

This document contains guidance on the identification and placement process for newly arrived English learners in your state. WIDA and your state education agency (SEA) 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.

**All questions about the WIDA suite of assessments and portal login accounts should be sent to Dr. Mary Nesbit-McBride in Assessment & Accountability. All questions about the ESOL Language Program should be sent to the EL Language Programs Helpdesk.**

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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](mailto:help@wida.us) or (866) 276-7735.

### Initial Assessment and Identification

Questions/Topic	State-specific Guidance
Process Overview	<p>Please see <a href="#">EL Language Programs – State Guidance</a> for more information.</p> <p>During registration, parents complete a <a href="#">Home Language Survey (HLS)</a> to identify the student’s primary language(s).</p> <p><b>For students new to U.S. schools, school system staff will...</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review responses on Home Language Survey (HLS) to identify potential English learners (ELs) – students whose primary language is other than English.</li> <li>2. Administer WIDA English language proficiency (ELP) screener to potential ELs within 30 days of enrollment.</li> <li>3. Identify if student met state EL eligibility criteria. (See <i>EL Entrance Criteria Flowcharts</i> on the <a href="#">ESOL Language Program</a> website.)</li> <li>4. Place identified EL student in appropriate ESOL language instruction education program services.</li> <li>5. Notify parents of student’s EL status and ESOL services within 30 days at beginning of school year or two weeks during the year.</li> </ol>

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	<p>6. Report student status in state student information system (SIS).</p> <p><b>For Transfer Students (not new to U.S. schools) school system staff will...</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review prior enrollment records: EL History in GUIDE application, ELP assessment records (initial HLS, screener, annual ELP assessments) in SLDS application and physical or digital permanent records.</li> <li>2. Identify student’s current or former EL status based on transferring state or school system’s records within 30 days from enrollment. (See <i>2018-2024 EL Exit Criteria by LEA</i> on the <a href="#">ESOL Language Program</a> website.)</li> <li>3. Place EL student in appropriate ESOL language instruction education program services.</li> <li>4. Notify parents of student’s EL status and ESOL services within 30 days at beginning of school year or two weeks during the school year.</li> <li>5. Report student status in state student information system.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Timelines</b></p>	<p>[The Georgia Department of Education requires local school systems and charter schools to follow the English learner identification timeline established in ESEA/ESSA Section 3113(b)(2). Within 30 days of enrollment in a K-12 school in the state, regardless of when the enrollment occurs in the school year, local school systems and charter schools must screen all potential EL students, new to U.S. schools, for EL eligibility and must identify the current or former English learner (EL) status of transfer students. (<b>Please see <a href="#">EL Language Programs – State Guidance</a> for more information.</b>)</p> <p><b>Note:</b> Early Kindergarten screening is a local decision in Georgia but may not occur prior to mid-April of a student’s pre-school year. Contact the ESOL Language Program Specialist, <a href="mailto:Noel.Wilkinson@doe.k12.ga.us">Noel.Wilkinson@doe.k12.ga.us</a>, for more information.</p>
<p><b>Home Language Survey</b></p>	<p>[The Georgia Department of Education requires local school systems and charter schools to use the following three <a href="#">Home Language Survey (HLS)</a> questions to identify potential ELs whose primary language is other than English:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Which language does your child <b>best</b> understand and speak?</li> <li>• Which language does your child <b>most</b> frequently speak at home?</li> <li>• Which language do adults in your home <b>most</b> frequently use when speaking with your child?</li> </ul> <p>Beginning January 2024, the <i>HLS</i> questions includes a section for additional information provided by families who indicate a multilingual home environment. Multilingual families report whether their child is fully multilingual or understands and uses one language more than the other.</p>

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	<p>HLS questions are expected to be embedded in the school system’s enrollment/registration procedures and are provided to parents in a language and format they understand, either through oral interpretation or written translation as required under the Office for Civil Rights. (For more information, see <a href="#">EL Language Programs – State Guidance</a>.)</p> <p>Schools are encouraged to identify parents’ primary language first and provide them with the HLS questions in a language they understand.</p>
<b>State Approved Assessments</b>	<p><b>Screeners:</b> Local school systems and charter schools must use the grade-level specific WIDA English language proficiency (ELP) screener for initial identification of ELs new to U.S. schools.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>WIDA Screener for Kindergarten</i> – Administered in Grade K and 1<sup>st</sup> Semester Grade 1</li> <li>2. <i>WIDA Screener for Grades 1 (2<sup>nd</sup> Sem.) – 12</i> (Online; Paper used for special cases.)</li> </ol> <p><b>Annual Assessment:</b> Local school systems and charter schools must use the <i>WIDA ACCESS</i> or <i>WIDA Alternate ACCESS</i> for continuing identification of ELs, to measure growth in English language proficiency, and to determine EL exit or reclassification. For more information, see <a href="#">EL Language Programs – State Guidance</a>.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> Discontinued screeners: <i>KW-APT</i>, <i>W-APT</i>, <i>Remote Screener</i>, and <i>WIDA MODEL</i> as a screener.</p>
<b>Paper Based Screener Costs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local school systems and charter schools are responsible for purchasing the <i>WIDA Screener for Kindergarten</i> and the <i>WIDA Screener for Grades 1-12 (Paper)</i>, when applicable. For more information, go to the <a href="#">WIDA Store</a>.</li> <li>• ELP screener costs <b>may not</b> be funded using Title III, Part A subgrant funds, since the obligation to identify all EL students is a local and state requirement under the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) (<i>Lau v. Nichols, 1974</i>).</li> <li>• When private schools participate in Federal Programs’ Title III, Part A equitable services, the private school may use a portion of its Title III, Part A proportionate share to participate in the WIDA suite of assessments. Private school officials and public school officials in their district must follow the steps to participate in WIDA’s assessments detailed in the <i>Guidance on Using WIDA Assessments in Private Schools</i> on the <a href="#">Title III, Part A webpage</a> and on the <a href="#">State Ombudsman webpage</a>.</li> </ul>

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**Identification/Placement  
Criteria**

**For transfer students:** School personnel review prior EL student records to determine eligibility and placement in ESOL language programs. The state’s GUIDE application in the State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) provides staff with the student’s EL status history in Georgia. Receiving school systems or charter schools must contact the sending school system or charter school to determine whether the student was reclassified using local flexibility criteria and must review students’ current or former EL status as well as student’s ELP assessment history in SLDS. Schools will honor EL identification criteria used to identify students transferring from other school systems in GA and from other U.S. states.

**For students newly enrolled in U.S. schools whose HLS indicates a primary home language other than English,** the grade appropriate screener must be administered and the following EL eligibility criteria must be met for initial EL identification.

**WIDA Screener Scores for Initial EL Eligibility**

(See [WIDA Screener for Kindergarten](#) EL Eligibility Flowchart and [Grades 1-12 WIDA Screener](#) EL Eligibility Flowchart.)

Screener / Grade level / Semester	Eligibility Score
<b>WIDA Screener for Kindergarten:</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> Semester Kindergarten	Oral Proficiency (Listening & Speaking) < 5.0
<b>WIDA Screener for Kindergarten:</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Semester Kindergarten – 1 <sup>st</sup> Semester Grade 1	Overall Composite Proficiency Level < 5.0
<b>WIDA Screener:</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Semester Grade 1 – Grade 12	Overall Composite Proficiency Level < 5.0

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**For continuing eligibility**, the following ELP assessment must be administered, and students who score less than the EL exit or reclassification criteria, by grade-level and assessment, are eligible for continued EL='Yes' status.

**WIDA ACCESS/Alternate ACCESS Scores EL Exit and Reclassification Criteria**

(See [Kindergarten](#) and [Grades 1-12](#) EL Exit Flowcharts.)

WIDA Assessments	EL Exit and Reclassification Criteria
<p><b>Kindergarten ACCESS</b></p>	<p><b>Clear Exit:</b> Overall Composite Proficiency Level (CPL) or DCPL* <math>\geq</math> 5.0 <b>and</b> Listening, Speaking, <b>and</b> Reading PL <math>\geq</math> 5.0 <b>and</b> Writing PL <math>\geq</math> 4.5</p>
<p><b>Grades 1-12 ACCESS</b></p>	<p><b>Clear Exit:</b> Overall CPL or DCPL* <math>\geq</math> 5.0</p> <p><b>Local Education Agency's (LEA) Grades 1-12 Reclassification Option:</b> Overall CPL or DCPL* meets LEA's established minimum criterion in the 4.3 - 4.9 range, as well as any additional standardized criteria the LEA has chosen to adopt, along with a completed <i>EL Reclassification</i> form</p>
<p><b>Alternate ACCESS</b></p>	<p><b>Clear Exit:</b> Overall CPL or DCPL* = 5</p> <p><b>LEA Grades 1-12 Reclassification Option:</b> Overall CPL or DCPL* = 4 along with an <i>IEP/EL Reclassification</i> completed by the IEP team</p>

**\*Designated Composite Proficiency Level (D-CPL)** calculated by the state for eligible students whose disability precluded the assessment of one or more language domains.

## Initial Assessment and Identification

**Other Useful Resources or Information**

- Initial ELP Screening occurs only once – upon initial registration in a U.S. school, in any state, based on initial Home Language Survey responses.
- Georgia recommends that local school personnel enter students' *WIDA Screener* results in the ELP Screener application in the SLDS, in addition to their system's Student Information System (SIS).
- School personnel must report EL student data in the Student Information System (SIS) including the student's DATE OF ELP SCREENER.
- All student's HLS responses, screener score results, and yearly *WIDA ACCESS / Alternate ACCESS* assessment results must be maintained in the student's permanent/cumulative school record.
- School systems and charter schools must honor both in-state and out-of-state transfer students' EL status and placement decisions. For more information on specific in-state timelines, see [EL Language Programs – State Guidance](#).
- Schools provide parents with annual written notification of their child's initial and continued EL eligibility and placement in the ESOL language program, in a language and format they have indicated they understand, including notification of any additional, supplemental federally funded language instruction educational program services the student is receiving, when applicable. (See the [ESOL Parent Notification Letters](#) in various languages, and, when necessary, the [Title I/Title III Parent Notification Letters](#). Schools have the option to use the [Combined Parent Notification Letter](#).)
- Per Federal ESEA/ESSA Title I, Part A statute, schools must administer the annual ELP Assessment (*WIDA ACCESS* or *Alternate ACCESS*) to all identified EL students in Georgia, including those who are not participating in the ESOL language program due to parents' decision to opt them out or for other documented reasons.
- As a member of the WIDA Consortium, the *WIDA ACCESS* and the *WIDA Alternate ACCESS* are the only state approved ELP assessments used for EL Exit and Reclassification decisions.
- For private schools participating in Title III, Part A equitable services, LEA officials in consultation with private school officials will determine which ELP assessment and screener will be used to identify and monitor EL student growth and progress toward proficiency. The WIDA suite of assessments is a viable option for private schools wishing to use their proportionate share to cover the costs.

## Test Administrator Training and Certification

Question/Topic	State-specific Guidance
<b>Test Administrator Qualifications</b>	[Test Administrators (TAs) must hold Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC) certification and WIDA test examiner certification.]
<b>Test Administrator Training Requirements</b>	<p>[<b>WIDA Screener for Kindergarten</b></p> <p>To prepare for and administer the <i>WIDA Screener for Kindergarten</i>, test administrators must complete the <i>WIDA Screener for Kindergarten: Administration and Scoring</i> training course.</p> <p><b>WIDA Screener Grades 1-12</b>, Test Administrators (TA) must complete the required WIDA training and certification quizzes in the WIDA Secure Portal Assessment Training pathway.</p> <p>To be certified to administer WIDA Screener, test administrators must complete the following courses for the tests they will be administering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>WIDA Screener Grades 1-12 Online: Administration</i></li> <li>• <i>WIDA Screener Grades 1-12 Paper: Administration</i></li> </ul> <p>To be certified to score WIDA Screener, test administrators must complete the following courses for the grade level tests and domains they will be scoring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speaking for Grades 1-5: Scoring <i>WIDA ACCESS</i> Paper and <i>WIDA Screener</i></li> <li>• Speaking for Grades 6-12: Scoring <i>WIDA ACCESS</i> Paper and <i>WIDA Screener</i></li> <li>• Writing for Grades 1-5: Scoring <i>WIDA Screener</i></li> <li>• Writing for Grades 6-12: Scoring <i>WIDA Screener</i></li> </ul> <p><b>New for 2024-25:</b> <i>WIDA Screener</i> training courses will be available on the WIDA Secure Portal July 1, 2024.</p> <p><b>Test Administrators (TAs) must recertify annually.</b> To administer the <i>WIDA Screener</i> in Georgia, school test examiners must have completed the most current <i>WIDA Screener</i> training and received WIDA certification within that same timeframe (July 1 – June 30).</p>

## Test Administrator Training and Certification

**Website Permissions****WIDA Secure Portal** ([portal.wida.us](https://portal.wida.us))

The local school system or charter school's ESOL Coordinator will provide the System Testing Coordinator (STC) with the list of educators who need a WIDA Secure Portal login to complete the training requirements to administer the WIDA screeners and assessments. The local STC provides this login.

**WIDA AMS (DRC)** ([wida-ams.us](https://wida-ams.us))

The local school system or charter school's ESOL Coordinator will provide the System Testing Coordinator (STC) with the list of educators who need access to WIDA AMS to administer the WIDA screeners and assessments, as applicable. The local STC provides this access.



## EL Program Requirements – Services &amp; Support

Question/Topic	State-specific Guidance
<p><b>EL Services or Program Requirements</b></p>	<p>Per Office for Civil Rights requirements, local school systems or charter schools must provide all identified EL students with appropriate language services in a core ESOL language instruction educational program. Georgia’s <a href="#">State Board of Education Rule 160-45-.02</a> establishes ESOL language program delivery models, maximum class segments by grade level, and grade specific minimum instructional minutes. Local school systems/charter schools have flexibility to waive the ESOL state board rule pursuant to their Strategic Waivers School System (SWSS) or Charter agreements with the state.</p> <p>Local school systems or charter schools may choose to use <i>WIDA MODEL</i> as a formative English language proficiency assessment to measure students’ growth and progress on an interim basis, but <b>not</b> for EL identification purposes.</p>
<p><b>Declining Services</b></p>	<p>[ESEA/ESSA Sections 1112(e)(3)(A) and (B) specify that the parents must be notified of the student’s placement in an EL program 30 days after the beginning of the school year or within ten days of being placed in the EL program if the student enrolled after the beginning of the school year. Local school systems or charter schools must notify parents annually regarding their child’s continued eligibility and placement.</p> <p>On an annual basis, parents have the right to decline or opt their children out of a school district’s EL language program or some EL services within an EL language program. Parents must indicate this “knowing and voluntary” decision by signing a <i>Parent Waiver</i> form. This form must be completed annually per parent’s request, in a language and format the parent has indicated they understand.</p> <p>Per OCR, schools must take “affirmative steps” and “appropriate action” to meet the language needs of opted-out EL students and periodically monitor their progress. This may include providing the EL student access to some language development support.</p> <p>Per Federal Title I, Part A statute, all identified EL students in Georgia are required to take the annual ELP assessment (<i>WIDA ACCESS or Alternate ACCESS</i>), even if their parents have waived ESOL language program services. The <i>WIDA ACCESS</i> and the <i>WIDA Alternate ACCESS</i> are the only state approved ELP assessments used for EL exit and reclassification decisions.</p>