



English Language Proficiency and Program Update Report EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose of Report: To update the School Board on English Language (EL) proficiency and programming.

The Sioux Falls School District (SFSD) continues to support a growing population of English Learners (ELs) with a strong focus on language development, access to grade-level instruction, and a timely exit from EL services. Each year, EL students in grades K-12 take the WIDA ACCESS assessment, a statewide assessment that measures students' progress in listening, speaking, reading, and writing English. Results help educators track language growth and program effectiveness to determine when students are ready to exit EL services.

In spring 2025, students completed the WIDA ACCESS assessment, and 248 students met state criteria to exit EL services across all grade levels. As part of a multi-year program review, the District analyzed student outcome data and implemented improvements to better support language growth. A key strategy has been expanding co-planning and co-teaching between EL teachers and classroom teachers. Data from the two-year pilot show higher language growth for students who received co-taught instruction, along with strong feedback from staff about improved alignment and shared responsibility.

Based on these results, the SFSD will expand co-teaching as the primary EL services model over the next three years. Refinements to elementary newcomer supports will further strengthen early access to language development and core instruction. These efforts align with federal guidance and district priorities and are designed to improve outcomes for English Learners while benefiting all students.

Administrative Recommendation to School Board: Acknowledge the update on the English Language proficiency and programming report.

English Language Proficiency and Program Update Report

Purpose of Report: To update the School Board on English Language (EL) proficiency and programming.

District Priority Area: Academic Success

Explanation: Federal guidance requires school districts to take necessary measures to ensure that English Learners (ELs) can meaningfully participate in educational programs, develop proficiency in speaking, listening, reading, and writing English, meet rigorous state academic standards, and exit EL services within a reasonable timeframe.

As part of this guidance, all students identified as EL in grades K–12 participate annually in the WIDA ACCESS assessment. Results provide educators with actionable data to:

- Support EL students' development of academic English in the classroom
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the district's English Language Acquisition program
- Determine when students are ready to exit EL services

Exit criteria in South Dakota consist of either a 5.0 composite score on the ACCESS or Alternate ACCESS assessment or at least a 4.0 composite score on ACCESS and a proficient score (3 or 4) on the South Dakota ELA assessment.

2025 WIDA ACCESS Assessment Results

Spring 2025:

- 3,162 EL students in the SFSD completed the WIDA ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 assessment
- 10 students participated in the Alternate WIDA ACCESS assessment, as determined by their IEP teams

Exit Outcomes

Of the 3,162 EL students assessed:

- 160 students exited with a composite score of 5.0 or higher
- 88 students exited by meeting the secondary criteria (4.0 composite and proficient SD ELA score)
- A total of 248 students exited during the 2024-2025 school year:
 - 152 students at the K-5 grade level
 - 34 students at the 6-8 grade level
 - 62 students at the 9-12 grade level

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Total Enrollment	2,632	2,612	2,689	2,972	3,162
K-5 Students Exited	11.7%	11%	9.7%	8.5%	8.4%
6-8 Students Exited	6%	4.7%	3.2%	5.5%	6.1%
9-12 Students Exited	8.4%	5%	5.5%	7.6%	7.8%
K-12 Total Exited	9.8%	8.4%	7.5%	7.7%	7.8%

*Secondary exit criteria implemented in 2021

Student Outcomes of the WIDA Assessment

The percentage of students who meet expected annual growth and exit EL services within the expected timeframe is reported in the English Learners Progress section of the school report card. Each English Learner is assigned an individualized proficiency target for up to five years based on their initial ACCESS score. Among students enrolled for the full academic year, 31% are currently on track to meet expected growth targets, and 10% exited the EL program.

EL Program Updates

In July 2022, a representative team of EL teachers, classroom teachers, administrators, instructional coaches, and district leadership began a comprehensive review of the K–12 EL program aligned with federal guidance. Using the MTSS problem-solving process, the team analyzed five years of EL student data compared to non-EL peers.

The team reviewed evidence-based practices for English Learner instruction, including multiple program models and nationally recognized frameworks. A strong emphasis was placed on co-planning and co-teaching as a means to increase access to grade-level instruction while supporting language development.

Over the last two years, ten schools have participated in a co-planning and co-teaching pilot.

Data for students who received co-teaching as their EL service model was analyzed, comparing scaled-score growth with that of students who did not receive co-teaching. Below is a summary of those findings:

Elementary Level

- Co-taught average = 36.9
- Not co-taught average = 35.4

Middle School Level

- Co-taught average = 26.1
- Not co-taught average = 13.8

High School Level

- Co-taught average = 18.1
- Not co-taught average = 12.6

Teachers and administrators reported that co-planning and co-teaching strengthened instructional alignment and shared responsibility between classrooms and EL teachers, increased their capacity to reach and support a broader range of learners, and led to the consistent use of instructional strategies that improved access to grade-level content for both English Learners and non-English Learners.

Based on positive growth data and consistent qualitative feedback, co-planning and co-teaching will be implemented as the primary instructional model for EL services at all EL sites over the next three years.

Elementary Newcomer Program Updates

Elementary newcomer supports have been refined to strengthen early access to language development and core academic instruction. During the 2024–2025 school year, kindergarten students new to the United States who enrolled in the first semester attended either their EL center-based site or their home attendance center. Beginning in the 2025–2026 school year, all elementary newcomers start at either their EL center-based site or their home attendance center. To support this model, two teachers and two educational support professionals with specialized experience working with newcomers are assigned across five schools. Enrollment patterns are closely monitored to ensure staffing and instructional support are targeted where student needs are greatest.

A primary objective of the SFSD EL program is to equip students with the language skills needed to access the core curriculum and successfully integrate with their non-EL peers. The expansion of co-planning and co-teaching, along with refinements to elementary newcomer programming, directly support this goal.

Costs: \$25,600 for co-planning and co-teaching training and instructional supplies

- LSS Refugee Impact Grant
- Title III Grant
- Migrant Grant

Committee Participation: Throughout the program review, pilot implementation, and professional learning planning, classroom teachers, EL teachers, instructional coaches, administrators, and district leaders participated collaboratively.

Summary: The Sioux Falls School District continues to experience growth in its English Learner population while maintaining a strong focus on English language proficiency, access to grade-level instruction, and timely exit from EL services. Analysis of student outcome data and multi-year program review indicate that co-planning and co-teaching strengthen instructional alignment, accelerate language growth, and improve access to the core curriculum for English Learners. Based on positive quantitative trends and qualitative feedback, the district will expand co-planning and co-teaching as the primary EL service model over the next three years, alongside refinements to elementary newcomer supports. These efforts align with federal guidance and district priorities and are designed to improve academic outcomes for English Learners while benefiting all students.

Administrative Recommendation to the School Board: Acknowledge the update on the English Language Proficiency and programming report.