



# Wisconsin English Language Development Standards

## Framework Rollout Brief

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# Wisconsin English Language Development Standards

Over the past three decades, Wisconsin schools have welcomed a growing number of multilingual students who speak one or more languages other than English. In fact, there are currently over 65 languages other than English spoken by Wisconsin public school students. The linguistic and cultural assets that these students bring to school with them are rich, varied, and important resources for learning.

Many multilingual students are also classified as English Learners (ELs), meaning that they are in the process of acquiring proficiency in English. During the 2022-23 school year, there were over 51,638 EL students enrolled in 373 school districts across the state. These students are served in a variety of settings, including general education classrooms with the support of an ESL teacher and bilingual classrooms where instruction is given in both English and students' home language.

No matter the learning environment, educators should build on the strengths of EL students, including their linguistic and cultural backgrounds. It is also essential for schools to provide EL students with the instruction and support needed to access grade-level content and develop their English-language proficiency. This includes implementing English language development standards in all learning environments where there are EL students present.



## GUIDING BELIEFS FOR THE LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT OF MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS

The work DPI does to support the education of multilingual learners, including students classified as English Learners, is guided by the following beliefs about language and language development:

- All language(s) is an asset.
- Language is foundational to academic learning.
- All educators are language educators.
- Language learning should be integrated into all teaching for ELs through the ELD standards.
- Use of the ELD standards supports the academic language development of ALL students.

These guiding beliefs have informed the adoption and implementation of the state’s ELD standards. DPI has created an [infographic](#) of these guiding beliefs that can be downloaded and shared.

## ADOPTION OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

Under the direction of then State Superintendent Carolyn Stanford Taylor, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) officially adopted the WIDA 2020 English Language Development Standards Framework as the State’s English Language Development (ELD) standards in May of 2021.

**The ELD standards are a tool that ALL educators can use to design instruction that support EL students’ language learning needs and provides them with access to rigorous grade-level content.**



Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Equal Educational Opportunities Act (EEOA), all states and local education agencies (LEAs) must ensure that students classified as English Learners can participate meaningfully and equally in educational programs and services. Additionally, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as reauthorized under the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2016 (ESSA), requires that LEAs implement English language proficiency standards that are aligned with academic content and academic achievement and are aligned to all state content standards (Section 1111 (b)(1)(F)).

The adoption of the new Wisconsin ELD standards supports DPI's commitment to ensuring that all multilingual learners in the state have access to equitable, high quality educational experiences that are culturally and linguistically sustaining and prepare them for schooling, work, and life. The ELD standards are a tool that ALL educators can use to design instruction that support EL students' language learning needs and provides them with access to rigorous grade-level content.

#### **ABOUT THE ELD STANDARDS**

DPI is a founding member of the WIDA Consortium and an early adopter of the WIDA English Language Development and ACCESS for ELLs assessment suite. The [WIDA ELD Standards Framework](#), developed with the input of Wisconsin educators, supports the development of EL students' social and academic language proficiency.

**The WIDA ELD Standards framework consists of four components: the WIDA ELD Standards Statements, Key Language Uses, Language Expectations, and Proficiency Level Descriptors. Taken together, the four components offer a robust representation of language development (WIDA 2020).**



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The first component of the framework, the WIDA ELD Standards Statements, acts as the conceptual framing for the document, highlighting that language and content are integrated in instructional contexts (WIDA 2020). The focus of the standards statements is the language of schooling and how language is used for learning (ibid.). There are five statements, each one focusing on a different area of language use in schools and classrooms. These include: social and instructional language, the language of language arts, the language of mathematics, the language of science and, and the language of social studies.

While the standards statements are purposefully broad, the other three components of the framework provide increasingly detailed views of language use and language development. The Key Language Uses represent the main ways that language is used across disciplines, including to narrate, inform, explain, and argue (WIDA 2020). The Language Expectations function as goals for content-aligned language instruction and the Proficiency Level

**The ELD Standards Framework is grounded in WIDA’s four Big Ideas, which include: equity of opportunity and access, integration of content and language, a shared responsibility and collaborative approach between stakeholders, and a purposeful, functional approach to language (WIDA 2020).**



Descriptors highlight the continuum of language development, from beginning to advanced stages of proficiency, as it relates to both receptive and expressive modes of language use (ibid.).

The ELD Standards Framework is grounded in WIDA's four Big Ideas, which include: equity of opportunity and access, integration of content and language, a shared responsibility and collaborative approach between stakeholders, and a purposeful, functional approach to language (WIDA 2020). WIDA's Big Ideas reflect an asset-based approach to supporting English learners, one that provides students with access to grade level content, addresses their needs, and recognizes and builds on their cultural and linguistic resources (ibid.). (See pages 17-20 of the [WIDA ELD Standards Framework](#) for more information about WIDA's Big Ideas.)

DPI believes that the WIDA ELD Standards Framework is an important tool for ensuring multilingual learners in the state have access to equitable, high quality educational experiences that are culturally and linguistically sustaining and prepare them to succeed in school and beyond. Additionally, the standards framework is aligned with the ACCESS for ELLs assessment, which is the state- and federally-mandated annual English language proficiency assessment for ELs in Wisconsin (34 CFR 200.6, Wis. Stat. § 115.96(1)). As such, using the standards to plan instruction for ELs helps ensure students are developing the linguistic skills that are associated with becoming a proficient speaker, reader, and writer of English.

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## GOAL OF THE ELD STANDARDS FRAMEWORK ROLLOUT

DPI began rolling out the ELD standards during the 2021-22 school year and has developed a plan that is intended to support the full implementation of the standards by 2025-26. The overarching goal of DPI's ELD standards rollout is to ensure educators are equipped with the knowledge, dispositions and resources necessary to fully implement, with integrity, the English language development standards across content areas so that all English Learner students in Wisconsin acquire the social and academic language needed to graduate college, career, and life ready.

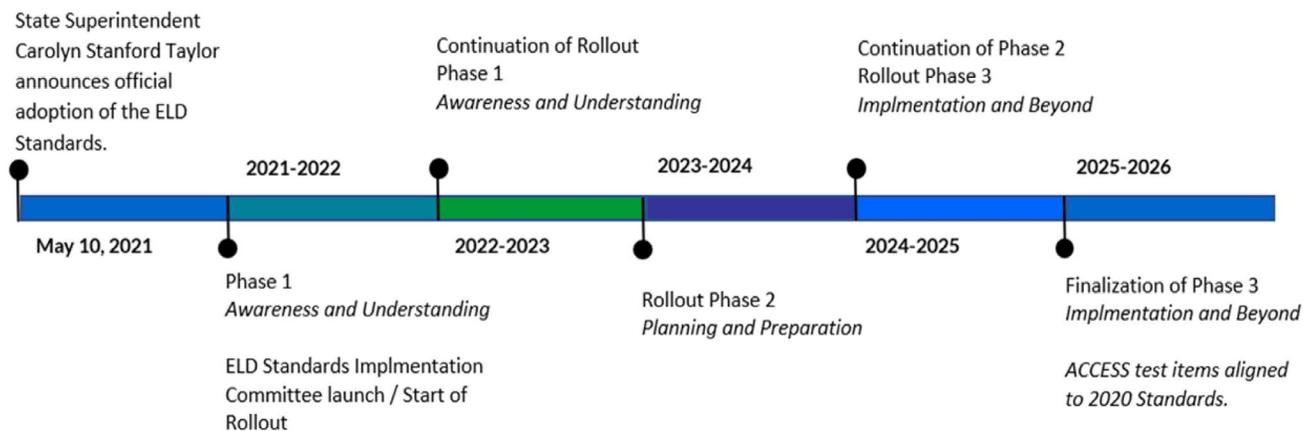
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## PHASE-BY-PHASE ROLLOUT PLAN

DPI has created an ELD standards rollout plan that consists of three phases: Awareness and Understanding, Planning and Preparation, and Implementation and Beyond. Each of the three phases has a number of activities or tasks associated with it which are meant to be completed both at the state and local level. As such, the phase-by-phase rollout plan is intended to guide DPI's work with the standards, as well as work taking place at the district and school level. The Phase-by-Phase Rollout Plan document can be accessed on [DPI's ELD Standards web page](#).

## ROLLOUT TIMELINE

In addition to creating a rollout plan, DPI has developed a timeline that specifies the approximate windows of time associated with each phase of the rollout. The time periods outlined in the timeline apply to both state-level and district-level activities. The rollout is intended to be completed by the 2025-26 school year, when



## ELD STANDARDS IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

DPI recognizes that individual districts and schools may vary in their readiness to implement the standards fully and may need more or less time to move through the three phases of the rollout process. That being said, it is expected that all districts serving ELs implement the ELD standards in their language instruction educational programs for EL students.

## LEVEL OF INVOLVEMENT AND PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE CONTINUUM

DPI believes that it is important for many different stakeholder groups to have an awareness and understanding of the ELD standards. However, DPI also recognizes that not all stakeholders will have the same level of involvement with the standards and will not need to possess the same depth of knowledge of the standards. The following chart reflects the recommended levels of involvement

Role of Educational Stakeholder	Level of Involvement and/or Professional Knowledge of ELD Standards			
	Awareness and Understanding	Planning and Preparation	Implementation and Assessment	Student Outcomes and Program Effectiveness
<b>Bilingual/ESL Leaders</b> <i>(LIEP Program Directors, Program Coordinators, Etc.)</i>	→			
<b>Bilingual/ESL Teachers</b> <i>(LIEP Program Directors, Program Coordinators, Etc.)</i>	→			
<b>Curriculum Leaders</b> <i>(Curriculum/Teaching and Learning Directors, Etc.)</i>	→			
<b>Content and Classroom Teachers</b> <i>(Kindergarten, Algebra, Art, Etc.)</i>	→			
<b>Interventionists</b> <i>(Reading, Math, Etc.)</i>	→			
<b>Instructional Coaches</b> <i>(Math Coach, Reading Coach, ELD Coach, Etc.)</i>	→			
<b>Effectiveness Evaluators</b> <i>(Principals, Effectiveness Coordinators, Etc.)</i>	→			
<b>Other District-Level Administrators</b> <i>(Pupil Services Director, Business Leaders, Etc.)</i>	→			
<b>Educator Preparation</b> <i>(Universities, Any Applicable CESA Leaders, Etc.)</i>	→			
<b>Paraprofessionals</b>	→			
<b>Specialty Teachers</b> <i>(Gifted and Talented, Special Ed, Etc.)</i>	→			
<b>District Oversight</b> <i>(District Administrator/Superintendent, School Board, Etc.)</i>	→			
<b>Community</b> <i>(Families, Caregivers, Any Relevant Community Groups, Etc.)</i>	→			

and professional knowledge for different stakeholder groups with regards to the standards.

The roles district and school administrators and staff play vary from district to district. For that reason, rather than using positions or job titles, the graphic on page 10 groups stakeholders by the roles they play in the school or district. It is possible that one person - such as a district administrator in a small district - may fall into multiple groups.

### **NEXT STEPS**

All LEAs are required to officially adopt a set of ELD standards. DPI encourages Wisconsin LEAs to adopt the state ELD standards as they are aligned to the state annual ELP assessment, the ACCESS for ELLs.

The state of Wisconsin is under obligation to ensure that LEAs implement English language development standards and an annual assessment for language proficiency in all required language domains (i.e., listening, reading, writing and speaking). Over the next three years, DPI will work to ensure that districts serving English Learners are aware of the ELD standards, understand why they are important, and have the support needed to develop and execute a plan for implementing them.

Once a district has adopted a set of ELD standards, it should provide training related to those standards to all administrators and staff who work with English Learners. Wisconsin educators can learn



more about the state ELD standards and related resources by visiting DPI's ELD Standards webpage and [WIDA's ELD Standards Framework page](#). Additionally, WIDA offers many self-paced trainings related to the standards for Wisconsin educators that can be accessed via [WIDA's Secure Portal](#).

Schools serving ELs must also monitor the language and academic progress of EL students each year. If a school is implementing the ELD standards, this monitoring can provide important information about that implementation and whether additional training and support related to integrating the standards into instructional activities is needed.

DPI strongly believes that the adoption and implementation of the ELD standards will benefit ALL students. Although focused on the language development of EL students, the ELD standards framework will support the learning of academic language for all students and is a powerful tool for teachers to use across content areas and learning contexts. Teaching with the standards provides ELs with the support they need and deserve, while fostering the academic language growth that all students need to access grade-level content.

## REFERENCE

WIDA. 2020. WIDA English language Development Standards Framework, 2020 edition: Kindergarten–Grade 12. Madison, WI: Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System.





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