Definition of an English Learner (EL)

An English Learner is a Kindergarten through twelfth grade student who has a primary or home language other than English and who is not yet proficient in English as measured by a standardized assessment.
Definition of ESOL

ESOL (English to Speakers of Other Languages) is the name of the language assistance program that is provided to English Learners.
A student is considered to have a disability under the The Education for All Handicapped Children Act (P.L. 94-142) of 1975 and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (P. L. 101-476) if the child meets the eligibility criteria in at least one category AND needs special education and related services.
Definition of Special Education

Special Education is the program that provides students with disabilities specially designed instruction and related services that meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment and independent living.
13 Categories of Eligibility

- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Deafblind
- Deaf/hard of hearing
- Emotional and Behavioral Disorder
- Intellectual Disability (mild, moderate, severe, profound)
- Orthopedic Impairment
- Other Health Impairment
- Significant Developmental Delay
- Specific Learning Disability
- Speech-Language Impairment
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Visual Impairment

Today, we will focus on the language based eligibilities, but it is important to note that any of these eligibilities can be applicable for EL students.

Georgia Categories of Eligibility
Dually-Identified

“The fact that an EL has a disability does not replace the need for language assistance. The plan for continuing to provide language assistance and support should be delineated in the student’s Individual Education Plan (IEP). *It is important to ensure that ELs are dually served through both programs.* If, due to the student’s significant cognitive disabilities, it is determined that another means of support will be more beneficial to him/her, the IEP committee, [which should include the ESOL teacher] must work together to determine the most effective plan for the student.”

EL/SWD’s in Walton County Schools

Nationwide, EL’s with disabilities are most likely to be classified as having a Specific Learning Disability or Speech-Language Impairment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># of EL/SWD per school</th>
<th>Specific Learning Disability</th>
<th>Other Health Impairment</th>
<th>Significant Development Delay</th>
<th>Speech or Language Impairment</th>
<th>Autism</th>
<th>Mild Intellectual Disability</th>
<th>Emotional/Behavioral Disorder</th>
<th>Orthopedic Impairment</th>
<th>Traumatic Brain Injury</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ARES</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BCES</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HES</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LES</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MES</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WGES</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WPES</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMS</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LMS</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YMS</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LHS</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAHS</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WGHS</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Misconceptions and Misidentification

It can be difficult to distinguish students who truly have learning disabilities from students who are failing for other reasons, such as:

- having limited or interrupted education prior to arriving in US
- being Migrant or Homeless and missing critical instruction due to frequent school changes
- living in poverty that leads to limited background experiences
- having limited English proficiency
### Characteristics of Typical ELs Which May Be Mistaken as Signs of a Disability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Issues (What it may seem like)</th>
<th>Reason Difficulty Seen in Typical ELLs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Learning difficulties</td>
<td>ELLs often have difficulty with grade-level academic language and concepts because it takes at least five years for nonnative speakers to display native-speaker like functioning in academics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language disorder</td>
<td>Lack of fluency and correct syntax is a natural part of learning a new language. Students may require more “wait time” as they process an utterance in one language and translate into another. This “wait time” may be misinterpreted as a language processing issue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attention and memory problems</td>
<td>ELLs may have difficulty paying attention and remembering if they cannot relate new information to their previous experiences in their respective cultures. ELLs may also be experiencing exhaustion due to the task of learning in a language in which they are not yet proficient.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Withdrawn behavior</td>
<td>When students are learning a new language and adapting to a new culture a “silent period” is normal. Also, this behavior might be appropriate in the student’s culture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggressive behavior</td>
<td>The student may not understand appropriate school behavior and language in the US. Also this behavior may be appropriate in the students’ culture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social and Emotional problems</td>
<td>When students are learning to live in a new culture and using a new language, social and emotional problems often develop.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Avoiding Under-Identification

Even though it takes time to learn a language, we need to recognize that some ELs, just as students in the English-speaking population, do in fact have disabilities that may make them eligible for special education.

Possible reasons for initiating a special education referral for an EL:

- The EL is exhibiting the same difficulties in both first and second languages.
- The ESOL teacher states that the EL is performing differently from his/her cultural peers.
- The EL displays very little or no academic progress even after receiving appropriate instructional strategies, alternative instruction, or academic interventions.
- The EL’s parents confirm the academic/behavioral difficulties seen in the school setting.
Which disability Categories are EL’s most likely to be identified as?

Specific Learning Disability

A disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations...

(ii) Specific learning disability does not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities, of mental retardation, of emotional disturbance, or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.

34 CFR 300.8(c)(10)
A child has a specific learning disability if:

The child does not achieve adequately for his/her age or to meet state-approved grade-level standards in one or more of the following areas... when provided with learning experiences and instruction appropriate for the child’s age or grade:

- Oral expression
- Listening comprehension
- Written expression
- Basic reading skills
- Reading fluency skills
- Reading comprehension
- Mathematics calculation
- Mathematics problem solving

Could difficulty in any of these areas be related to lack of English proficiency???
Determination of Eligibility for Learning Disability

A child may not be determined to be eligible under this part if—

(1) The determinant factor for that eligibility determination is—

   (i) Lack of instruction in reading or math;
   or
   (ii) Limited English proficiency
Language Acquisition or Learning Disability?

- To a large extent, determining whether an English language learner has a learning disability is a process of elimination.
- There are no tests that can definitely tell us whether the student has LD.
- Therefore it’s important to...
  - Understand the second language acquisition process
  - Know possible characteristics associated with LD
  - Look at the quality of instruction and students’ opportunities to learn
5 STAGES OF LEARNING A SECOND LANGUAGE

PRE-PRODUCTION (0-6 MONTHS)
-Non-verbal; draws and points

EARLY PRE-PRODUCTION (6 MONTHS TO 1 YEAR)
-Limited comprehension; 1-2 word responses

SPEECH EMERGENCE (1 TO 3 YEARS)
-Simple sentences; good comprehension; grammar errors

INTERMEDIATE FLUENCY (3 TO 5 YEARS)
-Excellent comprehension; few grammatical errors

ADVANCED FLUENCY (5 TO 7 YEARS)
-Native level of speaking; understands figurative language
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behaviors Associated w/ LD</th>
<th>Behaviors Associated with Acquiring an L2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty following directions</td>
<td>Difficulty following directions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty with phonological awareness</td>
<td>Difficulty distinguishing between sounds not found in L1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slow to learn sound-symbol correspondence</td>
<td>Confusion with sound-symbol correspondence when different than in L1 and difficulty pronouncing sounds not found in L1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty remembering sight words</td>
<td>Difficulty remembering sight words when word meanings are not understood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty retelling a story in sequence</td>
<td>May understand more than able to convey in L2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confused by figurative language</td>
<td>Confused by figurative language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slow to process challenging language</td>
<td>Slow to process challenging language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May have poor auditory memory</td>
<td>May have poor auditory memory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May have difficulty concentrating</td>
<td>May have difficulty concentrating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May seem easily frustrated</td>
<td>May seem easily frustrated</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Collaboration is Key!

The Collaborative Relationship
Why Collaborate?

- **ESOL Teachers** are typically taught to provide instruction that addresses language-learning needs, usually with limited preparation in working with students with disabilities.

- **Special Educators** are prepared to design programs that address needs associated with a disability but often have limited coursework or skills in second language acquisition and strategies designed to improve outcomes for ELs.

- **General Educators** may be well versed in standards-based curriculum and instruction but may have had limited opportunities to learn about special populations.
Best Practices for EL/SWD Students

- Slow it down
- Rephrase, paraphrase and simplify
- Academic language frames - oral and written
- Repetition
- Explain idioms and slang
- Small group and partner work
- Graphic organizers

- First language support when available
- Visual supports
- Word banks
- Read aloud all directions, tests, and activities
- Give one step or two step directions, both in writing and orally
Universal Design
Universal Design for Learning

“UDL is part of a larger movement of universal design, which works to increase access for all through designs that—from the beginning—consider needs of diverse people, not just adapting when a situation requires it. For teachers, UDL means designing your instruction with accessibility in mind—regardless of whether you’ve been approached by a student who may ‘require’ such adjustments.”
Three Core Principles of UDL

**Representation:**
Provide information in more than one format

**Action & Expression:**
Provide multiple options for learners to interact with the material and to show what they have learned

**Engagement:**
Offer different types of motivators and ways to sustain learners’ interest
Why UDL?

In December of 2015, the United States Congress passed the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). This general K-12 education law defines and endorses Universal Design for Learning. ESSA used the same definition of UDL found in the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2009:

*Universal Design for Learning (UDL)* means a scientifically valid framework for guiding educational practice that -- (A) provides flexibility in the ways information is presented, in the ways students respond or demonstrate knowledge and skills, and in the ways students are engaged; and (B) reduces barriers in instruction, provides appropriate accommodations, supports, and challenges, and maintains high achievement expectations for all students, including students with disabilities and students who are limited English proficient.
Hattie’s Visible Learning (2009, 2016)

- 15 years of research into the influences on achievement in school-aged students
- Identified the most important factors in effective learning
- The study aggregated, correlated and ranked those factors that most improved learning outcomes

“Know Thy Impact”
- John Hattie
Cooperative Learning
Home Environment
Ability Grouping
Homework
Teacher Expectations of Students
Vocabulary Instruction
What is Effect Size?

- Used to determine the efficacy of an intervention or educational practice relative to a comparison approach.
- Not only does the effect size indicate if an intervention works, but it also predicts the impact.
- An effect size of 0.40 is regarded as *average* or *typical*.
- Another way of interpreting an effect size is in terms of a year’s growth. Meta-analysis experts Glass, McGaw, and Smith (1981) stated that an effect size of 1.0 can be interpreted as roughly one year’s growth in achievement.
- A negative effect size would mean that the experimental group actually performed worse than the control group did.
**Table Activity**

- Rank the effect size on Student achievement
- Use the Hattie Activity Sheet
- Decide:
  - Low Impact? <0.40
  - Medium Impact? 0.40-0.60
  - High Impact? 0.60-0.80
  - Off The Chart? > 0.80
Off the Charts

- Collective Teacher Efficacy 1.57
- Student Expectations 1.44
- Providing Formative Evaluation 0.90
- Micro-Teaching 0.90
- Classroom Discussion 0.82
HIGH IMPACT

- Feedback 0.75
- Clarity of Goals 0.75
- Reciprocal Teaching 0.74
- Teacher-Student Relationships 0.72
- Metacognitive Strategies 0.71
- Vocabulary Instruction 0.67
- Homework – High School 0.64
- Teaching Learning (e.g. reading) strategies 0.62
- Comprehension Strategies 0.60
Medium Impact

- Direct Instruction 0.59
- Cooperative Learning 0.59
- Providing worked examples 0.57
- Home Environment 0.52
- Teacher Expectations of Students 0.43
- Inquiry-Based Teaching 0.31
Low Impact

- Homework – Middle School 0.30
- Teaching Test-taking and Coaching 0.27
- Reducing Class Size 0.21
- Matching Teaching with Learning Styles 0.17
- Homework – Elementary School 0.15
- Ability Grouping 0.12
- Teacher Knowledge of Subject Matter 0.09
- Retention -0.13
Great care should be taken when referring and evaluating an English Learner for possible special education.

Coming Soon!
**IEP Checklist for EL/SWD**

Once a student has been identified as both EL and SWD, there are extra steps to consider when developing the student’s IEP:

1) **Mark “English Learner”** under the Special Considerations tab in GOIEP.
2) **Mark either ACCESS or Alternate ACCESS and accommodations as appropriate** under State Assessment tab.
3) **If the student will not participate in ESOL and will receive language support through Special Education**, include references to English proficiency in the Goals section.
Collaboration Time!

Staff (SEIS, SpEd teacher, ESOL teacher, SLP) from each school meet as a group to create a profile of each EL/SWD that you share.