



YAZOO COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT SPECIAL POPULATIONS MANUAL 2025 – 2026

Terri Rhea, Ph.D. – Superintendent
Shundria Shaffer, Ph.D. – Federal Programs Director

Revised July 18, 2025

Topic	Page
Yazoo County School District Referral to Placement Process for ELL Students	3
Registration Procedures	4
Guidelines for Registration	4
Identification of Potential ELL Students	4
Assessment of Language Proficiency	5
ELL Program Placement	5
Special Education Services	6
ELL Grading Guidelines	6
ELL Student Participation in the Mississippi Academic Assessment Program	6
ELL Monitoring Procedures	7
ELL Program Assessment	7
Yazoo County School District Plan Summary	8
Migrant/Immigrant Students	9
Definition	9
Registration	9
Assessment, Parent Notification, Placement, and Evaluation	10
Homeless Students	10
Definition	10
Procedures Regarding Homeless Students	10
Identification.	10
Registration	11
Child-Centered Decision-Making Process	11
Foster Care Students	11
Registration	11
Unaccompanied Youth	11
Definition	11
Procedures for Enrollment	12
MSIS	12

Yazoo County School District Referral to Placement Process for ELL Students

Yazoo County School District is committed to providing a quality education for all students, including those whose first language is one other than English. The instructional goal for the English Language Learners Program is to provide services to ELL students to improve or increase their English proficiency, thus, enabling them to function independently and to participate effectively in the general education academic program.

All English Language Learners receive their primary core curriculum instruction through the general education academic program. As a supplement to general education classroom instruction, ELL students receive scheduled instruction in English as a second language with an emphasis on English language acquisition skills through a software program and educational consultant. Initially, emphasis of the K-5 ELL program is on the teaching of survival language such as following directions and basic conversational English. Support and assistance are provided for ELL students in core curriculum content for general education classroom instruction at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. The level of English Language proficiency and the individual needs of the students determine the frequency and duration of ELL instruction provided to students.

The academic needs of ELL students are met through a variety of instructional strategies. ELL instruction and general education content modifications, with emphasis placed on the development of the four intertwined language modes: listening, speaking, reading and writing are utilized. The use of an internet-based, online language intervention program is available to students at each school site to aid in the acquisition and progression of English proficiency.

A. Step 1: Educational Approach

The district must select a sound educational approach for providing English language development and meaningful program participation for its students.

B. Step 2: Identification

The district is responsible for identifying all students potentially needing ELL Services through the home language survey.

C. Step 3: Assessment

The district is responsible for assessing each identified potential ELL student for English language proficiency.

D. Step 4: Placement into ELL Program Services

The district is responsible for providing its ELL students with a program of service consistent with its chosen educational approach.

E. Step 5: Staffing and Resources

The district is obligated to provide the necessary staff and resources to implement its educational approach.

F. Step 6: Transition from ELL Services

The district utilizes assessment results to determine when a student has sufficient English language proficiency to meaningfully participate in the regular school program.

G. Step 7: Monitoring

The district will ensure that students transitioned from ELL program have the opportunity to fully participate in the education program.

H. Step 8: Program Evaluation

The district will develop evaluation procedures to periodically evaluate and revise, if necessary, its ELL program.

Registration Procedures

A. Guidelines for Registration

1. Proof of Age - A valid birth certificate, a valid passport or other official document listing date and place of birth is required to establish proof of age.
2. Registration Forms - School registration forms are to be completed and filed at the school.
3. Home Language Survey (HLS) Form - District-wide form to be completed and signed by the parents of all new students registering for grades K-12.

Former school records such as a report card or withdrawal form are requested from the parents and/or guardians. If these documents are not available, information relating to the student's records will be requested from the school.

B. Identification of Potential ELL Students

According to ESSA, an ELL is defined as an individual:

- who is aged 3 through 21;
- who is enrolled or preparing to enroll in an elementary school or secondary school;
- who was not born in the United States or whose native language is a language other than English;
- who is a Native American or Alaska Native, or a native resident of the outlying areas; and
- who comes from an environment where a language other than English has had a significant impact on the individual's level of English language proficiency; or
- who is migratory, whose native language is a language other than English, and who comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant; and
- whose difficulties in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language may be sufficient to deny the individual -
 - o the ability to meet the State's proficient level of achievement on State assessments;

- o the ability to successfully achieve in classrooms where the language of instruction is English; or
- o the opportunity to participate fully in society.

Assessment of Language Proficiency

The ELPA21 Dynamic Screener will be used as a screener to determine the student's level of English proficiency.

Yazoo County School District does not have a bilingual model of instruction for ELL students. All ELL students are taught the English language; therefore, ELL students are only assessed for their English language abilities. This assessment is administered according to the age/grade level of the student. Parent consent shall be requested.

- ▶ Each ELL student is assessed for the following:
 - (1) listening
 - (2) speaking
 - (3) reading
 - (4) writing
- ▶ Each school's designated ELL assessment faculty member is responsible for administering the assessment for all ELL students at the school site.

ELL Program Placement

The ELL Support Team shall consist of a school administrator, ELL teacher/consultant, counselor or others as designated by the administrator. The team shall meet within ten days of student's registration to review the student's home language survey and other relevant data/information of the ELL student. Based upon this information, the committee shall make a recommendation concerning the student's placement.

Parents are provided written notice of the committee's recommendation. The process continues as follows:

- ▶ The placement decision is noted on the Language Service Plan, which is placed in the student's cumulative record.
- ▶ Students who are recommended for ELL tutorial services should receive services based on determined needs.
- ▶ Fully English Proficient (FEP) students will be monitored by the ELL faculty member(s)/consultant for four school years following exit and will receive tutoring if the need for such is evidenced.

ELL students are considered for the gifted program, Advanced Placement, dual credit and other advanced courses. ELL students are made aware of vocational courses and extracurricular activities that are available as well. ELL's must receive language supports to assist them in accessing academic content.

Special Education Services

All ELL students in Yazoo County School District will receive special education services on the same basis as English speaking students if they are eligible through IDEA.

Students who are experiencing academic difficulties determined by the ELL Support Committee which is not related to a lack of language proficiency are initially referred to the school-based Teacher Support Team. Students will begin receiving intervention. If interventions are not successful, the referral to placement process as outlined in the Yazoo County School District's Student Handbook is followed.

Assessments, which will be administered to the ELL student, will be presented in the native language of the student when such a test format is available. Another option is testing with an interpreter. The intellectual test of choice for ELL/LEP students is the LEITER International Performance Scales (LIPS-R). This is a test that requires no language and lacks cultural bias.

ELL Grading Guidelines

As students are working to learn English during the initial stages of language acquisition, it is a violation of their Civil Rights to retain them due to limited language proficiency. Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI) and the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974 (EEOA), schools must ensure that ELL students are appropriately placed and can participate equally in educational programs. Districts are required to take steps to ensure that students are not retained solely because they are still in the early stages of learning English. The Yazoo County School District grading scale will be utilized. Students receiving extensive language supports and classroom accommodations will have this information noted on their report cards. Accommodations will be shared with the families of ELL students to ensure that they understand true academic performance in English language proficiency.

ELL Student Participation in the (MAAP) Mississippi Academic Assessment Program

English Language Learners are expected to participate in all aspects of the Mississippi Statewide Assessment System. ELL students are not exempt from testing; however, the Mississippi Department of Education excludes the test scores of students whose progress and proficiency reports indicate that they have been receiving language instruction educational services for one year or less. These students are still calculated in the 95% participation rate, but their scores may be excluded from the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), Achievement and Growth Model calculations for the first year. If districts wish to include the scores of the first-year ELL students in AYP, Achievement and Growth Models, they have to request that scores be included.

ELL students who are working towards a regular diploma and who are enrolled in Algebra I, Biology I, English II and/or U.S. History from 1877 must take the applicable subject area test(s) using only allowable accommodations and meet the standards that are required for graduation.

ELL students who are considered vocational completers due to completion of a two-year vocational program must participate in the MS-CPAS.

Decisions regarding the appropriate accommodations for each testing program or whether a student's scores will be excluded from the statistical summary are addressed in the MDE Testing Accommodations.

There is not a specific time period for students to participate in the ELL program before exiting. A student may participate as long as the need exists.

Although informal assessments (portfolios, logs, journals, checklists, questionnaires, reading and writing exercises, etc.) of ELL students' progress are ongoing, the formal instrument used to assess an ELL student's readiness to exit the ELL program is the required Mississippi Assessment which measures English Language Proficiency. Grades and results from the state-mandated test, Mississippi Assessment Program (MAAP) and EOC Assessments will also be used to determine readiness to exit the ELL Program. In order to exit the ELL Program, ELL students must score a level 4 or 5 on the state mandated English Language Proficiency Assessment.

The ELL Services/Program Exit Form shall be completed and filed in the student's cumulative folder and a written notice must be provided to the parents/guardians.

ELL Monitoring Procedures

Once ELL students exit from the program, ELL teachers/consultants must monitor students' progress for four years. During the years of monitoring, ELL teachers/consultants will monitor students' progress at the end of each nine weeks grading period. As part of the monitoring process, the ELL teacher will use several data points (i.e. subject-area grades, test scores, attendance, patterns of office referrals and teacher-parent-student comments). If the student is not academically successful, the committee shall make an appropriate recommendation.

ELL Program Assessment

Yazoo County School District will evaluate its ELL Program annually. The evaluation process will consist of a review of overall progress, including pre- and post-ELPA21 scores for all ELL students.

The district will also evaluate data to compare long-range academic progress for former ELL students with non-ELL students. Areas of review will include grade point averages, rates of retention, and graduation. The district will report to the Mississippi Department of Education information concerning the identification, placement, and educational progress of ELL students. The program will be modified as indicated by district evaluation results to address the needs of ELL students.

Yazoo County School District Plan Summary

Component 1: Programs/Activities

The Yazoo County School District (YCSD) will continue to differentiate instruction and utilize whole group, small group, and individual instructional strategies to help ELL students become proficient in English. Instructors/consultants will continue to use a variety of teaching resources, materials, and online software to address the students' needs.

Component 2: Mississippi ELL Standards

Teachers/ELL consultants in the YCSD will teach English Language Learners in the regular education program each day to help them become proficient in the English language. They will use the Mississippi English Language Proficiency Standards as outlined by the MDE as a guide for mastery of the English Language by ELL students. Instruction will target the standards at each level.

Component 3: Accountability

Each teacher/ELL consultant is required to test ELL students throughout the school year. ELL teachers/consultants are also required to meet to discuss results and progress levels of ELL students in the instructional process. Tests results and data are used to develop ELL student's Language Proficiency Plan.

Component 4: Parental and Community Involvement

Yazoo County School District's schools will contact parents of ELL students and provide informational sessions to help parents with the education of their children. The school district is working with local IHLs to solicit interpreters and translators to work with parent and students.

Component 5: Collective Consent

All teachers of YCSD are trained on differentiated instruction and effective instructional strategies. With the district's move towards institutionalizing differentiated instruction, all teachers will be better prepared to address the diverse learning needs and learning styles of all students, including students whose first language is not English.

Component 6: Evaluation and Achievement

Teachers/ELL consultants will continue to progress monitor ELL students throughout the school year. The YCSD will use data to determine the program's success and if revisions to the program are necessary. The school district expects ELL teachers/consultants to assist all ELL students in becoming proficient in the English language and master subject area content as indicated by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

Migrant/Immigrant Students

A. Definition

The term "migratory child" is defined in section 1309(2) of the statute and section 200.81(d) of the regulations. According to sections 111S(b)(1)(A) (incorporated into the MEP program by virtue of sections 1304(c)(2)) and 1309(2) of the statute and §§ 200.81(e) and 200.103(a) of the regulations, a child is a "migratory child" and is eligible for MEP services if all of the following conditions are met:

1. The child is not older than 21 years of age; *and*
2. The child is entitled to a free public education (through grade 12) under State law or is below the age of compulsory school attendance; *and*
3. The child is a migratory agricultural worker or a migratory fisher, or the child has a parent, spouse, or guardian who is a migratory agricultural worker or a migratory fisher; *and*
4. The child moved within the preceding 36 months in order to seek or obtain qualifying work, or to accompany or join the migratory agricultural worker or migratory fisher identified in paragraph 3, above, in order to seek or obtain qualifying work; *and*
5. With regard to the move identified in paragraph 4, above, the child:
 1. Has moved from one school district to another; *or*
 2. In a State that is comprised of a single school district, has moved from one administrative area to another within such district; *or*
 3. Resides in a school district of more than 15,000 square miles and migrates a distance of 20 miles or more to a temporary residence to engage in or to accompany or join a parent, spouse, or guardian who engages in a fishing activity. (This provision currently applies only to Alaska.)

B. Registration

Upon review of registration information (Migrant Survey), the school administrator or designee will notify the District ELL Coordinator in writing that the school has a Migrant Student.

- o The District ELL Coordinator will assist the school in the completion of student enrollment, as necessary. The District ELL Coordinator will also contact the Mississippi Migrant Education Program Coordinator to notify him/her that the district has a migrant student. District and school personnel will work with personnel from the Mississippi Migrant Education Program Office to prescribe an appropriate educational program for migrant students identified in the district.
- o The MSIS clerk will request a nine-digit number for MSIS identification.
- o Children without proper immunizations will be enrolled in school and given a grace period of thirty (30) days in which to receive their immunizations and provide the school with documentation.

- o Parents/Guardians will be provided with assistance in securing immunizations and vital records.
- o Students will not be marked as migrant in the SIS until the Mississippi Migrant Education Program Coordinator verifies that the student is migrant.

C. Assessment, Parent Notification, Placement and Evaluation

District and school personnel will follow the same procedures outlined for English language learners to ensure that:

- o Migrant students' English language proficiency and academic proficiency is assessed.
- o Parents/guardians of migrant students will receive notification of the assessment results and program placement.
- o Migrant students will receive appropriate grade and/or language instruction.
- o Migrant students' academic progress is assessed annually.

Homeless Students

A. Definition

The McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth Act provides a definition of homeless children and youths to be used by state and local educational agencies (LEAs). It defines homeless children and youths to be those who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. Under the larger umbrella of lacking a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, the law also provides several examples of situations that meet the definition. The examples include children and youths sharing housing due to a loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason such as:

- o living in hotels, motels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to a lack of alternative adequate housing;
- o living in emergency or transitional shelters;
- o abandoned in hospitals;
- o living in a public or private place not designated for, or normally used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
- o living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar places;
- o Utilities, infestation, mold, and danger should be considered when determining substandard housing
- o living in one of the above circumstances and who are migratory according to the Definition in Section 1309 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 [42 U.S.C. § 11434a(2)]

Procedures Regarding Homeless Students

A. Identification

Upon review of registration information, the school administrator or designee will notify the district Homeless Liaison of the homeless student.

- o Homeless Survey & Interview
- o Consultation with School-based Homeless Liaison

- o Determination of need

B. Registration

District and school personnel will work with parents and guardians to ensure appropriate educational and support services are provided to the student.

Each LEA shall, according to each child's best interest:

- o Continue the student's education in the school of origin for the duration of homelessness, and until the end of the academic year in which the student becomes permanently housed; OR
- o Enroll in any public school that housed students living where the student is living are eligible to attend.

If a dispute arises over eligibility, school selection, or enrollment in a school including full participation:

- o The student shall be immediately enrolled in the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute including all available appeals.
- o The parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth must be provided a written explanation of decisions made by the school, LEA or SEA.

C. Child-Centered; Decision-Making Process

Student-centered factors, including the impact of mobility on achievement, education, health, and safety, shall be considered in the decision-making process.

Foster Care Students

A. Registration

District and school personnel will work with Child Protective Services and foster parents to ensure appropriate educational and support services are provided to the student. In the event that a foster care student seeks enrollment in the district, a Best Interest Determination (BID) will be provided. After signatures are obtained, the BID will be forwarded to the school for enrollment. Enrollment documents will be provided at the school level. This procedure occurs for withdrawing students also.

Unaccompanied Youth

A. Definition

An unaccompanied youth is defined in the McKinney-Vento Act as "a homeless child or youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian." (42 U.S.C. § 11434a(6)). Unaccompanied youth is not considered Homeless unless they fit the

definition of Homeless in the McKinney-Vento Act. If a child or youth who is not in the custody of a parent or guardian, however, has fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, will be enrolled as an Unaccompanied Youth.

B. Procedures for Enrollment

- a. The non-parent(s) claiming district residency must meet residency requirements.
- b. The district resident must provide the school with an affidavit stating his or her relationship to the student, and that the student will be living at his/her abode full time and provide documentation fully explaining the reason(s) (other than school attendance zone or district preference) for this arrangement. The superintendent or his/her designee will make the necessary factual determinations as required under this policy. Examples of situations where "in loco parentis" authority of an adult will be recognized to establish residency of the minor include but are not limited to the following:
 - Death or serious illness of the child's parent(s) or guardian(s);
 - Abandonment of the child;
 - Child abuse or neglect;
 - Unstable family relationships or undesirable conditions in the home of the child's parents or guardians having a detrimental effect on the child;
 - Students enrolled in recognized exchange programs residing with host families.
- c. Whenever appropriate, the person who has assumed responsibility for the care and custody of the child shall be encouraged to obtain legal guardianship of the child.

MSIS

Monthly checks are conducted to ensure that our homeless, migrant, foster, immigrant students are identified appropriately. The schools mark the students in the Student Information System. The federal programs director verifies the information in the SIS in relation to MSIS. The MSIS Coordinator then receives an email verifying that the data is correct.