Multilingual Learners / English Language Learners (ML/ELL) Policy

Draft 3 - Expanded SLT Approval Version | K-12 | Academic Year 2026-27

Policy Owner	ELL Coordinators / SLT
Scope	KG-Grade 12
Review Cycle	Annually
Assessment Framework	WIDA ELD Framework / approved WIDA assessment
Formal WIDA Schedule	Beginning of Year (BOY) and End of Year (EOY), K-12
Data Ownership	Primary and Secondary ELL Coordinators jointly maintain the K-12 ELL/WIDA register.

SLT APPROVAL NOTE: This draft incorporates the agreed Primary and Secondary ELL model. Bell Foundation references, NGRT-based ELL identification and Literacy Lab references have been removed. Secondary Tier 2/3 intervention references the approved National Geographic curriculum/resources. The appendix has been rebuilt around WIDA proficiency levels and classroom implications.

1. Mission and Vision

Yas American Academy is committed to an inclusive, language-rich environment in which multilingualism is recognized as an asset and all students have equitable access to rigorous, grade-level learning.

Multilingual Learners are supported to develop the English proficiency necessary to participate meaningfully and increasingly independently across the curriculum. Language development is a shared responsibility across the school.

2. Purpose

- identify students who may require additional English language development support;
- assess English language proficiency and related access needs;
- determine appropriate Tier 1, Tier 2 or Tier 3 provision;
- ensure continued access to the school curriculum with appropriate language scaffolds;
- monitor language development, curriculum access and response to support;
- determine when direct ELL support should be increased, reduced or discontinued;
- distinguish English language acquisition from literacy difficulties and additional learning needs;
- establish clear responsibilities for leadership, ELL Coordinators, teachers, Inclusion, administration, families and students; and
- ensure consistent K-12 documentation, communication and review.

Phase-specific procedures may differ between Elementary and Secondary while remaining aligned to this common K-12 policy.

3. Definitions

Multilingual Learner (ML): A student acquiring the language of instruction who requires additional support to address a language barrier to access and attainment.

English Language Learner (ELL): Within YAA, an ML identified as requiring additional English language development support. Not every multilingual student requires ELL provision.

English Language Development (ELD): Explicit and intentional development of English across Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing for social, instructional and academic purposes.

English Language Proficiency: A student's current ability to understand and communicate in English across the four WIDA language domains.

Language Development Plan (LDP): YAA's individual plan for students receiving Tier 2 or Tier 3 direct ELL provision.

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4. Guiding Principles

- Multilingualism is an asset; students' home languages, cultures, experiences and prior knowledge are resources for learning.
- All teachers share responsibility for language development across the school day and curriculum.
- Students retain access to rigorous, age-appropriate and grade-level learning. Scaffolding increases access and should not unnecessarily reduce cognitive demand.
- English proficiency and academic attainment are related but distinct. Academic or literacy scores alone do not identify an ELL.
- No single assessment score determines a student's overall need. Identification, provision and exit decisions use multiple sources of evidence.
- English language acquisition alone does not constitute SEND/additional learning need; however, students may have both language-development and additional learning needs.
- Support is responsive to individual need and may increase, decrease or change in focus over time.
- Families are partners in communication, review and support.

5. Identification and Referral

- Students are not identified for ELL provision solely because of home language, nationality, MAP/academic attainment, reading level, phonics/fluency difficulty, teacher impression or SEND status.
- Elementary referral may begin through a documented **Language Concern** and Coordinator review.
- Secondary referral is triggered primarily through teacher observation and professional conversation regarding language acquisition and curriculum access.
- Where significant English-language needs are apparent, including for new or mid-year arrivals, the relevant ELL Coordinator may proceed directly to review and WIDA assessment without requiring a classroom-intervention waiting period.
- Students recommended for small-group ELL intervention because of significant language-acquisition needs receive WIDA assessment to establish a formal language profile.

6. Multiple Sources of Evidence

- WIDA Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing evidence;
- language and educational history;
- classroom observations and teacher evidence;
- student work samples;
- academic/literacy evidence where relevant;
- student response to support and intervention;
- student and family information where relevant.

Literacy and academic assessments answer different questions from English-language proficiency assessment and should be interpreted accordingly.

7. WIDA Assessment and K-12 Schedule

- YAA uses WIDA to understand English-language proficiency across Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing.
- Formal WIDA assessment is administered **twice per academic year across Elementary and Secondary: Beginning of Year (BOY) and End of Year (EOY)**.
- Additional diagnostic WIDA assessment may be administered to newly enrolled or newly referred students when needed to determine appropriate provision.
- Individual domain scores are interpreted rather than relying only on an overall score.
- Formal WIDA administrations are distinct from ongoing classroom and intervention progress monitoring.

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8. Continuum of ELL Provision

Tier	Provision	Core features
Tier 1	Universal / Push-in Language Support	Classroom language-supportive teaching, purposeful scaffolds, push-in support and monitoring as appropriate. No LDP required.
Tier 2	Targeted ELL/ELD	Targeted small-group intervention plus classroom support. LDP required. Secondary may use approved National Geographic curriculum/resources.
Tier 3	Intensive ELL/ELD	More intensive/frequent direct ELD plus substantial classroom language support. LDP required. Secondary may use approved National Geographic curriculum/resources.

Students scoring **below Level 4 in three or more WIDA domains** will ordinarily receive Tier 2 or Tier 3 direct ELL provision. **No rigid WIDA cutoff separates Tier 2 from Tier 3.** The Coordinator determines intensity using the full WIDA profile, curriculum access, educational history, response to support and other relevant evidence.

Students demonstrating Level 4 or above across most domains, together with evidence of increasing independent curriculum access, may move from direct Tier 2/3 intervention to Tier 1 push-in/classroom support.

9. Language Development Plans (LDPs)

- An LDP is required for every student receiving Tier 2 or Tier 3 direct ELL provision.
- Tier 1 students do not require an individual LDP unless the Coordinator determines one is necessary.
- LDPs are stored on the designated shared drive and reviewed as part of the student monitoring cycle.
- LDPs should remain concise, instructional and responsive rather than becoming compliance paperwork.

Minimum LDP content:

- student language profile and WIDA domain evidence;
- priority language-development need(s);
- direct ELL provision and frequency;
- classroom scaffolds/supports;
- measurable language-development goal(s);
- progress evidence and review date;
- next steps or change in provision.

10. Progress Monitoring

- WIDA data is tracked throughout the academic year.
- Between BOY and EOY formal WIDA administrations, teachers and ELL staff conduct ongoing progress monitoring and targeted progress checks.
- Short-cycle monitoring may occur approximately every 4-6 weeks where applicable to the intervention and student need.
- Evidence may include language samples, work samples, classroom observation, curriculum access, literacy/academic evidence where relevant and response to intervention.
- Changes in tier, frequency, goals or support are documented.

11. K-12 ELL/WIDA Register

Primary and Secondary ELL Coordinators jointly maintain the K-12 ELL/WIDA register.

- preserve current placement and longitudinal WIDA history rather than overwriting prior scores;
- record domain scores, assessment dates, tier, LDP status and current provision;
- track family communication, reassessment, movement between tiers, exit and post-exit monitoring;

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- support phase and whole-school analysis of language-development trends and provision.

12. Annual Review and Placement

- All relevant ELL data is formally reviewed at the end of each academic year to inform provision and placement for the following year.
- Movement between tiers may occur during the academic year when evidence demonstrates a meaningful change in need.
- Annual review should consider WIDA development, classroom access, intervention response, teacher evidence and academic/literacy information where relevant.

13. Exit from Direct ELL Provision

- A student may be considered for exit from Tier 2/3 direct ELL provision when they achieve **WIDA Level 4 or above in at least three of the four language domains**.
- Multiple sources of evidence must also indicate that direct English-language intervention is no longer required for successful curriculum access.
- Exit is approved by the relevant Elementary/Primary or Secondary ELL Coordinator.
- Parents/guardians are notified of the change in provision.
- The student is monitored for **one academic year** following exit and continues to receive Tier 1/classroom language support as appropriate.
- Exit from direct provision does not mean a student ceases to be multilingual.

14. ELL and Additional Learning Needs

- English-language acquisition alone does not constitute SEND/additional learning need.
- Multilingual learners should not be referred for additional-needs identification solely because they are developing English.
- Where concerns extend beyond language acquisition, ELL and Inclusion teams collaborate in multidisciplinary review.
- Assessment and intervention evidence should help distinguish language-development needs from literacy, cognitive, attention, communication or other additional learning needs.

15. Family Communication

- Parents/guardians are informed when a student is recommended for Tier 2 or Tier 3 ELL services.
- Communication should explain the identified language-development need, planned provision and significant subsequent changes.
- Families are invited to share relevant language, educational and contextual information.
- Parents/guardians are informed when a student exits direct ELL provision and enters the one-year monitoring period.
- Relevant communication is documented and stored with ELL records.

SLT CONFIRMATION: Current ADEK school policies reviewed for this draft emphasize parent engagement and communication; this review did not identify an explicit ADEK requirement for parental consent before ordinary school-based ELL provision. Because YAA staff recall a previous local practice of calling home for consent, SLT should confirm whether YAA/Aldar has an internal consent requirement before final approval.

16. Teaching and Learning

- explicit teaching of academic and subject-specific vocabulary;
- visuals, realia, modelling, worked examples and multimodal supports;
- structured talk, partner rehearsal and purposeful oral-language opportunities;
- chunked instructions and frequent checks for understanding;

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- sentence frames, word banks and discourse supports when appropriate;
- scaffolded reading and writing without unnecessary reduction in cognitive demand;
- explicit attention to the language functions students need to explain, describe, narrate, justify and argue;
- opportunities to use listening, speaking, reading and writing for authentic academic purposes;
- strategic use of students' home languages and prior knowledge as learning resources where appropriate.

17. Roles and Responsibilities

17.1 Principal / SLT

- Ensure ELL provision is adequately staffed, resourced and included within school improvement and inclusive provision.
- Approve and monitor implementation of the K-12 ELL policy and related procedures.
- Ensure appropriate budget and access to professional learning for staff supporting multilingual learners.
- Ensure leaders use ELL data to monitor access, progress, provision and impact.
- Support appropriate curriculum resources, intervention materials and assessment access.
- Confirm the school/Aldar requirement regarding parent consent versus notification for ELL services.

17.2 Primary ELL Coordinator

- Coordinate Elementary identification, referral review and WIDA administration.
- Determine Tier 1, 2 or 3 provision using WIDA and multiple sources of evidence.
- Ensure Tier 2/3 students have current LDPs and that provision is reviewed regularly.
- Maintain accurate Elementary ELL records and contribute to the joint K-12 ELL/WIDA register.
- Coordinate BOY/EOY WIDA administration and additional assessment for newly referred students as needed.
- Monitor intervention impact, student movement between tiers and exit decisions.
- Provide coaching, modelling, planning support and professional learning for classroom teachers.
- Collaborate with teachers, Inclusion, administration and families.
- Quality assure classroom scaffolding and language-supportive practice through agreed monitoring processes.
- Approve Elementary exit from direct ELL provision and monitor students for one academic year after exit.

17.3 Secondary ELL Coordinator

- Coordinate Secondary identification through teacher observation, professional conversation and review of evidence.
- Coordinate WIDA assessment for students with significant language-acquisition needs and for students entering small-group ELL intervention.
- Determine Tier 1, 2 or 3 provision without using a rigid WIDA cutoff to separate Tier 2 and Tier 3.
- Coordinate targeted/intensive intervention, including approved National Geographic curriculum/resources for Tier 2/3 provision.
- Ensure Tier 2/3 students have current LDPs and that intervention is reviewed regularly.
- Maintain accurate Secondary ELL records and contribute to the joint K-12 ELL/WIDA register.
- Coordinate BOY/EOY WIDA administration and additional assessment for newly referred students as needed.
- Collaborate with content teachers to ensure appropriate in-class scaffolds and access to subject learning.
- Provide staff guidance and professional learning related to multilingual learner access and language development.
- Communicate with families regarding identification, provision, significant changes and exit.
- Approve Secondary exit from direct ELL provision and monitor students for one academic year after exit.

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17.4 Administration / Relevant Secondary Team

- Collect and share appropriate student language and educational history during enrolment and transition processes.
- Refer new or transferring students for immediate Coordinator review when significant English-language needs are apparent.
- Support accurate student records, timetabling and communication required for ELL provision.
- Collaborate with the Secondary ELL Coordinator on placement and scheduling considerations where relevant.

17.5 Classroom and Content Teachers

- Provide high-quality, language-supportive Tier 1 instruction for multilingual learners.
- Know which students receive ELL provision and understand relevant WIDA domain information and agreed classroom supports.
- Embed speaking, listening, reading and writing opportunities within grade-level/subject learning.
- Use appropriate scaffolds such as visuals, modelling, sentence/discourse supports, structured talk and explicit vocabulary teaching.
- Monitor curriculum access and language development and refer sustained language concerns to the ELL team.
- Collect and share relevant evidence during identification, LDP review, tier movement and exit decisions.
- Collaborate with ELL staff regarding planning, intervention, progress and classroom access.
- Maintain high expectations and avoid equating developing English proficiency with low cognitive ability.

17.6 Inclusion Team

- Collaborate with ELL staff when concerns may indicate needs beyond English-language acquisition.
- Help distinguish language acquisition from broader additional learning needs through multidisciplinary review and evidence.
- Ensure multilingual learners with additional learning needs receive coordinated support rather than being served through only one pathway.
- Contribute relevant assessment, intervention and progress information where appropriate.

17.7 Families

- Share relevant information about the student's language background, prior schooling and learning history.
- Participate in communication and review related to ELL provision.
- Support continued language and literacy development in English and/or the home language as appropriate.
- Seek clarification from the school when needed and communicate information that may affect the student's learning.

17.8 Students (age appropriate)

- Understand their language-development goals and the support available to them.
- Participate in goal-setting and review when appropriate.
- Use feedback and classroom supports to build increasing independence.
- Contribute their interests, experiences, home-language resources and learning preferences to the process.

18. Documentation and Records

- referral/review evidence;
- WIDA results and longitudinal domain history;
- tier placement and changes to provision;
- LDPs for Tier 2/3 students;
- progress reviews and intervention evidence;
- family communication;

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- exit decisions and post-exit monitoring.

ELL records are stored in the designated YAA shared drive in accordance with school access and records procedures.

19. Policy Review

Policy Owner: ELL Coordinators / SLT
Review: Annually, or earlier where changes to ADEK requirements or YAA provision require revision.

Detailed assessment administration, phase-specific workflows, intervention resources, progress-monitoring tools and staff guidance are maintained in implementation handbooks/procedures so operational practice can be updated without unnecessarily rewriting the K-12 policy.

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Appendix A - WIDA English Language Proficiency Levels and Classroom Implications

This appendix replaces the previous Bell/EAL descriptor appendix. It is intended as a practical teacher reference aligned to the WIDA English Language Development Standards Framework. The descriptions below are YAA summaries of the WIDA proficiency continuum, not verbatim WIDA descriptors.

Important: WIDA proficiency is domain-specific. A student may demonstrate different levels in Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. Levels should guide scaffolding and instruction, not become fixed labels for students. WIDA describes language development as a continuum, and appropriate scaffolding is assumed at all levels.

1 - Entering

Students are beginning to use English for classroom communication. They may rely heavily on visuals, gestures, familiar routines, single words, memorized chunks and home-language resources. Understanding is strongest when language is concrete and highly supported.

Classroom implications:

• Use visuals, gestures, demonstrations, real objects and predictable routines.

• Preteach a small number of essential words/phrases.

• Allow pointing, matching, drawing, acting, home-language use and other multimodal responses.

• Provide repeated models and short, clearly chunked language.

• Pair with supportive peers and build low-risk opportunities for oral participation.

2 - Emerging

Students can understand and produce growing amounts of familiar English, often through phrases and simple sentences. They can engage with routine academic language when context and supports are clear.

Classroom implications:

• Use sentence starters/frames, labelled visuals, word banks and guided oral rehearsal.

• Break longer texts and directions into manageable parts.

• Model complete responses before independent production.

• Use structured partner talk and frequent comprehension checks.

• Connect new academic language to familiar concepts and previously learned vocabulary.

3 - Developing

Students can use increasingly connected English to communicate ideas and engage with academic content. They are developing greater control of sentences, content vocabulary and organization but still benefit from targeted scaffolds.

Classroom implications:

• Use graphic organizers and structured discussion to support connected ideas.

• Teach academic vocabulary, morphology and common language patterns explicitly.

• Provide models of paragraphs, explanations and subject-specific responses.

• Prompt elaboration with questions such as how, why, compare and explain.

• Gradually reduce supports as students show independence.

4 - Expanding

Students can use more detailed and connected language across a range of academic contexts. They are increasingly able to explain, justify, compare and organize ideas, though complex or unfamiliar tasks may still require support.

Classroom implications:

• Expect participation in grade-level tasks with strategic rather than pervasive scaffolding.

• Support precision in academic vocabulary and more complex sentence/discourse structures.

• Use planning tools for extended speaking and writing when needed.

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• Provide feedback on clarity, organization, register and language choice.

• Increase independence while retaining supports for unfamiliar content or high language demand.

5 - Bridging

Students can use English flexibly for most grade-level academic purposes and across increasingly complex tasks. Remaining needs are often related to nuance, precision, discipline-specific language, register and sophisticated text demands.

Classroom implications:

• Provide grade-level complexity with targeted support rather than simplified work.

• Teach nuance, idiomatic/discipline-specific language and precise word choice.

• Support synthesis across texts, evidence-based argument and extended academic writing.

• Use feedback to refine style, cohesion, register and precision.

• Monitor for isolated domain needs rather than assuming uniform proficiency.

6 - Reaching

Students demonstrate English language performance comparable to the expectations represented at the upper end of the WIDA continuum for their grade-level context. They may still develop new disciplinary language as academic demands change.

Classroom implications:

• Provide full access to grade-level academic language and curriculum demands.

• Continue explicit teaching of sophisticated disciplinary language expected of all learners.

• Use normal classroom differentiation rather than ELL-specific simplification unless a specific domain need remains.

• Recognize that language development continues as content, genres and expectations become more complex.

Using WIDA Descriptors Responsibly

- Use the student's actual domain profile rather than assigning one global label.
- Interpret proficiency in relation to grade-level expectations and the language demands of the task.
- Use descriptors to identify what students can already do and what scaffold will enable the next level of participation.
- Do not lower cognitive expectations simply because a student is developing English.
- Use multiple evidence when determining tier placement, movement between tiers or exit from direct provision.

Appendix B - SLT Approval Record

Draft presented for approval: _____ Date: _____

Decision: Approved / Approved with amendments / Further review required

Parent communication requirement confirmed as: Notification only / Consent required / Other: _____

Approved by: _____ Role: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Amendments / notes

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