

High School Credit and English Learners

Please note that this guidance is not meant to supersede federal and state regulations regarding English learners nor provide exhaustive guidance. Local contexts may impact individual circumstances, and educators needing technical assistance may contact the Office of English Learner and Migrant Education for further guidance

What is the purpose of this document?

The course and credit requirements for earning a high school diploma apply to all Indiana students, including English learners. Indiana schools may utilize the information within this document as guidance to appropriately offer credit to ensure that English learners are immediately earning credit toward graduation, placed in appropriate grade levels and courses with support, and develop college and career readiness.

How does a school provide equal access for English learners?

- First and foremost, English learners must be enrolled in credit-bearing courses to meet graduation requirements.
- As with all students, English learners are expected to graduate in four years.
- English learners cannot be denied access to an education due to language.
- A public school must comply with its legal obligation under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which requires schools to take affirmative steps to ensure that students with limited English proficiency can meaningfully participate in educational programs and services. This includes federally Lau required (1974) English language development.

What must a school consider when enrolling a student?

- Per IC 20-33-2-3, children less than 18 years of age and who intend to remain in Indiana for 30 days, must be enrolled in school.
- Students do not “age out” of the right to an education.
- Children cannot be denied enrollment for lacking a birth certificate, not being a citizen see <http://www.doe.in.gov/student-services/attendance/memos-and-forms>.
- Students over 18 years of age, including English learners, have a constitutional right to attend school until they receive a high school diploma. Receipt of a High School Equivalency Diploma (HSE) is not equivalent to a high school diploma and does not extinguish the right to earn a high school diploma.

- If a school determines an adult student should attend school in an alternate setting such as online credit recovery or evening classes, then this setting must allow the student the opportunity to earn credit toward graduation. For example, a student might be required to attend adult education classes rather than high school, but this student cannot be denied the right to attend school and earn a diploma. Per the Compulsory School Attendance law, a student is required to attend school until the age of 18. This code does not specify an age of which they can no longer attend.
- Although supplemental funding for EL is only provided for students aged 3-21, students maintain the right to continue to attend until they have earned a diploma.
- Per IC 20-30-9-8, students *“shall, if graded classes are used, be placed, to the extent practicable, in classes with students of approximately the same age and level of educational attainment, as determined after considering the attainment through the use of all necessary languages.”*

What is the difference between an accommodation and a modification?

A **modification** is made when the general education curriculum is altered or the performance level expectation of the students is changed. An **accommodation** is a support or service that is provided to help a student fully access the general education curriculum. Accommodations do not reduce expectations for learning, but rather they change how the content is taught, made accessible, and/or assessed.¹

The Office of Civil Rights, per Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, states that “state educational agencies and school districts share a dual obligation to provide English learner students language assistance programs as well as assistance in other areas of the curriculum where their equal participation may be impaired by academic deficits incurred while they are learning English.”² Schools must maintain high expectations for English learners by teaching the Indiana Academic Standards, in conjunction with the WIDA English language development (ELD) standards. Teachers shall not modify the teaching and learning by removing the responsibility to learn the appropriate grade level academic standards. However, schools must provide meaningful access to the general education curriculum through differentiated supports and multiple methods for students to demonstrate their understanding of the content.

Full implementation of Indiana’s adopted WIDA English language development (ELD) standards framework is one component of providing meaningful access to the general education curriculum for English learners. WIDA states that “the components of WIDA’s framework interact and influence each other in the design of curricula, language instruction, and assessment of language learners.”³ The WIDA ELD standards and framework requires teachers to teach the same grade-level standards to all students but emphasizes how language production and instructional supports will vary by student.

¹ This language is consistent with definitions provided for modifications and accommodations for students with disabilities per the Statewide Assessment Resource Guide and Toolkit, July 2014 Revision
<http://www.doe.in.gov/sites/default/files/assessment/accommodations-resource-guide-and-toolkitrevised-july-2014.pdf>

² <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-el-201501.pdf>

³ <https://www.wida.us/get.aspx?id=540>

What accommodations and instructional support must a school provide for English Learners?

Sections 1111(b)(1) and 31111(b)(2)(C)(ii) of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and Indiana’s ESEA Flexibility Waiver require Indiana to adopt college and career ready English language development (ELD) standards. Indiana adopted the WIDA ELD standards in 2013 to meet these requirements.

WIDA standards and framework must be utilized for all English learners in all subjects by all teachers. These standards provide the framework for all levels of English learners to develop academic language in the content areas and demonstrate the appropriate classroom supports provided by classroom teachers.

Visit www.wida.us to view the framework and the appropriate supports for English learners at varying levels of English proficiency in order to maintain academic rigor while learning English. Educators may wish to view the [PreK-Grade 5](#) and [Grades 6-12](#) frameworks within WIDA’s download library at <https://www.wida.us/downloadLibrary.aspx>.

A wide range of accommodations and instructional supports will need to be utilized in a classroom to ensure equal access for English learners while still providing the opportunity to earn credit toward graduation, as long as the respective Indiana Academic Standards are still being taught in the course. Students must have meaningful access to the content. The school must take action to ensure that the language barrier does not impede participation. Local school corporations will likely need to provide additional professional development to teachers in order to maintain academic rigor in a classroom by teaching the respective Indiana Academic Standards while providing the appropriate supports for English learners at varying levels of language proficiency.

Accommodations on state assessments, such as ISTEP+, IREAD, and ECAs, can be found at <http://www.doe.in.gov/assessment> in Appendix C.

Sample graphic, sensory, and interactive supports can be found on RG-21 of WIDA’s Resource Guide at <https://www.wida.us/get.aspx?id=4>.

WIDA’s Can Do Descriptors provide a concise, global overview of language expectations for each level of language proficiency. The Can Do Descriptors can be found in WIDA’s download library at <https://www.wida.us/downloadLibrary.aspx>

Document Title	Format
I-PRODEP & I-PRUEDE Field Test and Standard Setting Study Technical Brief	PDF
Can Do Name Charts	PDF
PreK-K Can Do Descriptors	PDF
Grades 1-2 Can Do Descriptors	PDF
Grades 3-5 Can Do Descriptors	PDF
Grades 6-8 Can Do Descriptors	PDF
Grades 9-12 Can Do Descriptors	PDF
PreK-Grade 12 Can Do Descriptors	PDF
Can Do Research Brief	PDF

A sample Individual Learning Plan, which encompasses the state approved accommodations and instructional modifications, can be found in the EL Guidebook at www.doe.in.gov/elme

How can a school offer credit?

Per Indiana State Approved Course Titles and Descriptions found at <http://www.doe.in.gov/ccr/course-titles-and-descriptions>, each course must be consistent with the Indiana Academic Standards for the respective course. Local school corporations and classroom teachers have the flexibility to determine instructional decisions, implementation, and assessment regarding the standards for each course. This flexibility allows for teachers across the state, and even within the same building, to use varying styles but still offer credit toward graduation to students by teaching the state approved Indiana Academic Standards.

	1) Pass an Indiana Approved Course	2) Award Credits Based upon Transfer Transcripts	3) Demonstrate Current Proficiency without Completing Coursework
A student may receive high school credit in order to meet graduation requirements by	✓	✓	✓

1) Pass an Indiana Approved Course

A student may receive credit by passing an approved course.

Per 511 IAC 6.1-5-4.5, the course titles listed in Indiana State Approved Course Titles and Descriptions found at <http://www.doe.in.gov/ccr/course-titles-and-descriptions>, along with approved non-standard course waivers, are the only course titles that may be offered for high school credit in order to meet the graduation requirements established by the Indiana State Board of Education under 511 IAC 6-7 and 511 IAC 6-7.1⁴.

2) Award Credits Based upon Transfer Transcripts

A student may receive transfer credit from other schools, including from other states and countries.

Indiana high schools should make every effort possible to transfer credits for students enrolling from other countries. The IDOE recommends that the school attempt to obtain a list of content area course descriptions from the native country (in English) to determine the content equivalence of courses.

⁴ [511 IAC 6-7.1-1 \(d\)](#)

"Credit" means demonstration of proficiency against the academic standards in a course that meets the following requirements:

- (1) The course is an approved course and complies with the approved course description.
- (2) For those courses for which Indiana academic standards are defined, the course is consistent with Indiana academic standards.
- (3) For those courses for which there is a Core 40 end of course assessment, the required proficiency is at or greater than that required to pass the assessment.

Multiple credit may not be awarded for the same course unless the approved course description permits multiple credits to be awarded.

The following courses from the home country may count as Indiana **World Language credit**:

- English development classes
- Language arts classes in the native language (i.e. literature, writing in the native language)

In order to receive **English/Language Arts credit**, a course from the native country must meet the intent of *Indiana's Academic Standards for English/Language Arts* for secondary-level performance on reading, writing, speaking and listening skills and processes. In order to receive **Mathematics credit**, a course from the native country must meet the intent of *Indiana's Academic Standards for Indiana's Academic Standards for Mathematics*. In order to receive credit in **other content area disciplines**, a course from the native country must meet the intent of the Indiana Academic Standards for the respective courses.

- The number of credits awarded for each course may vary. The number of credits awarded should be determined by locally established transfer credit policy.
- Schools may administer available final exams or End of Course Assessments to students in order to determine placement and/or verify proficiency in the content. For more information about credit by proficiency, please contact the Office of College and Career Readiness or the Office of Student Services.

Awarding credits based on transfer transcripts is a local decision. Every effort should be made to honor credit and achievement from the student's previous schooling or current performance. This may involve the use of hired translators, school staff, district staff, family discussions, research into previous schooling systems, or a combination of the above.

Services are available, for a fee, to professionally translate and evaluate transcripts. However, schools are not required to professionally translate or evaluate transcripts.

For specific information regarding how international grades might transfer to a U.S. grading system, as well as an in-depth explanation of the various educational systems around the world, please go to the *World Education Services (WES)** website. The grades shown on these charts have been taken from the most commonly used grading scales from each country.

<http://www.wes.org/gradeconversionguide/mexico.htm>

Example: A student is transferring to an Indiana high school after completing high school coursework in Mexico. The school may utilize hired translators, bilingual school staff, and the student's family to interpret the previous transcript to be able to honor credit and report achievement/grades from the student's previous school(s). This will increase the likelihood the student graduates on time, which will be a benefit to the student and accountability systems.

3) Demonstrate Current Proficiency without Completing Coursework

Per IC 20-36-5-1⁵, students may receive high school credit in multiple ways, including using alternatives to traditional seat time. The school should honor the student's current proficiency in order to place students in appropriate classes that meet the needs of the student and increase the likelihood of on-time graduation.

Most students will be able to demonstrate proficiency in order to receive credit. For instance, students transferring from another country will often speak another language and can receive credit for native language skills by utilizing the World Language approved course titles, including the World Language course title, Other, for the description of low incidence languages. A school may wish to use a local or third-party assessment for the student to demonstrate proficiency, such as [ACTFL Assessment of Performance Toward Proficiency in Languages](#), which has assessments in many languages.

Students with demonstrated literacy skills in English and a foreign language may also qualify for the state certificate of biliteracy, per IC 20-30-14.5. The certificate of biliteracy:

- encourages students to study languages
- provides employers with a method of identifying students with biliteracy skills
- provides postsecondary institutions with an additional method to recognize applicants for admission; and
- prepares students with twenty-first century skills

Example: A student is transferring to an Indiana high school after completing previous schooling in China, but the student does not have a transcript or the transcript is incomplete. In an interview with the student and her family, the student has previous schooling that might be comparable to some state approved courses found at <http://www.doe.in.gov/ccr/course-titles-and-descriptions>. The high school administers several locally created end of course assessments/course finals to the student, utilizing approved accommodations if the student has a disability or is an English learner. The student demonstrates proficiency to show that previous learning or schooling has met the intent of Indiana's academic standards. The high school offers credit via this method by utilizing the grade received on the end of course assessment and keeps locally developed documentation to verify the issuance of credit. Note: It is recommended that credit earned using alternative methods should be documented in the same way as it would if using traditional seat time on the high school transcript.

⁵ IC 20-36-5-1

Receiving credits by demonstrating proficiency; methods

Sec.1. A student shall receive credits toward graduation or an academic honors diploma by demonstrating the student's proficiency in a course or subject area required for graduation or the academic honors diploma, whether or not the student has completed course work in the subject area, by any one (1) or more of the following methods:

- (1) Receiving a score that demonstrates proficiency on a standardized assessment of academic or subject area competence that is accepted by accredited postsecondary educational institutions.
- (2) Receiving a high proficiency level score on an end of course assessment for a course without taking the course.
- (3) Successfully completing similar course at an eligible institution under the postsecondary enrollment program under IC 21-43-4.
- (4) Receiving a score of three (3), four (4), or five (5) on an advanced placement examination for a course or subject area.
- (5) Other methods approved by the state board.

How can a school award credit through the English as a New Language (ENL) Course?

According to the Indiana State Approved Course Titles and Descriptions, the ENL course can be utilized as either:

- English/language arts credit (1012) if the course addresses Indiana’s Academic Standards for English/language arts
- World language arts credit (2188) if the course addresses Indiana’s Academic Standards for World Languages **AND** is taken concurrently with another English/language arts credit, up to four (4) credits accrued may count as World Language credits for the General, Core 40, Core 40 with Academic Honors and Core 40 with Technical Honors diplomas.

The school must decide which credit to offer, either English/language arts or World Language, prior to the student taking the course. The teacher must utilize the appropriate standards aligned to the respective courses during the completion of the course. If a school receives a transfer student with an ENL course on the student record, the receiving school shall utilize the state course codes (1012, 2188, etc.) in order to determine the credit received.

In order to maintain equal access to the general education curriculum as required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the school must ensure the student has access to the appropriate coursework in his/her high school career, including the **eight credits** in English/language arts required for graduation by the State Board of Education.

Additional Credit Suggestions for English Courses in Course Titles and Descriptions

Schools may design a course schedule for newcomers or entering students (i.e. Level 1) where language instruction program courses are *temporarily* emphasized (i.e. one year) over other subjects. However, Office of Civil Rights policy requires schools to provide appropriate assistance in order to remedy academic deficits that may have occurred in other subjects while the student was focusing on learning English.⁶ As a reminder, newcomer English learners are entitled to equal access to the content and a full range of district programs, regardless of the type of language instruction program or model in which they participate.

For examples of exemplary programs for newcomer students, please visit The Center for Applied Linguistics website at <http://www.cal.org/what-we-do/projects/newcomer>.

⁶ <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-el-201501.pdf>

The following two courses provide credit opportunities, in addition to the ENL Course, for schools to provide language instruction courses to meet the needs of English learners per the [Indiana High School Course Titles and Descriptions](#). These courses are suggestions and do not represent an exhaustive list of suggested courses.

1010

(LANG LAB)

Language Arts Lab is a **supplemental** course that provides students with individualized or small group instruction designed to support success in completing course work aligned with the *Indiana Academic Standards for English Language/Arts* focusing on the writing standards. **All students should be concurrently enrolled in an English course** in which class work will address **all** of the Indiana Academic Standards.

- Recommended Grade Level: Grades 9-12
- Recommended Prerequisites: None
- Credits: 1-8 elective credits. This course allows for successive semesters of instruction for students who need additional support in any or all aspects of the writing standards.

1120

(DEV READNG)

Developmental Reading is a **supplemental** course that provides students with individualized instruction designed to support success in completing course work aligned with the *Indiana Academic Standards for English/Language Arts* focusing on the Reading Standards for Literature and Nonfiction. **All students should be concurrently enrolled in an English course** in which class work will address **all** of the Indiana Academic Standards.

- Recommended Grade Level: Grades 9-12
- Recommended Prerequisites: None
- Credits: 1-8 elective credits. This course allows for successive semesters of instruction for students who need additional support in vocabulary development and reading comprehension.

Sample Support Flowchart

Step 1

For a student enrolling in Indiana whose home language survey indicates another language, administer the English proficiency placement test to determine the student's current level of English proficiency. For students transferring from another Indiana school or a WIDA state (see www.wida.us), obtain the annual English proficiency results to determine the student's current level of English proficiency.

Step 2

Determine the credits to award the student via transfer transcripts, completed courses, and/or demonstration of proficiency (i.e. local course finals).

Step 3

Utilize the awarded credits and the results of the English proficiency assessments to determine the appropriate English course and other content area disciplines, with support. All English learners need to be enrolled in credit bearing courses, including an English/language arts course.

Step 4

Ensure that all limited English proficient students are provided with their Lau required (1974) English language development services.

Step 5

Regularly evaluate each English learner's programming to ensure students are on-track to graduate. Revise support as needed based upon the results of the English proficiency assessment, student progress, family feedback, and teacher input.