



English Language Learners: Your Right to Equal Education

English Language Learners (ELL), also called English as a Second Language (ESL), have the right to equal opportunities at school. This means there are rules about how a school has to help these students be successful in the classroom.



How do schools have to help students that do not know English?

A school has to

- Identify students that need English language classes.
- Have an ELL program that has proven to work and helps the students succeed.
- Hire or train staff to work with ELL students.
- Evaluate the program and make changes if the students are not meeting goals.
- Help students learn English **and** meet the same state standards that all students have to meet.

What is a school's responsibility to the parents?

The school has to

- Find a way to talk to parents in their own language and find ways for them to be a part of their children's education.
- Let parents know within 10 days when their child is identified as an ELL student.
- Describe the services offered to the parents and the goals a student needs to meet to complete the program. The school also has to let parents know that they have the right to refuse these services.
- Let parents know if the program for ELL students does not meet the yearly goals.

Schools CANNOT

- Separate ELL students from other students for a large part of the school day.
- Refuse to let ELL students into enrichment programs or college preparatory courses.
- Separate ELL students into low or vocational tracks permanently.

Developed in collaboration with the Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services Education Law Project.