

New English Language Proficiency (ELP) Standards

Limited English Proficiency (LEP) students in West Virginia are defined as students, ages 3-21, who were not born in the United States or whose native language is a language other than English. Fayette County currently has (23?) students who are defined as LEP. As such, they are provided additional support in the area of language and tested yearly on the WESTELL test until they demonstrate sufficient proficiency to no longer need support.

In addition to the regular classroom standards for various content areas the same as all other students, LEP students have English Language Proficiency (ELP) standards. These standards specify language skills that support learning in all academic subjects. West Virginia has approved new standards which will go into effect on July 1, 2014. They are separated into three areas for each grade level: Oral (listening/speaking), Reading, and Writing.

Four key features of the new standards are:

1. They correspond with all other standards
2. They are streamlined and strategically selected
3. There is added emphasis on two-way, interactive communication
4. There are user-friendly tools that support English Language Learners and content area lesson planning

New standards were developed because state college and career-ready standards contain increased language demands and the existing standards were not shown to be effective in supporting student performance on English Language Arts and mathematics assessments. In addition, there is a renewed interest in using ELP standards and assessments to measure the academic language proficiency needed for content areas.

What are the goals of the new ELP standards?

1. To create fewer, clearer standards with strategic correspondences to Next Generation standards for all content areas
2. To acknowledge and address the unique language acquisition needs of English Language Learners (ELL)
3. To ensure that a student's English language development does not interfere with his or her access to grade-appropriate content and practices.
4. To require a shift from "What language does the student have?" to "What is the student able to do with the language in the content areas?"

Six sets of ELP standards:

Kindergarten
Grade 1
Grades 2-3
Grades 4-5

Grades 6-8

Grades 9-12

These new standards require that students engage with complex texts to build knowledge across the curriculum; use evidence to inform, argue, and analyze; work collaboratively, understanding multiple perspectives, and presenting ideas; as well as use and develop linguistic resources to do all of the items mentioned previously.

Fayette County will provide support with a part-time teacher to work with LEP students in mastering these new standards. In addition, regular classroom teachers and county coaches and specialists will work with LEP students on language development in the regular classroom setting.