

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

### Initial Assessment and Identification

| Questions/Topic         | State-specific Guidance  |
|-------------------------|--|
| <b>Process Overview</b> | <p>In accordance with ESSA, New Jersey (NJ) has implemented a standardized identification and exit procedure for students who are identified as multilingual learners (MLs). The procedure is outlined on the “<a href="#">Identification of Multilingual Learners (ML) and Exiting Students from ML Status</a>” webpages.</p> <p>There is a multi-step process for identification of students who may be MLs (See <a href="#">Identification of Students as Multilingual Learners</a>). The multi-step process, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:15-1.3 is:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Administer the home language survey (HLS) to all N.J. preschool to grade 12 students enrolled regardless of the student’s place of birth, spoken language, or surname affiliation;</li> <li>2. Conduct a records review for any N.J. preschool to grade 12 students for whom the HLS indicates to continue to records review. (N.J.A.C. 6A:15-1.3(a)2(i). This is a required step and must be documented as part of the student’s record.</li> <li>3. Administer an English language proficiency assessment for identification to any Kindergarten to grade 12 students who is eligible based on Steps 1 and 2. This step does not apply to preschool students.</li> </ol> |

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| <b>Timelines</b>                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local Education Agencies (LEAs) must use New Jersey's standardized HLS.</li> <li>Eligible students must be screened using a Department-approved English language proficiency (ELP) assessment for identification at the time of enrollment (See <a href="#">NJDOE Approved ELP Assessments</a>).</li> <li>Parent notification that their child has been identified as a ML and eligible for placement in a LIEP must be in writing. LEAs shall issue the notification within 30 calendar days of the start of the school year or within 14 calendar days for students who are enrolled after the start of the school year and identified as ML. The notification must be sent in English and a language that is comprehensible to the parent (See <a href="#">Parent Notification</a>).</li> <li>LEAs must determine LIEP placement upon enrollment.</li> <li>All preschool to grade 12 students identified as multilingual learners must be entered into NJSMART (See <a href="#">Reporting Multilingual Learners in NJ SMART</a>).</li> </ul>                |
| <b>Home Language Survey</b>       | <p>NJ has a standardized HLS all LEAs must administer to all students.</p> <p>The HLS and parent notification letters are translated into 20 languages other than English to assist LEAs in meeting federal and state requirements. The translations may be found online on the Title III <a href="#">Parent Notification Requirements</a> webpage.</p>   |
| <b>State Approved Assessments</b> | <p>A student can be eligible for identification as a multilingual learner with a WIDA Screener or WIDA MODEL with a composite proficiency level below 4.5. A teacher with an endorsement in English as a Second Language (ESL) and/or bilingual staff must complete this step of the identification process.</p> <p>The Reading and Writing sections of the WIDA Screener for Kindergarten test are only appropriate during the second half of the kindergarten year.</p> <p>For students taking the Kindergarten Screener or MODEL test prior to January 1, the students can be administered the listening and speaking domains only. The cut score for the Oral proficiency is 4.5. Students taking the Screener or MODEL after January 1, shall take all four domains. The cut score for the overall composite is 4.5.</p> <p>The district can use the online calculator located at <a href="#">WIDA Screener for Kindergarten Score Calculator</a> after the district administers the WIDA Screener for Kindergarten to determine a composite score. Retain the score of all students tested.</p> |

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| <b>Paper Based Screener Costs</b>        | <p>LEAs are responsible for paying for paper versions of screening.</p> <p>For more information, go to the <a href="#">WIDA Store</a>.</p>  |
| <b>Identification/Placement Criteria</b> | <p><b>Identification Criteria:</b><br/>See <a href="#">Identification of Students as Multilingual Learners</a>, <a href="#">Identification of Preschool Students as Multilingual Learners</a>, and <a href="#">English Language Proficiency Screening for Students with Disabilities</a>.</p> <p><b>Continuance</b><br/>All students who have been identified as multilingual learners, including students with disability and students whose parents have refused services must take the annual state ELP assessment during a specified testing window (See <a href="#">WIDA/New Jersey</a> page). If a new student enters the district two weeks or less prior to the test window closing and is identified as a multilingual learner, the student does not need to be tested during the annual testing window for that school year.</p> <p><b>Exit Criteria:</b><br/>Multilingual learners are assessed annually using WIDA ACCESS for ELLs or WIDA Alternate ACCESS for students who qualify for the DLM state assessment (N.J.A.C. 6A:15-1.9(b)). Multilingual learners can demonstrate readiness to exit by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>First</b>, achieving the Department established cut score, an overall composite of 4.5 or higher on ACCESS for ELLs or A3, Engaging on Alternate ACCESS; and</li><li>• <b>Second</b>, having an English language observation form that indicates the student is ready to exit.</li></ul> <p>All students who are multilingual learners, including multilingual learners with disabilities must demonstrate readiness to exit with the two steps above (see <a href="#">Exiting a Student from Multilingual Learner Status</a>).</p> |

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|  | <p><b>Reentry Criteria</b></p> <p>Newly exited students from ML status who are not academically progressing in classes where English is the primary language of instruction may be considered for reentry to a language instructional education program(see <a href="#">Exiting a Student from Multilingual Learner Status</a>). Criteria for reentry include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Minimum of one-half year and within two years of initial exit.</li><li>• Upon recommendation from a teacher delivering instruction in English, based on documented observation that the student is experiencing difficulties due to using the English language.</li></ul> <p>The student shall be tested using a different form of the ELP assessment then the one used to exit the student.</p> <p><b>Considerations for Students with Disabilities:</b></p> <p>Federal requirements are to assess students in the four domains of Listening, Reading, Writing, and Speaking (See <a href="#">US ED EL Fact Sheet</a> (p.8), May 2020). Students with a disability which precludes assessment of a domain because no appropriate accommodations are available for the affected domain (e.g., non-verbal student who cannot take the speaking portion of the assessment) can be evaluated using the remaining domains. For additional guidance, see <a href="#">English Language Proficiency Screening for Students with Disabilities</a> or contact <a href="mailto:ML@doe.nj.gov">ML@doe.nj.gov</a>.</p> |
| <b>Other Useful Resources or Information</b> | <p><b>Primary Language Assessments</b></p> <p>While the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) encourages school districts/charter schools to assess the primary language literacy of students upon enrollment, it is not required to determine if a student meets the requirements to be identified as a multilingual learner.</p> <p><b>Parental Notification:</b></p> <p>See Title I <a href="#">Parent Notification Requirements</a> in New Jersey for information regarding providing written notification to parents that their child has been identified as a ML and is eligible for placement in a LIEP.</p>  |

### Test Administrator Training and Certification

| Question/Topic                                  | State-specific Guidance  |
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| <b>Test Administrator Qualifications</b>        | <p>A New Jersey certified teacher who has received training and professional development on WIDA User and Training Manuals and has passed quizzes is qualified to administer WIDA tests. Test administrators must meet this requirement annually. See test preparation and training tab on New Jersey's <a href="#">WIDA page</a>.</p>   |
| <b>Test Administrator Training Requirements</b> | <p><b>NJ ACCESS District Test Coordinators must conduct annual training for all school test coordinators and teachers administering the ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS for ELLs, including turnkeying training put out by the NJDOE in the NJ-specific ACCESS District Test Coordinator Training Manual when the updated version is released.</b></p> <p>A New Jersey certified teacher who has received training and PD on WIDA User and Training Manuals and has passed quizzes is qualified to administer WIDA tests. Test administrators must meet this requirement annually. See test preparation and training tab on New Jersey's <a href="#">WIDA page</a>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing for Grades 1-5: Scoring WIDA Screener</li> <li>• Writing for Grades 6-12: Scoring WIDA Screener.</li> </ul> <p><b>New for 2024-25: WIDA Screener training courses will be available on the WIDA Secure Portal July 1, 2024.</b></p> |
| <b>Website Permissions</b>                      | <p><b>WIDA Secure Portal</b><br/>The LEA's District Test Coordinator (DTC) creates WIDA Secure Portal accounts for test administrators at <a href="https://portal.wida.us">portal.wida.us</a>.</p> <p><b>WIDA AMS (DRC)</b><br/>Test administrator receives permissions from the LEA's DTC at <a href="https://wida-ams.us">wida-ams.us</a> to have access to various WIDA assessments and scores.</p>   |

## ELL Program Requirements – Services &amp; Support

| Question/Topic                              | State-specific Guidance   |
|---|---|
| <b>ELL Services or Program Requirements</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Students identified as MLs are eligible for placement in a language instruction educational program (LIEP) unless the parent refuses placement into a LIEP, in whole or part (see below).</li></ul>   |
| <b>Declining Services</b>                   | <p><a href="#">Parental Consent in Bilingual Education:</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Parents have the right to decline placement of their child in whole or part into a LIEP.</li><li>Parents' right-to-decline notification is included in the parent notification letter.</li><li>During the first three years of a ML's participation in a LIEP, the parent or guardian may only remove a ML at the end of the school year. If the parent or guardian wishes to remove the ML prior to the end of the school year, they must have the approval of the county superintendent of schools.</li></ul> |