



Gresham Barlow School District

English Language Learner (ELL) Program

Program Goals:

The primary goal of the Gresham Barlow School District ELL Program is to assist students in becoming fully proficient in English. This includes reaching fluency in reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

A secondary goal is to ensure students access grade level instruction and demonstrate academic achievement in English language arts, mathematics, and science as measured by State Balanced Assessments (SBA), succeed academically and graduate on time.

How are students identified?

Using the home language survey as a starting point, students qualify if they:

1. speak a language at home that is NOT English or had significant exposure to another language before learning English;
AND
2. do not demonstrate grade level proficiency in English (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) when administered a language assessment.

Students identified as ELL receive language development instruction and support to access grade level content.

English language development (ELD)

Elementary (Kindergarten to 5th grade)

Students in kindergarten to 5th grade receive English language development instruction for 30 minutes a day 4 to 5 times a week. Instruction is delivered in English in areas of speaking, listening, reading and writing. Participating students do not miss any grade level core instruction during ELD.

The five elementary schools with the largest population of English learners provide language support for all students in the early grades (Kdg, 1st & some 2nd). At these schools, students move between classes based on language levels in order to build and strengthen language for all.

Language instruction is based on Oregon's English language proficiency standards. Materials used include Systematic ELD units, instruction based on our language arts program, and other resources based on student need.

Middle and High School (6th to 12th grade)

Students in middle and high school have a separate class period for English language development. At this level, instruction has a greater focus on reading and writing and developing high-level academic language.

Newcomers

Students in 3rd to 12th grades who have less than one year in US schools AND score at the beginning proficiency level may qualify to participate in the Newcomer Program for one to two years. Transportation is provided.

Support for Accessing Core Instruction

Classroom and content teachers use strategies such as demonstrations, interactive routines, visual, sentence frames, etc. to support students with grade level content.

How does a student exit the ELL Program?

English learners take the English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA21) each spring. A portfolio of the student's language progress and the ELPA21 score are used to determine if the student is proficient in English. Parents provide input into this decision.

Academic Monitoring

Students who exit the ELL program are monitored for four years to ensure they are making academic progress. If it is determined that the student still needs language support, a process, including parent input, is followed and students can be re-entered into the program.

Parent Input and Participation

Schools hold meetings to inform parents about programs and services. Parents can also ask questions, share concerns and provide input.

ELL Program Participation Options

Parents can waive ELL services by meeting with an ELL teacher and signing a waiver form.

Participation in Other Programs

Students participate in Title I, TAG, and Special Education if they meet criteria for those programs.

If you have questions, please contact your school's ELL teacher(s) _____
_____ at _____
or the ELL Director at 503-261-4582.



Frequently Asked Questions About Our ELL Program

We no longer speak our native language to our children at home. Why was my student assessed for the ELL Program?

When a child spoke or was spoken to in a language other than English as an infant, either before or at the same time as they learned English it may have impacted their English language development. This may be the case even if the child no longer speaks that language.

The identification of potential English learners in this manner is a federal requirement. It ensures that all students have the English skills necessary to be successful in school.

Students are assessed to determine if they might qualify for ELL services based on responses to questions about the first language learned and home language on the registration form.

My student speaks English, why are they still considered an ELL?

Some students speak “social” language well and still struggle with academic language or school language on their grade level.

They may still be developing complex vocabulary or find it difficult to write an organized essay that demonstrates their ability to use English fluently. They may not yet be able to consistently use appropriate grammar, clearly sequence, compare and contrast, show cause & effect, classify, or draw an inference. Students may need more practice summarizing, analyzing, persuading, or supporting their ideas in writing.

ELD class focuses on teaching skills to prepare students to be successful in their other classes and meet grade-level standards. These classes also support our students in being college and/or career ready when they graduate by providing them with a vast vocabulary and understanding of English in an academic setting.

I want my child to learn English quickly. Should I stop using our native language at home?

Speak with your child in the language that is most comfortable for you. This will allow them to develop language strongly. Share family and cultural stories, traditional songs and humor and talk about your day, your plans and your goals. A strong first language makes learning a second language, like English, easier and faster.

School will provide your child with lots of English practice opportunities. Continuing to use your native language at home will make it more likely that your student becomes fully bilingual.

Research shows that there are cognitive advantages to being bilingual. In the future, being bilingual may give your student more opportunities in higher education, careers, and employment.

Should I read to my child in our native language or teach them to read our native language?

Read to your child in the language you feel most comfortable reading. The important thing is that you read to them or with them regularly and discuss what you read. You can also listen to them read to you in any language and talk about what they are reading. This will build your child’s interest in reading as well as their level of comprehension about what they read.

Children who learn to read in their native language often have an easier time learning to read in English. If your child is expressing frustration or confusion reading in your native language and/or English, talk with your child’s classroom or ELL teacher.

I didn’t go to school in the United States. How can help my student with school?

Even if you are not familiar with the US school system or are not fluent in English, you can do a lot to help your student succeed in school.

- Ask your student about what they are learning and what is happening at school
- Encourage your student to try their best even when something is challenging
- Give your student time and a place in your home to read and do homework
- Call the school if you have any questions, you will be provided with an interpreter so that you can communicate
- Attend any school events or activities that you are able to and learn about resources
- Go to fall conferences to learn how your student is progressing in school

I don’t speak English. How do I communicate with my child’s school?

Schools can provide you with an interpreter by phone or in person. Let your school know what language you speak and they can arrange to provide you with the communication support you need to participate in your child’s education.

If you have additional questions, please contact your school’s ELL teacher(s) _____ at _____ or the ELL Director at 503-261-4582.