



Frequently Asked Questions: English as a New Language at Vestal

Q1 Are English as a New Language services offered in every school in the district?

A1 *No. Currently English as a New Language Services are offered only in the following schools: African Road Elementary, Clayton Avenue Elementary, Vestal Hills Elementary, Vestal Middle School, and Vestal Senior High School. Students living in the attendance zones for Glenwood Avenue or Tioga Hills elementary schools who need ENL services will be assigned to one of the three elementary buildings in which those services are offered.*

Q2 Does Vestal offer a bilingual education program?

A2 *No, Vestal does not currently offer bilingual education. State regulations require that school districts create bilingual education programs when they have twenty or more students who speak the same home language at a given grade level. Currently Vestal does not have twenty or more students at any one grade level who speak the same language.*

Q3 Does the school district provide an orientation for the families of English Language Learners who are new to the school district?

A3 *Yes. Parents and guardians are invited to attend an orientation program. This one-hour session is offered in the evening in October. In September, parents/guardians will receive an invitation providing details about the time and place of the meeting. The district's English as a New Language (ENL) teachers will present information about our program and answer any questions that you may have. A copy of this presentation is available on the district's web site.*

Q4 How are students identified as English Language Learners?

A4 *The ENL identification process is prescribed by Part 154 of the New York State Commissioner of Education's regulations. After registering their child for school all parents/guardians complete a Home Language Questionnaire. If a language other than English is reported on that document, then our staff conduct an individual interview with the student and (when possible) his or her parent or guardian. Students are then given the New York State Identification Test for English Language Learners (NYSITELL). If the student tests below the designated cut point, then the student is identified as an English Language Learner.*

Q5 Can I refuse English as a New Language services after my child is identified as an English Language Learner?

A5 *No. New York State regulations require that all students identified as English Language Learners receive ENL services.*

Q6 Can I appeal my child's identification (or lack of identification) as an English Language Learner?

A6 *Yes. If you believe your child has been misidentified (either as an ELL or a non-ELL), then you can request a review of that identification. The review process only applies to students who have been recently screened. Requests must be made within forty-five school days of receiving notification of your child's language status. To initiate a review, simply make a written request to your child's building principal. Your child's ENL teacher can assist you with this process.*

Q7 How do students exit English as a New Language Services?

A7 *As per state regulations, students may exit ENL services in one of the following ways:*

- *OPTION 1) Scoring at the Commanding level on the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT), which is given every spring.*
OR
- *OPTION 2) Scoring at the Expanding level on the NYSESLAT, **and** scoring at level 3 or 4 on the grades 3-8 New York State English Language Arts test **or** scoring at least 65 on the Regents exam in English.*

Q8 Will my child be educated in the same classroom as native English speaking students?

A8 *Yes. All English Language Learners are placed in regular classrooms with students whose first language is English, and receive instruction based on the regular curriculum. Most students are also given "stand-alone" ENL instruction outside of the regular classroom for parts of the school day.*

Q9 Can the school district provide me with translated correspondence and/or an interpreter for parent-teacher conferences?

A9 *Yes. During the ENL identification process we ask parents/guardians which language they would like us to use for correspondence and oral communication. We can provide you with an interpreter for parent-teacher conferences or other important school meetings. Please make this request through your child's ENL teacher.*

Q10 Can my child participate in all extracurricular events offered to non-English Language Learners?

A10 Yes. The Vestal schools offer a wide array of extracurricular activities including clubs, sports, and musical groups. English Language Learners have open access to the same activities as other Vestal students.

Q11 Should I continue to communicate with my child in our home language?

A11 Yes! Not only does maintaining your home language keep your child connected to your family's culture, but research has also demonstrated many academic and cognitive benefits of bilingualism and multilingualism. Students who come to us with strong linguistic skills in their home language often find it easier to learn English. For example, if they already know how to read and write in their home language, this will usually help them learn those skills more quickly in English.

Q12 Where can I find information about adult English as a Second Language classes, citizenship classes, and other services?

A12 Adult English as a Second Language (ESL) classes are offered through Broome-Tioga BOCES. For more information please visit their web page at <http://www.btboces.org/ESOL.aspx>. The American Civic Association also offers adult ESL classes, citizenship classes, and other services. For more information please visit their web page at <http://www.americancivic.com/>.

Q13 Will I receive feedback about how my child is progressing in his or her English as a New Language instruction?

A13 Yes. Students receive regular written ENL progress reports. These reports are sent home each trimester at the elementary level, and quarterly at the secondary level. Additionally, ENL teachers attend parent conferences for ELLs twice each year. Also please feel free to contact your child's ENL teacher at any point in the school year if you have any additional questions or concerns.