

## Frequently Asked Questions: English Learner Services

### **1. Why does my child need EL (English Learner) services?**

EL services are needed to support the student's regular classes that are in English. This support will aid in the student's acquisition of academic English in the areas of math, science, social studies, and language arts, which is imperative for continued academic achievement. An EL student will still attend regular classes and be taught by a classroom teacher and an ESL teacher. Only students who are at WIDA levels 1 or 2 will be pulled out to receive special instruction by an ESL teacher.

### **2. How do I know if my child needs EL services?**

Every child who enrolls for the first time in MPS is given a Home Language Questionnaire. If the parent notes that the family speaks a language other than English at home, first spoke a language other than English, or hears another language regularly at home, we will assess the child's English language proficiency with a screening test. If the results of this test show that the child needs English Learner services, he/she will be recommended to a school that has ESL teachers.

### **3. My child speaks English very well; he/she talks to friends all the time in English, and watches TV and movies in English, so why does he/she still need EL services?**

Your child may speak English very well in certain types of social situations, but may need additional support in order to learn vocabulary needed for reading and writing in English at advanced levels. These are key skills that will be needed in order to be successful in high school and beyond. Complex academic English takes much more time to acquire and master. For this reason we strongly encourage parents to keep their children in EL programming until they no longer need services as determined by yearly WIDA ACCESS testing.

### **4. What is the WIDA ACCESS test?**

This test is an English language proficiency assessment given to Kindergarten through 12th graders who have been identified as English Learners (ELs). It is given annually in February and March to monitor students' progress in acquiring academic English. Based on the results of this assessment your child will be assigned an English proficiency level. That level will be used to determine what EL support services, if any, your child needs. You will receive a letter with your child's assessment results stating what services your child is eligible to receive. See the Assessment and Testing page for more information.

### **5. How long will it take to exit EL services?**

It is difficult to predict the exact time it will take for a student to fully acquire the English language; it may take 5-10 years. Every student is different and may develop at different rates and in different ways. However, it is generally expected that students will advance one half of a proficiency level per school year.

### **6. Can my child receive Special Education and EL services at the same time?**

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Yes, all Special Education students who are also eligible for EL services receive both services as mandated by federal and state law. See the Dual Eligibility page for more information.