

San Marcos Unified School District Home Language Survey and English Learner Resource Guide:

Directions to Parents and Guardians:

The California *Education Code* contains legal requirements which direct schools to assess the English language proficiency of students. The process begins with determining the language(s) spoken in the home of each student. The responses to the home language survey will assist in determining if a student's proficiency in English should be tested. This information is essential in order for the school to provide adequate instructional programs and services.

As parents or guardians, your cooperation is requested in complying with these requirements. Please respond to each of the four questions listed on the Home Language Survey as accurately as possible. For each question, write the name(s) of the language(s) that apply in the space provided. Please do not leave any question unanswered.

Why Must Parents Complete the Home Language Survey?

When students in grades Transitional-kindergarten (TK) or Kindergarten through grade twelve first enroll in a California public school, the school district uses a Home Language Survey to determine a student's primary language. This survey is completed by the parents or guardians at the time the student is first enrolled. A student who speaks a language other than English in the home is given the *English Language Proficiency Assessment for California (ELPAC)* to determine the student's level of English.

What is the Purpose of the *English Language Proficiency Assessment for California (ELPAC)*?

The purposes of the ELPAC are the following:

- ◆ To identify students who have limited English language skills and qualify as Limited English Proficient (LEP)
- ◆ To determine LEP students' English language proficiency level
- ◆ To assess the progress of LEP students in acquiring the skills of listening, reading, speaking, and writing in English

What does it mean that my child is an English Learner?

If a student does not yet speak and understand English at a level where they can fully participate in regular instruction taught in English, they should be classified as an English learner (EL). California law requires that school districts provide English learners with additional services to help them gain fluency in English while moving forward with everything else they need to learn.

It's important to realize that English proficiency isn't something that should need to happen before students can access all the other content—science, literature, math, history, art, and all the rest—that their school provides.

How does SMUSD know who is an English Learner?

When a student enrolls in a new school, parents fill out a survey, the Home Language Survey or HLS, that asks what language the student speaks at home. Federal and state laws require that school districts then test the English ability of students whose home language is not English. In California, this is done with the *English Language Proficiency Assessment for California (ELPAC)*. The Home Language Survey identifies likely English learners, these students take the ELPAC and, if their scores indicate that they are not yet proficient enough in English, they are classified as an English learner. This is what entitles the student to extra support.

What is Reclassification?

English learner status should be temporary: Reclassification means that the student has gained command of English and is no longer categorized as an English learner in need of extra support.

How does the district decide if a student should be reclassified?

The state of California requires that every school district decide whether to reclassify students based on four criteria:

1. Results from the *ELPAC*, which all English Learners retake every year
2. A test of “basic skills,” usually as indicated by the general state test (currently the CAASPP), or local measure assessments (such as the *Lexile* reading test).
3. Teacher recommendations
4. Parent opinion and consultation

How long should it take?

The ideal timeline for a student will depend on when they began the program and their level of English proficiency when they started. California considers students “long-term English learners” if they have been in the system for six years or more, are not making progress toward fluency, and are struggling academically.

SMUSD will work with your student to assist him/her to graduate with the skills and experience he/she needs to succeed in college and beyond. Our district will ensure that he/she is learning English at a reasonable pace but also that he/she has access to a strong education while doing so.

What should I do to support my child?

Stay informed. We hope that by understanding the basics of reclassification, as outlined here, you’ll be able to effectively communicate with your child’s school and work together with teachers and school staff to support his/her success.

What is the English Learner Advisory Committee (ELAC)?

The English Learner Advisory Committee is an advisory committee developed to advise the school about programs for English learners students. ELAC advises the School Site Council (SSC) in the development of a Single Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA). ELAC also makes recommendations to the principal and staff about programs for EL students. ELAC assists in data analysis and review of the school’s language census to decide which are the best programs for the EL students, and it will make an effort to raise awareness among parents of the importance of regular school attendance. Finally, ELAC has the responsibility to elect officers, including at least one DELAC representative.

What is DELAC?

The District’s English Language Advisory Committee (DELAC) consists of a group formed by ELAC representatives of each school within the district. The purpose of this committee is to advise the district in regards to the programs destined for EL students and to certify that the district complies with the federal and state norms.