

West Tennessee School for the Deaf
ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER/ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE
POLICY AND PROCEDURES

West Tennessee School for the Deaf (WTSD) is a State Special school serving as a school district located in Jackson, Tennessee. Our service area includes all west Tennessee counties lying between the Tennessee and Mississippi rivers. All of our students are deaf or hard of hearing and WTSD has been determined to be their Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). We serve children beginning at the age of two (2) through sixth grade. We have had four (4) students in the past ten years that were English Language Learners (ELL) and had a hearing loss. All ELL students enrolled at WTSD have a written IEP that states the student's academic and prevocational goals and objectives for the year. All WTSD teachers are highly qualified.

The ELL/ESL contact person for the West Tennessee School for the Deaf is Ms. Teresa Rice, WTSD Guidance Counselor. Ms. Rice will be the liaison between WTSD and the LEA of all ELL/ESL children that attend WTSD. During school registration, all WTSD parents complete a Home Language Survey. This survey is given to determine the primary language that is spoken in their home. If a parent indicates that a language other than English is their primary spoken language, the results of this home language survey will be submitted to the Special Education Supervisor in the child's home school system so they can administer the Tennessee English Language Placement Assessment (TELPA). The administration at WTSD will assist, if necessary, with this screening process and provide services to the student and family, as needed. The student's LEA will also administer the English Language Development Assessment (ELDA) annually and analyze its results. These results will be shared with the administration at WTSD.

ESL Plan for ELL Students

The following general principles recommended by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) for ELL students are integral for students who are deaf/hard of hearing. They include the following:

- **Increase Comprehensibility**: This principle includes the use of pictures, concrete objects, demonstrations, gestures, and intonational cues. Deaf

educators employ all of these, as well as manual communication, and speech reading. These two strategies increase comprehensibility as well.

- **Increase Interaction:** The strategies included in this concept are cooperative learning, project-based learning, and one-to-one teacher/student interactions. Our classes are small, typically with a teacher/student ratio of not larger than 1:8. Teachers and paraprofessionals provide consistent attention to students' learning.
- **Increase Thinking/Study Skills:** These strategies are used to build basic and advance thinking skills. WTSD utilizes components such as Write from the Beginning and the Teacher Assessment of Spoken Language to foster vocabulary and concept development in oral and written language. Teachers model "thinking language" and guide student's questions and responses. Additionally, language experience stories, based upon actual shared experiences, are used daily.
- **Respect the student's native language (Native Language Support):** We seek interpreters to connect the school and the classroom teacher to the parents or guardians of ELL students. One communication advantage is our use of sign language. Many signs have a universal quality that crosses national language lines.
- **Cooperative Learning:** Our classes are small, and most have at least a modified cooperative learning pattern. Each class has a paraprofessional to provide individual support to all students.
- **Language Experience Approach:** We utilize this method throughout the school day. This strategy is a "mainstay" of deaf education and provides interactive support for ELL students.
- **Dialogue Journals:** Write from the Beginning is a commercial program designed to improve written communication. WTSD implemented this program at the beginning of the 2007 – 2008 school year. Journaling is an essential component of this program.
- **Academic Scaffolding:** Many examples of scaffolding are integral to all classes. They are implemented throughout the school day.
- **Assessing Prior Knowledge:** This strategy is also an integral part of learning at WTSD. Reteaching skills learned from previous lessons reinforces the language that was presented during the lesson.

Policy on English Language Learners (ELL)

All students at WTSD have been identified as deaf or hard of hearing. A child who is classified as an English Language Learner and has deafness listed as his/her primary disability is eligible to be considered for placement at WTSD, as long as it is determined to be the least restrictive environment. The following basic provisions apply to these students:

- ***WTSD will connect parents with their child's LEA so they can begin assessments and other testing procedures to determine a plan of action.***
- ***The child's LEA will analyze the results from their assessment and share the results with the administration at WTSD if the child is a full-time student at WTSD.***