

DUAL-IDENTIFIED RECLASSIFICATION (EXITING) FROM ESL

Dear Parent/Guardian,

We are writing to inform you that your student is being considered for reclassification (exiting) from the English as a Second Language (ESL) program. Specifically, your student **may** qualify for *dual-identified* reclassification, which is for English Learners (ELs) who also have an Individual Education Plan (IEP).

In order to qualify for dual-identified reclassification, a school-based or IEP team, **including a parent/guardian**, must recommend your student for dual-identified reclassification. Your reclassification decision will be contingent upon (1) whether your student is making progress towards meeting grade-level standards, and (2) whether your student has enough English proficiency to succeed in school without ESL support.

In order to begin this process, **we will be contacting you to schedule a meeting**. At the meeting, we will discuss your student's academic progress and English proficiency, and determine whether reclassification is appropriate for your student. Please note that you **must** attend this meeting for your student to be reclassified. Interpretation will be provided at the meeting if necessary.

Reclassification decisions are also dependent on 2020 ACCESS scores. As such, it is very important that your student **take the 2020 ACCESS exam**, which will be administered at your student's school sometime between January 6 and February 21, 2020.

If your student is reclassified, your student will no longer be eligible to receive direct support from an ESL teacher beginning in the 2020-21 school year. Instead, your student will only receive general support from teachers, along with the special education services mandated in his/her IEP. Additionally, your student's academic performance will continue to be monitored.

If you have further questions, please contact me using the contact information listed below. Someone from our school will be in touch soon regarding next steps. We look forward to meeting with you.

Sincerely,

Name: _____

Role: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

DUAL-IDENTIFIED RECLASSIFICATION (EXITING) FROM ESL FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What does it mean to be an English Learner?

An English Learner (EL) is a student who has been identified as needing English language supports. These supports are provided through the Language Instruction Educational Program (LIEP), commonly known as English as a Second Language (ESL). The goals of ESL are to (1) help students gain English proficiency, and (2) ensure all students can access grade-level content.

2. What exactly is the purpose of the English as a Second Language program?

The purpose of the English as a Second Language (ESL) program is to help your student learn English so that s/he will be able to comprehend daily lessons, participate socially in school, and meet grade-appropriate academic standards for grade promotion and graduation.

3. How was my student identified as an English Learner?

When parents/guardians enroll students in The School District of Philadelphia (SDP), they complete a "Home Language Survey." Based on the responses to the survey, an English proficiency test may be administered to your student in order to determine if s/he is in need of English language supports.

4. What does it mean to be a dual-identified student?

A student who is "dual-identified" is an English Learner who has an Individual Educational Program (IEP). Dual-identified students receive both English language and special education instruction.

5. What is the ACCESS exam?

ACCESS for ELs® is an assessment that measures your student's English proficiency. This assessment is given between January and February of each school year and is administered either online or by paper and pencil. Students receive a score of 1.0 - 6.0 (6.0 is the highest). A small group of ELs with IEPs take the Alternate ACCESS exam, which is an alternative version of ACCESS.

6. What exactly is tested on the ACCESS exam?

ACCESS measures students' English proficiency in reading, writing, speaking, and listening. These areas are commonly referred to as "Domains." Each domain generates a score which, taken together, produce an overall composite score, also known as your student's English proficiency level.

7. What does it mean to be reclassified (exited) from ESL?

Students are reclassified when evidence (ACCESS test scores and input from teachers) indicates that the student is proficient in academic English. After students are reclassified, their academic performance is actively monitored by the School District of Philadelphia for two (2) years, and monitored by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) for four (4) years. If it is determined during the first two years of monitoring that the student is struggling academically as a result of persistent language barriers, then the student may be re-designated as an active English Learner and re-enrolled in the English as a Second Language (ESL) program.

8. How do I know if my student is a good candidate for reclassification?

If your student is proficient or close to proficient in academic English, and is making progress towards meeting grade-level standards, s/he may be a good candidate for reclassification.

9. Is this the only way my student can be reclassified (exit) from ESL?

There are two pathways for reclassification (exiting) from English as a Second Language (ESL) programming. The first, general reclassification, requires that students achieve a 4.5 or above on the ACCESS exam and be recommended for reclassification by their teachers. The second, dual-identified reclassification, is for a select group of English Learners who also have Individual Education Plans (IEPs), and for whom the ACCESS exam may not be an appropriate measure of the student's English proficiency. In both processes, academic English proficiency is a requirement for reclassification.

10. Will my student continue to receive English language supports if s/he is reclassified?

Students who are reclassified receive general support from teacher(s), but do not receive English as a Second Language instruction or any other additional, English Learner-specific supports.

11. Will my student continue to receive Special Education supports if s/he is reclassified?

Yes. Your student will continue to receive special education support and instruction as mandated in your student's IEP.

12. What will be my role at the dual-identified reclassification meeting?

At the dual-identified reclassification meeting, you will work with your student's teachers to review his/her work and test scores. After reviewing these items, you will *collaboratively* determine whether your student has sufficient proficiency in English to be reclassified. If you believe your student should *not* be reclassified, the school must respect this decision.

13. What will happen if I am not able to participate in the reclassification meeting?

A parent/guardian must participate in all dual-identified reclassification meetings. If you are not able to participate, your student will not be eligible for the dual-identified reclassification process this school year.

14. Am I able to participate in the reclassification meeting by phone or video conference?

Yes, you may participate in the meeting by phone or video conference.

15. Will interpretation services be available during the meeting?

Yes, interpretation services must be provided, either by a Bilingual Counseling Assistant (BCA) or via the District's telephonic interpretation line. Please request these services when the school contacts you.

16. Where can I learn more about the reclassification process?

You can view the criteria for reclassification on the Pennsylvania Department of Education's website at <https://www.education.pa.gov/>. Once on the website, search for the document titled "Reclassification, Monitoring, and Redesignation of ELs."