

This document contains guidance on the identification and placement process for newly arrived English learners in your state. WIDA and your state education agency have worked together to provide this outline of policies, procedures, assessment options, test administrator training requirements, and criteria for placement in EL services. This document is updated each spring and throughout the year per SEA request.

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For questions related to WIDA’s website, resources, or assessments, please contact the WIDA Client Services Center at help@wida.us or (866) 276-7735.

Initial Assessment and Identification

Questions/Topic	State-specific Guidance
Process Overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Districts must pre-screen with, at a minimum, the Home Language Survey (HLS) as posted on the DEED website (or a similar form). • If the HLS indicates that only English is spoken in the home, but the teacher has an indication otherwise, the teacher may administer the Language Observation Checklist. • If the HLS responses indicate that another language other than English is spoken to the student or by the student, the district would administer a state-approved screener within the first 30 days of school to determine the student’s level of English language proficiency (districts are encouraged to contact families to help determine appropriateness of screening). • Based on the results of the screener, a student would be identified as an English learner (See Identification/Placement Criteria). • Parents/guardians of students identified for LIEP services must be notified. • Placement into LIEP for student identified as an EL. • Identified ELs take the WIDA ACCESS for ELLs (or Alternate ACCESS for students with significant cognitive disabilities) during the 2025 test administration window (February 3 – March 31).

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Timelines	<p>Incoming kindergartners and older students new to the district from another state or country who are potentially ELs must be screened and identified as soon as possible after enrolling in school, and within 30 days after the beginning of the school year if enrolled at the beginning of the school year.</p> <p>Students who transfer from another Alaska district and who have already been identified ELs should not be re-screened. The sending district must transfer the student records within 14 days and provide information about the identification of the student, including results from the screening assessment and the annual ELP assessment.</p>
Home Language Survey	<p>Districts must pre-screen with, at a minimum, the Home Language Survey (HLS) as posted on the DEED website (or a similar form). The US Department of Education and the Office of Civil Rights have provided guidance on what questions should be asked, what questions are inappropriate, and how to appropriately use an HLS to ensure the civil rights of students and parents. The Home Language Survey is a means for the district to determine the student's <i>current</i> language dominance, degree of exposure to English and whether the student's proficiency in English should be tested. Information from the HLS informs placement into a language assistance program. If the answers to any questions of the HLS indicate that a language other than English is either spoken by the student or by the parents/guardians to the student, the student would move to the approved screening assessment. Districts are encouraged to contact families to help determine the appropriateness of screening. The prescreening forms can be found in the Appendix of the state's EL Identification Guidance document and on the DEED Forms webpage.</p> <p>Even though a student may not speak a heritage language in the home, a student may have grown up in an environment in which the syntax, rhetorical style, and sociolinguistic patterns of the heritage language may have had a significant impact on the student's level of proficiency in English in order to succeed in the classroom. If the Home Language Survey indicates that English is spoken in the home, but the teacher has an indication that the student comes from such an environment, the teacher may administer the Language Observation Checklist, Part A. If the <i>Language Observation Checklist Part A (LOC-A)</i>, as filled out by the student's teacher, indicates 5 or more "No" answers in Part A or that a student is not fluent (compared to English-speaking students of the same age or grade level) in reading, writing, or oral language, based on the teacher's knowledge, then the student should be referred for a formal identification assessment. Note that if the Home Language Survey as completed by the parent already indicates a need for formal identification assessment, then use of the LOC-A is at the discretion of the district. The Language Observation checklists can be found in the Appendix of the state's EL Identification Guidance document and on the DEED Forms webpage.</p>

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State Approved Assessments	<p>KINDERGARTEN: WIDA Screener for Kindergarten and Kindergarten MODEL GRADES 1-12: WIDA Screener Online, WIDA Screener Paper, WIDA MODEL</p> <p>For potential ELs that are either in the special education identification process or have been identified as a student with a disability through an IEP or 504 plan, it is important to ensure that school staff providing English language support and those providing Special Education support collaborate in the EL identification process. For identified ELs with disabilities, staff from both programs should collaborate on decisions about the provision of appropriate services.</p>
Paper Based Screener Costs	<p>WIDA SCREENER (GRADES K-12):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The WIDA Screener for Kindergarten kits can be purchased online at the WIDA Store (at district expense), or downloaded and printed from the WIDA Secure Portal for free. The <i>WIDA Screener for Kindergarten: Administration and Scoring</i> training course is available online through the WIDA Secure Portal. • The WIDA Screener Paper can be purchased online at the WIDA Store (at district expense). The <i>WIDA Screener Paper: Administration</i> training course is available online through the WIDA Secure Portal. • The WIDA Screener Online can be downloaded for free through the WIDA Assessment Management System (AMS). The <i>WIDA Screener Online: Administration</i> training course is available through the WIDA Secure Portal. • Test Administrators must have an account to access the WIDA Secure Portal. For more information, visit the WIDA Screener webpage. <p>WIDA MODEL: The WIDA MODEL™ kits can be ordered online (at district expense) at the WIDA Store. The Test Administration Manual, Training CD-ROM, and DVD are provided in all kits to aid educators in the administration of WIDA MODEL.</p>
Identification/Placement Criteria	<p>Exit Criteria:</p> <p>An overall composite PL \geq of 4.5 on Tier B/C on ACCESS for ELLs (no tier designation for Kindergarten).</p>

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Identification Criteria:**FOR EL IDENTIFICATION OF ENTERING STUDENTS IN GRADES 1-12:**

Time of Entry in School Year	Screener	Domains Given* (L, S, R, W)	Score	Identified as EL?	Administer ACCESS for ELLs in current school year?
Fall – February 28	WIDA Screener, or MODEL	All domains	Overall Composite \geq 5	NO	NO
			Overall Composite $<$ 5	YES	YES
March 1 or after	WIDA Screener, or MODEL	All domains	Overall Composite \geq 5	NO	NO
			Overall Composite $<$ 5	YES	NO (wait until next school year)

FOR EL IDENTIFICATION OF ENTERING KINDERGARTEN STUDENTS:

Time of Entry in School Year	Domains Given* (L, S, R, W)	MODEL or WIDA Screener for Kindergarten Score	Identified as EL?	Administer ACCESS for ELLs in current school year?
Through February 28	L & S (at time of entry)	Oral Composite $<$ 5	YES	YES
	L & S (at time of entry)	Oral Composite \geq 5	NO (not at this time)	NO
	L/S/R/W (given after March 31)	Overall Composite $<$ 5	YES	NO (wait until next school year)
		Overall Composite \geq 5	NO	NO
March 1 or after	All domains	Overall Composite $<$ 5	YES	NO (wait until next school year)
		Overall Composite \geq 5	NO	NO

*L = Listening, S = Speaking, R = Reading, W = Writing

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	<p>Entering kindergarten students would not yet be expected to be proficient on the reading and writing domains of the screener assessments. If the student is clearly not proficient on the listening and speaking domains of the WIDA Screener for Kindergarten or MODEL, then that student is immediately identified as an EL, is eligible for services, and will take the Kindergarten ACCESS for ELLs in the spring. If the student is proficient on listening and speaking in the fall, then the student is not identified as an EL at that time. Subsequently, after March 31, the district must choose one of the following options for each of these students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) rescreen the student with all four domains of either the WIDA Screener for Kindergarten or the WIDA MODEL, or b) the teacher completes a Language Observation Checklist (LOC-A) in all four domains that is then kept in the student's file. If there are five or more "no" answers at this time, the student should be formally rescreened with all four domains on either the WIDA Screener for Kindergarten, or the WIDA MODEL. <p>If the student is proficient in all four domains, that student is not identified as an EL. If the student is not proficient on the WIDA Screener for Kindergarten, or WIDA MODEL, then the student is identified as an EL and is eligible for language support services. The student is coded as L1 for the kindergarten year, and as LP in first grade. The student will take ACCESS for ELLs for the first time in the spring of 1st grade.</p>
<p>Other Useful Resources or Information</p>	<p>PARENTAL NOTIFICATION</p> <p>Districts are required to provide notifications to parents of ELs. Parents must be annually notified within 30 days of the start of the school year that their student has been identified as an EL. If a student enrolled after the start of the school year, the notification must be within two weeks after placement in an EL program.</p> <p>DATA REPORTING</p> <p>Districts must report the EL status (L1, LP, LT, M1, M2, M3, and M4) of each current or former EL student on the Participation Rate file for the state standards-based assessment and in the Fall OASIS and Summer OASIS Student Level Data Collections. In addition, in the Summer OASIS data collection, districts must report the native language of identified EL students (the primary, first, or home language, or language of influence that is not English) and, for ELs who did not take the annual ELP assessment, the reason why that assessment was not administered. The ELP test contractor will report to the district and to DEED the ELP assessment proficiency scores. DEED will match the student data with the test data in order to determine the number of EL students in the state and report on their progress to the US Department of Education. See the Summer OASIS handbook on DEED's Forms webpage for EL student data codes.</p>

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MONITORING FORMER ELS

Former ELs (codes M1, M2, M3 and M4) are those who have met the criteria to be exited from EL status and program services. Former ELs should not take the annual ELP Assessment. The academic progress of these former ELs should be monitored for four years using the state content-based assessments in ELA and math (for students in grades 3-9) as well as district-determined local criteria. Students in grades K, 1, 2, 10, 11, and 12 will be monitored for academic progress in reading/language arts and math according to local criteria as determined by the district. An EL who met the exit criteria in the prior school year should be coded as M1, a former EL, on the Fall OASIS Data Collection, the Spring Participation Rate file, and the Summer OASIS Data Collection for the school year following the year that the student met the exit criteria and was coded LT.

RECENTLY ARRIVED ELS (NEWCOMERS)

The state academic content assessment for English Language Arts (ELA) may not be used in place of the annual English language proficiency test. ELs who are recent arrivals must take the state content assessment in mathematics and science. Assessing recently arrived ELs is addressed in the State's AK STAR Test Coordinator Manual, available on the [AK STAR Test Administration webpage](#).

Immigrant Students Excluded from State Content Assessments**[Alaska regulation 4 AAC 06.820(f)]**

(f) Notwithstanding any provision in this chapter, if a district enrolls a student who is identified as an English learner under 4 AAC 34.090(2), and who has been enrolled in a school in one of the 50 states in the United States or the District of Columbia for less than 12 months, the district shall exclude

- (1) the identified English learner who is recently arrived under this subsection from one administration of the state standards-based assessment in English language arts; and
- (2) the identified English learner's results on any state standards-based assessment under 4 AAC 06.737 or an English language proficiency assessment under 4 AAC 34.055(c) for the first year of the student's enrollment in the school for the purposes of the school and district accountability system under 4 AAC 06.800 - 4 AAC 06.899.

RE-IDENTIFICATION

If a former EL exhibits academic difficulties attributed to a "persistent language barrier", the first step is to ensure the student is receiving any instructional supports they are legally entitled to. A decision to reclassify could entail providing evidence that the student's difficulties in English reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension may deny the student the:

- Ability to meet State's challenging academic standards;
- Ability to successfully achieve in classrooms where the language of instruction is English; and

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- Opportunity to participate fully in society (as defined in federal law).

Re-identification should be determined through a comprehensive evaluation of all data available. After a minimum of one semester of exit from EL status, the school-based team working with a struggling former EL must meet to review academic performance on classroom assignments, state academic achievement assessment results, as well as written observations and recommendations documented by the student's classroom teachers. After evaluating the available student data, if the school-based team determines the student requires language support due to lack of English language proficiency, the district EL coordinator must provide parental notification. The district will then administer the MODEL (preferred for reclassification information) or WIDA Screener to get a measure of the student's current English language proficiency and necessity for re-identification. If the student scores below the state established criteria for proficiency on the MODEL, or WIDA Screener, the student shall be re-identified as EL and receive appropriate language support services. The parental notification must give the parent(s) the option to decline EL program services. Note: if a former EL (coded as M1, M2, M3 or M4 in the Fall OASIS data collection) is re-identified during a school year, enter a code of LP in the Summer OASIS data collection and ensure that a comment is entered in the 'Notes' field that the student has been re-identified as EL through use of the screener assessment.

DEED is working hard to keep our [EL Identification Guidance document](#) current.

Below are other State resources applicable to the ELP Assessment –

- [DEED's English Language Proficiency Assessment webpage](#)
- [DEED's English Language Proficiency Standards webpage](#)
- Summer OASIS Handbook for Schools and Districts (available on [DEED's Forms webpage](#))
- Participation Guidelines for Alaska Students in State Assessments (available on [DEED's Accommodations and Student Supports webpage](#))
- Handbook for the Participation Guidelines (available on [DEED's Accommodations and Student Supports webpage](#))

Test Administrator Training and Certification

Question/Topic	State-specific Guidance
Test Administrator Qualifications	<p>Test administrators must be district employees, annually complete the WIDA online training courses for the applicable tests, complete test security training, and sign a test security agreement.</p> <p>Only trained employees of the school district may participate in test administration. [Alaska Regulations 4 AAC 06.761, 4 AAC 06.765, AAC 06.755]</p>
Test Administrator Training Requirements	<p>To be certified to administer WIDA Screener, test administrators must annually complete the following courses for the tests they will be administering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WIDA Screener Online: Administration • WIDA Screener Paper: Administration <p>To be certified to score WIDA Screener, test administrators must annually complete the following courses for the grade level tests and domains they will be scoring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaking for Grades 1-5: Scoring ACCESS Paper and WIDA Screener • Speaking for Grades 6-12: Scoring ACCESS Paper and WIDA Screener • Writing for Grades 1-5: Scoring WIDA Screener • Writing for Grades 6-12: Scoring WIDA Screener <p>To be certified to administer and score the WIDA Screener for Kindergarten, test administrators must annually complete the WIDA Screener for Kindergarten: Administration and Scoring training course.</p> <p>New for 2024-25: WIDA Screener training courses will be available on the WIDA Secure Portal July 1, 2024.</p> <p>WIDA MODEL: Review the training materials contained in the WIDA MODEL kit.</p> <p>Test administrators are required to be re-certified annually to administer the screener assessments.</p>
Website Permissions	<p>WIDA Secure Portal (portal.wida.us) Contact your District Test Coordinator for access to the training materials.</p> <p>WIDA AMS (DRC) (wida-ams.us) Educator Scoring for WIDA Screener: Contact your District Test Coordinator for permissions.</p>

EL Program Requirements – Services & Support

Question/Topic	State-specific Guidance
EL Services or Program Requirements	<p>The State of Alaska does not require districts to implement any particular type of EL Service or Program. Districts are required to provide parental notification within 30 days of the start of school that their student has been identified as an EL. If a student enrolled after the start of the school year, the notification must be within two weeks after placement in an EL program. The notification includes information about their parental rights to withdraw their child from the program, to decline to have their child enrolled in the program or to choose another program or method if available, and information to assist parents in selecting among various programs if more than one is available.</p>
Declining Services	<p>Title I requires that every LEA that uses funds under either Title I or Title III for services to ELs must provide a parent with notification that outlines their child’s identification as an EL and placement in a Language Instruction Educational Program (LIEP).</p> <p>ESEA Section 1112(e)(3)(A) reads - “Each local educational agency using funds under this part or title III to provide a language instruction educational program as determined under title III shall, not later than 30 days after the beginning of the school year, inform parents of an English learner identified for participation or participating in such a program, of —</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> viii. information pertaining to parental rights that includes written guidance – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. detailing the right that parents have to have their child immediately removed from such program upon their request; and II. detailing the options that parents have to decline to enroll their child in such program or to choose another program or method of instruction, if available.” <p>Under Title VI and the EEOA, a parent’s decision to opt out of a program for ELs must be knowing and voluntary, and an LEA may not recommend that parents decline all or some services within a program for ELs for any reason.</p> <p>Note, however, that if an EL is not participating in the LIEP, the LEA still has the obligation under Title VI and EEOA to take “affirmative steps” and “appropriate action” to provide the student with access to its educational programs. The English language and other academic needs of such an English learner must still be met.</p> <p>In addition, ESEA requires that the LEA still must assess all identified ELs using the annual English language proficiency assessment, including those students whose parents have declined to enroll them in, or had them removed from, LIEPs. All ELs enrolled in schools served by the State must be assessed annually using the State’s English language proficiency assessment. (ESEA Section 1111(b)(2)(G). State or district assessment policies, if they include a right to opt a child out of</p>

EL Program Requirements – Services & Support

assessments, do not override or diminish the LEA's obligation to assess 100 percent of ELs using the annual English language proficiency assessment.

If the student was not administered the required annual ELP assessment due to parent and/or student refusal to participate, the district would enter Code – 4 in the 'ELP Not Assessed Reason' field on the Summer OASIS data collection (more information can be found in the Summer OASIS Handbook, which is available through [DEED's Forms webpage](#)).

Note: entering a value in the 'ELP Not Assessed Reason' field **does not** absolve a district of the responsibility to test an English Learner.