

Problem Solving for English Learners: Best Practices

Concern is brought to the entire team, including:

- Representative of the Student's Family
- Interpreter ([see guidance document](#))
- General Education Teacher
- School Principal or Counselor
- English Learner/Migrant Staff
- School Psychologist
- Teacher Consultant
- Speech Therapist

The entire team should review the [MDE Guidance Handbook for English Learners with Suspected Disabilities](#) prior to beginning this process.

Team gathers information

- Background/history
- WIDA Scores
- Most recent [Language Development Plan](#)
- Applicable WIDA [Can-Do Descriptors](#) (if no LDP)
- Information from previous school(s)
- Information on [bilingual language development](#)
- [Resiliency checklist](#)
- [Acculturation quickscreen](#)
- Specific cultural differences
- [Sociocultural Checklist](#)

Team selects appropriate intervention(s) and progress monitoring tool(s) to match area(s) of concern

- The use of a [dynamic assessment process](#) is best practice
- AIMSweb or a similar tool can be used to identify academic instructional levels/set goals & monitor progress
- WIDA standards can be used to show progress in EL program

Team reviews [this document](#) and prioritizes up to 3 concerns

- Academics
- Behavior
- Attention/organization/work completion
- Communication
- Fine/gross motor
- Language
- Other, as needed

After the intervention period, entire team reconvenes:

- Review data
- Adjust/change intervention if needed
- Repeat the intervention process

When repeated intervention period is complete, entire team reconvenes:

- Review data
- Adjust/change intervention
- Repeat the intervention process

Consider a referral for [a special education evaluation](#) if progress is not evident after several cycles of intervention *and* team has considered the following:

- Individual language development and acquisition of CALP
- Resiliency
- Acculturation Status
- Cultural differences
- Length of exposure to instruction

Sources:

Collier, C. (2011) Seven steps to separating difference from disability

Oakland Schools. (2018) Guidance: Separating Difference from Disability in English Learners who Struggle

Michigan Department of Education (2017). Guidance Handbook for Educators of English Learners with Suspected Disabilities