

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.

For questions related to state policy or the contents of this document, please contact:

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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	<p>The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) requires a Home Language Survey (HLS) to be administered to all students upon initial enrollment in a Maryland public school. The HLS is used to determine if a student is eligible to be screened for English Language Development (ELD) services.</p> <p>The WIDA Screener for Kindergarten, WIDA Screener, and WIDA Alternate Screener are the assessment instruments used in Maryland to determine eligibility for ELD services. Results of the screener assessment will indicate whether the student is identified as a multilingual learner (ML). Students with an ML status must receive ELD instruction from a licensed ELD teacher as well as timely and meaningful access to grade level content instruction.</p>

Initial Assessment and Identification

Timelines	<p>Each local education agency must inform parents of an ML identified for participation in the local education agencies' ELD program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No later than 30 days after the beginning of the school year for students who enter at the start of the school year. • Within the first two weeks of a student being placed in such a program if the student was not identified as an ML prior to the beginning of the school year.
Home Language Survey	<p>In accordance with federal and state requirements, the Home Language Survey (HLS) will be administered to all students at time of initial enrollment and used only for determining whether a student needs English Language Development services.</p> <p>If a language other than English is indicated on two or more of the three questions below, the student will be assessed for English Language Development services. Additional criteria for testing may be considered.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What language(s) did the student first learn to speak? 2. What language does the student use most often to communicate? 3. What language(s) are spoken in your home? <p>Link to Home Language Survey: https://marylandpublicschools.org/programs/Pages/Multilingual-Learners/HLS.aspx.</p>
State Approved Assessments	<p>Screeners Assessments: WIDA Screener for Kindergarten, WIDA Screener, and WIDA Alternate Screener*</p> <p>Annual Summative Assessments: WIDA ACCESS, WIDA ACCESS for Kindergarten, and WIDA Alternate ACCESS**</p> <p><i>*These assessments are designed for potential MLs with the most significant cognitive disabilities who participate or will participate in a state's alternate content assessments. If a student presents an IEP indicating in Maryland alternate content assessments, then the WIDA Alternate Screener is appropriate. If a student in K-2 or 3-12 does not have an IEP, then the WIDA Screener should be used.</i></p> <p><i>**These assessments are designed for MLs who participate or will participate in a state's alternate content assessments.</i></p>

Initial Assessment and Identification

Identification and Placement Criteria	Assessment	Administration Timeline	Domains Assessed	Minimum Proficiency Score																																										
	WIDA Screener for Kindergarten	1 st semester of Kindergarten	Listening and Speaking only	4.5 Oral Composite																																										
	WIDA Screener for Kindergarten	2 nd semester of Kindergarten; 1 st semester of First Grade	All four domains: Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing	4.5 Overall Composite																																										
	WIDA Screener	2 nd semester First Grade through 12 th Grade	All four domains: Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing	4.5 Overall Composite																																										
		<table><tr><td>Grade</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td></tr><tr><td>Semester</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>Grade-Cluster Form</td><td>K</td><td colspan="2">Grade 1 Test</td><td colspan="2">Grades 2–3 Test</td><td colspan="2">Grades 4–5 Test</td><td colspan="3">Grades 6–8 Test</td><td colspan="3">Grades 9–12 Test</td></tr></table> <p>Please use the table above to determine the grade cluster form based on grade level and semester of the student.</p>			Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Semester	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	Grade-Cluster Form	K	Grade 1 Test		Grades 2–3 Test		Grades 4–5 Test		Grades 6–8 Test			Grades 9–12 Test
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Semester	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2																														
Grade-Cluster Form	K	Grade 1 Test		Grades 2–3 Test		Grades 4–5 Test		Grades 6–8 Test			Grades 9–12 Test																																			
Alternate WIDA Screener*	Kindergarten through 12 th Grade	All four domains: Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing	PL 4 Composite																																											

**These assessments are designed for potential MLs with the most significant cognitive disabilities who participate or will participate in a state’s alternate content assessments. If a student presents an IEP indicating in Maryland alternate content assessments, then the Alternate ACCESS screener is appropriate. If a student in K-2 or 3-12 does not have an IEP, then the WIDA Screener should be used.*

Initial Assessment and Identification

Exit and Reclassification Criteria	Assessment	Administration Timeline	Minimum Proficiency Score
	WIDA ACCESS for Kindergarten	Annually during the testing window in January and February	4.5 Overall Composite
	WIDA ACCESS	Annually during the testing window in January and February	4.5 Overall Composite
	WIDA Alternate ACCESS*	Annually during the testing window in January and February	PL 4
*These assessments are designed for potential MLs who participate or will participate in a state's alternate content assessments.			

Test Administrator Training and Certification

Question/Topic	State-specific Guidance
Test Administrator Qualifications	Per COMAR 13A.03.04.04(3)(b), “For any multi-state assessment consortium testing, Test Administrators (TAs) shall possess a valid Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) certificate for professional school staff.”
Test Administrator Training Requirements	<p>The online training courses for WIDA ACCESS can be found in the WIDA Secure Portal. The ML/ESOL Office in your county will need to set up an account for you.</p> <p>All Test Administrators must take the applicable training courses and pass the included certification quizzes in the WIDA Secure Portal in order to administer WIDA Screeners, WIDA ACCESS for Kindergarten, WIDA ACCESS, and WIDA Alternate ACCESS.</p> <p>For 2025-2026, all staff administering the WIDA ACCESS for Kindergarten must take the newly designed training in the WIDA Secure Portal that aligns with the updated version of the assessment. This training will not be available until September 29, 2025.</p> <p>For 2025-2026, all staff administering the WIDA Alternate Screener must take the new training in the WIDA Secure Port that aligns with the newly released assessment.</p> <p>Check with your ML/ESOL Coordinator to find out whether you must recertify for WIDA ACCESS. Teachers and staff administering WIDA ACCESS must recertify every two years. If administering the paper version of WIDA ACCESS, you must recertify annually for the grade band speaking test being administered.</p> <p>Your Local Accountability Coordinator (LAC) will be able to view past training history but check with your ML/ESOL Coordinator to find out whether you must turn in physical proof of your certification each year.</p> <p>The Division of Assessment and Accountability in the Maryland State Department of Education will offer training to local education agencies and information will be shared directly with the LACs and ML/ESOL Coordinators.</p>