kindergarten-1 (semester 1) scoring below a 26 on the W-APT or MODEL.

The W-APT and MODEL use a 1-6 scale. The performance definitions are as follows:

1-Entering

2-Emerging

3-Developing

4-Expanding

5-Bridging

6-Reaching

Parents/guardian have the right to refuse EL service for their child even if they are identified as an EL student. If this happens, the student must remain EL identified in MARSS but would have no start date for EL services.

When a student begins receiving service, a start date for EL service should be entered in the student's MARSS information. A start date for EL service must be entered in MARSS annually.

Parent Notification

When a student is eligible for placement in an EL program, parent(s)/guardian(s) must be notified in writing within ten days of the student being placed in the EL program and given the opportunity to withdraw the student from the program. This notification does not have to happen

annually unless the District is receiving Title III dollars. If the District is receiving Title III dollars, parents must be notified annually if their child is participating in the EL program within 30 days of the beginning of the year or within two weeks if the child enters the district during the course of the year. (Parent letters can be found in [Appendix A.](#))

Services for EL Students

EL instruction means direct EL services from a certified EL instructor either in a general education setting (push-in), or pull-out instruction.

Descriptions of Services

Pull-Out: EL teacher instructs students in a separate classroom.

Push-In: EL teacher and EL students work in the general education classroom with the general education teacher on a specific lesson or concept.

Guidelines for EL Services

Composite scores on the W-APT, MODEL, or ACCESS assessments are used to determine Tiers: A (beginning), B (intermediate), and C (advanced).

Beginning: Composite PL of 1-3

Intermediate: Composite PL of 2-4

Advanced: Composite PL of 3-5

Services Provided by Building

EL students may also be provided academic support by Title I personnel or special education programming depending upon student need. The Title I personnel will work under the guidance of the EL and mainstream teacher(s) but not necessarily in the EL classroom. Students qualify for special education services by following the special education identification process. If a student is identified as needing special education services, the special education teacher and the EL teacher will work together to provide the best education for the student.

Guidelines for Weekly EL services are as follows:

Northside Elementary

Grades K-5

Newcomer	150 - 180 minutes
Beginner	90-120 minutes
Intermediate	60 minutes
Advanced	60 minutes

Benson Elementary and High School

Grades 5-12

Newcomer	200 – 250 minutes
Beginner	180 minutes
Intermediate	90 minutes
Advanced	90 minutes

Annual Progress Evaluation

Each year all EL students will be evaluated for progress using the ACCESS assessment. The results of this assessment will determine progress and placement within the EL program. This information can also be used to meet exit criteria from the EL program.

Exit from EL Program Procedure

Due to the individual needs of an EL student, the exit decision for a student is made jointly by teachers from the EL program, mainstream classroom, counselors, and/or administrators. The decision is based on one of the following criteria being met:

Students in Northside Elementary Grades K-4

1. Achieve a score of 5 or higher on the ACCESS (Grades K-4) and no lower than a 4 in the other language domains.

Students in Benson Elementary and High School Grades 9-12

1. Achieve a score of 5 or higher on the ACCESS (Grades 9-12) and no lower than a 4 in the other language domains.

Parents and student are also consulted in regards to exiting. A student who is exited from the EL program will be monitored for a period of up to two school years to ensure a successful transition to a total mainstream environment.

When a student meets exit criteria, the parent/guardian of the student will be contacted through a meeting, phone call, and/or letter mailed home. If a parent attends an exit meeting and they agree with the exit recommendation, they should sign the EL Student Exit Form (see Appendix A). If a phone call is made, a letter should also be mailed home and a copy of that placed in the student's cumulative file.

If a parent wants to remove their child from the EL Program, they must sign the EL Student Withdrawal Form. Even though the student is not in the EL Program, they must remain classified as EL in MARSS with no service start date.

A copy of the EL Student Withdrawal Form or the exit letter sent home will be placed in the student cumulative file. A copy will also be forwarded to the EL Coordinator.

If a student arrives from another district in MN or another state that is a part of the WIDA consortium, they would already have taken the W-APT or ACCESS. The student would not be retested. Their scores will be provided from their previous district and those will be used to make any placement decisions.

Monitoring of Exited Students

Once a student has been exited from the EL program the student will be monitored for up to two school years. The manner in which the monitoring will be conducted will be as follows:

1. The EL Coordinator will keep a list of all exited students.
2. The EL teacher and mainstream teachers will consult in order to gather the necessary data about monitored students.

Reclassification of Exited Students as No Longer EL

Once a student is exited from the EL program, he/she should be reclassified in MARSS. Students may be exited from the EL program mid-year but should continue to be classified in MARSS as **EL —Y** for the remainder of the school year. The student would be reported as **EL – N** for the following school year. The change in status is to be completed by the building administrative assistant at the end of the school year.

Communication to Stakeholders

Parents	Letters in English and first language (L1), interpreters, phone calls and website
Teachers	New teachers will receive training on EL services and EL manual during the new teacher workshop each year; There will also be annual EL trainings available for all certified staff
Administrators	EL topics are discussed quarterly at administration meetings; The EL Manual will be reviewed annually.