

## ESL Students in Alberta

### Canadian-born ESL Students

First Nations, Métis and Inuit (FNMI) students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• may speak English, French, a First Nations, Métis and Inuit (FNMI) language or a combination of languages in their homes and communities</li><li>• have cultural and language diversity between Nations and regions</li><li>• have skills in their first language that range from minimal to fluent</li><li>• may use culturally specific nonverbal communication and have specific cultural values and beliefs regarding listening and speaking, passing of stories and sacred relationships</li></ul>
Francophone students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• come from within the province or from other areas of Canada</li><li>• may enter English-speaking schools at any age or may be learning English as a second language in a Francophone school</li></ul>
Hutterite, Mennonite or students in other religious groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• attend school within their communities and learn English to access outcomes of the Alberta programs of study</li><li>• have religious and cultural concerns in their communities that strongly influence the selection of instructional strategies and teaching materials</li></ul>
Canadian-born children of immigrants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• have parents who may not speak English, limiting family support in schooling</li><li>• may attend an immersion program in their first language and have delays or deficits in their English language skills</li><li>• may, in some cases, move to their parents' home country, only to return for schooling in Alberta at some later time</li></ul>

### Foreign-born ESL Students

Recently arrived immigrants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• make up a large group of ESL students in Alberta</li><li>• may arrive at any time in the school year and may be at any grade level</li><li>• have usually attended school on a regular basis in their home countries and may have already studied English, although this typically involves only a basic introduction to the language</li></ul>
Refugees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• have all the needs of regular immigrants, as well as issues relating to war, disaster, trauma, disorientation and loss of freedom</li><li>• may not have wished to leave their home countries</li><li>• may be worried about family members left behind</li><li>• may have received little or no formal schooling and have complex needs that go beyond learning English as a second language</li><li>• may qualify for additional assistance from the federal government on arrival</li><li>• may require assistance from government, social and community agencies for several years</li></ul>

### Fee-paying and funded international visa students

- are attending Alberta schools in increasing numbers
- usually live in home-stay situations without their families or with unfamiliar members of extended family (may cause separation anxiety issues)
- may feel pressure to excel in their studies, especially those who must meet re-entrance standards upon returning to school in their home countries
- are usually in Canada for one to two years

## ESL Policy and Funding

The current *K–12 Learning System Policy, Regulations and Forms Manual* and the *Funding Manual for School Authorities* are available on the Alberta Education Web site at [www.education.gov.ab.ca/reading/policy](http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/reading/policy).

### Policy 1.5.1

Alberta Education sets, develops and approves policies through a consultative approach that gives direction to school authorities on providing the best possible education for all Alberta students. The *English as a Second Language* policy states:

**Policy:** To facilitate the integration of the student into the regular school program at the earliest possible opportunity, Alberta Education will assist school boards in providing English as a second language programs to Alberta students who were born in Canada but who are not fluent in English, and to those who have recently arrived in Canada and whose first language is not English.

According to the policy:

1. Boards shall develop, keep current and implement written policy and procedures consistent with provincial policy and procedures for:
  - (1) curriculum and instruction; and
  - (2) receiving, assessing, placing, monitoring and evaluating ESL students.
2. Boards are responsible for making available appropriate English language instruction to meet the needs of all their resident students. This responsibility entails:
  - (1) the identification and linguistic assessment of students who require ESL; and
  - (2) the provision of special assistance, including
    - (a) the development, implementation and assessment of appropriate instructional programs and curricular guidelines for grades 1 to 12, in which attention is given to the linguistic, cultural and academic needs of students,
    - (b) courses or parts of courses and instructional materials as prescribed, authorized or approved by the Minister under section 39(1)(a), (b) and (d) of the *Act*, and

- (c) priority being placed on assistance that encourages the rapid integration of students into the school and community environment.
3. Alberta Education may provide funding for ESL programs subject to the terms and conditions described in the *Funding Manual for School Authorities*.

## Funding

ESL funding is provided to assist students who are residents of Alberta and who have insufficient fluency in English to achieve grade level expectations in English language arts and other subject areas.

Funding is provided for each eligible ESL funded child/student in Kindergarten to Grade 12. Funded children/students may be Canadian-born (Code 303) or foreign-born (Code 301). There are two enrollment counts taken for funding both Canadian-born and foreign-born ESL students—September 30 and March 1.

Funded children/students eligible for ESL funding:

- a) come from homes in which the primary spoken language is not English
- b) speak minimal English or are non-English speaking.

Coding of an eligible ESL funded child/student must also be supported by an annual assessment of the student's language proficiency in English. This assessment documentation must be kept on file at the school and made available upon request.

After three years of ESL instruction, it is expected most students would have sufficient fluency in English to access regular programming, although some students may require additional time. Funding is provided for a maximum of seven years for eligible ESL funded children/students.

ESL funding is also provided for children between the ages of 3 years 6 months and less than 4 years 6 months old that have insufficient fluency in English.

**Note:** Please refer to the current *Funding Manual for School Authorities*, available on the Alberta Education Web site at <http://www.education.alberta.ca/admin/funding/manual.aspx>.

Funded students enrolled in home education, blended programs, outreach programs or online programs are not eligible for funding.