

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the difference between ESL, LEP & ELL?



ESL – English as a Second Language
LEP – Limited English Proficient
ELL – English Language Learner

These refer to students who are learning English as a second or even a third language. ESL is the “old” term; LEP is the “legal” term; and ELL is currently the preferred term by most educators and families.

2. My ELL student is newly-arrived from another country. What do I need to know?

His/Her English skills may be non-existent, minimal or adequate. Your Principal, School Counselor, ELL Teacher and/or parents will inform you of his/her former English instruction and current abilities.

It may take a few hours-even a day or so, to find out this information from the family and/or translator because communication issues will likely be present. We do know that staff must have this information as soon as possible. As soon as a completed Home Language Survey arrives, your ELL Teacher will contact the family to clarify staff’s questions and concerns. Check your email often as this is generally the quickest form of communication.

In addition, cum files from other countries generally take weeks/months to arrive. This is another reason that your ELL Teacher wants to be proactive answering your questions and/or meeting your needs.

3. My ELL student transferred here from another U.S. school. Do I need to do anything special?

It is likely that your new ELL will have some ability to speak, listen, read and write in English. Most ELLs who have attended a U.S. school for at least six months, will be able to speak and understand some conversational English. His/Her previous English language proficiency assessment should be shared with you; if it isn’t, ask for it. This will be the first thing your ELL Teacher will review once the cum folder arrives and will communicate her findings to you!

Some students’ cum folders arrive within a week; others take almost one month. Regardless, if you have questions, concerns or need assistance before the cum folder arrives, contact your ELL Teacher.

4. My ELL student was born here and has lived here long enough so do I really need to know more?

If your ELL student has been in the U.S. for quite some time, his/her educational experiences may or may not be typical. These are worthwhile questions to explore:

- Did he/she receive ELL services in the past?
- Was he/she already exited from an ELL program? If so, when?
- Has he/she attended a bilingual school?
- Has he/she participated in mainstream classes and/or attended ELL Math or Reading classes?
- Is he/she currently bilingual or bi-literate?

The Bottom Line: Reviewing school records periodically is vital in understanding and appreciating each ELL’s educational experiences!

5. What do I initially do with a student who doesn't speak English?

Smile! Be warm and welcoming! Learn the correct pronunciation of the ELL's first and last name during Week 1. Seat him/her near your desk or the white board; this allows you to more easily "check for understanding" regularly AND for him/her to communicate more comfortably with you.

Assign a responsible and friendly student to be a *study buddy* for a week or two. Monitor the relationship and rotate *study buddies* regularly.

<<<The Best Advice>>> "What would you want a "strange" teacher in a "strange" school in a "strange" country speaking who speaks a "strange" language do for you?"

FYI... Some ELLs do not even speak for 3-6 months upon arrival; processing new routines, language, and culture take time. We are often as anxious as our students are to learn English – as quickly as possible too.... BUT language acquisition can't be rushed. The good news is that WE CAN PROVIDE activities to facilitate it.

6. Do I get a translator to help me in the classroom?

Unless a translator attends the enrollment process, there is no translator/interpreter immediately available. Pewaukee School District's *World Language* staff can be utilized on an as needed, temporary basis. Since they have their own responsibilities and often conflicting schedules, this doesn't happen regularly.

Upon advance request, a translator may be available at school events including p-t conferences, classroom events, parent education meetings, etc. Contact the district's ELL teacher regarding available translation services as soon as possible. The following information will need to be provided: date, start/end times, location, purpose and written materials that may need translated.

Good News!

Google Chrome has an app that allows short translations for student and staff use.
Hint: Keep contractions, figurative language and complex sentences to a minimum.

7. Am I getting more classroom support today? Tomorrow? This term?

Unless the ELL Teacher is present in your building at the time of registration, she only becomes involved AFTER receiving the original (completed) *Home Language Survey* from the school office. She will visit you before or after contacting the family.

Your ELL Teacher will notify the student's teachers and school counselor of any new student/family information and schedules the W-APT, an English language proficiency assessment (required by WI DPI). Based upon the ELL's cum folder, discussions with family, and language proficiency screener, the ELL teacher will offer to meet with the teaching team to...

- share the state required Student Service Support Plan,
- receive staff input and answer concerns/questions,
- discuss assistance with standardized testing,
- schedule student observations, and
- share appropriate ELL resources. This is occasionally completed via email depending on the ELL's educational factors and staff availability.

8. What do I do the first 8-10 weeks?

- Determine content area goals for your ELL. Much of this information will be on your ELL's Student Service Support Plan. Your ELL Teacher can help too!
- Create daily opportunities for your ELL to speak English with you, a study buddy and in cooperative groups.
- Use informal and formal alternate assessments on a regular basis to track progress. The more authentic the assessment, the more effective!
- Create a project or two "connecting" your ELL's culture with ours.
- Collaborate and/or conference with your ELL Teacher and other staff so that your needs AND your ELL's needs are met.
- Check out at least one ELL resource (online, district ELL site, ELL Quick Reads) each week.



Did You Know?

Each school building's library beginning with the 2013/2014 school year, will have a staff reference section of ELL resources?

- Communicate with parents! If they don't speak English, they may read English emails. If they don't speak or read English, sometimes their students are responsible enough to translate for them. Finally, you may contact your ELL Teacher to secure a volunteer translator. If parents do speak English, find out their preferred method of communication and share student progress on a regular basis. Encourage them to continue teaching their native language to their children.

The Bottom Line:

The stronger literacy skills an ELL has in his/her first language, the stronger his/her literacy skills will be in English!