

## ESL - FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions)

### *What is English as a Second Language?*

The Windham English as a Second Language (ESL) Program is designed to meet the varying needs of students in Kindergarten through grade twelve whose first language is not English or whose parents speak another language in the home.

### *Who are the Windham ESL Students?*

The language and cultural backgrounds of ESL students vary. Many of Windham's ESL students learned another language before learning English and are bilingual; some ESL students communicate at home in both English and another language; some children arrive from another country understanding or speaking little or no English; and some students have had Limited Formal Schooling in their native country.

Students in the program have a variety of languages in their backgrounds including:

Farsi	Russian	Kazhak	Chinese
Kurdish	Greek	Khmer	Polish
Romanian	Bengali	Amharic	Patois
Bosnian	Twi	Maliseet	

### *What is the Lau Plan?*

It is the policy of the Windham School Department to provide equal educational opportunities to all students. Therefore, it is necessary that the school district make an effort to do whatever is educationally appropriate to address the English language and other educational needs of the Limited English proficient student through a specifically designed language support program. The force of legislation, judicial opinion, and administrative regulation protects the rights of this group of students to an equal education through the **Lau Plan** as adopted by the Windham School Board.

### *What do these terms mean?*

1. ACCESS for ELLs™ - Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State to State for English Language Learners used as an annual assessment for K-12 LEP students.
2. ELL - English Language Learner: used to describe a student scoring at Level VI (6) or lower on the ACCESS for ELLs.
3. ESL - English as a Second Language: use of language development support and services to help students who come from a non-English language background learn English in a school setting.
4. FEP - Fluent (Fully) English Proficient: description of students who are capable of functioning in an English-only educational environment in the areas of comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing skills.
5. LAC - Language Assessment Committee: committee with responsibilities that include identifying and ensuring that the language, social, cultural, and educational needs of Non-English Proficient (NEP) and Limited English Proficient (LEP) students are met.
6. Lau Plan: written policy developed by a school district to address the appropriate educational practices for limited English proficient students as a result of the U.S. Supreme Court case of Lau v. Nichols (1974).
7. LEP - Limited English Proficiency: description of students having a primary language other than English in their background who are unable to participate effectively in school when English is the language of instruction.
8. NEP – Non- English Proficient: description of a student who has not had exposure to English.
9. W-APT - WIDA Assessment and Placement Test: used to screen newly enrolled students who have not taken the ACCESS for ELLs to determine eligibility for ESL services.
10. **WIDA – World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment**: a federally-founded assessment and member-state supported consortium including Alabama, Delaware, District of Columbia, Georgia, Illinois, Kentucky, Maine, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New Jersey, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Vermont, Virginia, and Wisconsin.

This consortium has created English language proficiency standards aligned to the Maine Learning Results.

