

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

### Initial Assessment and Identification

Questions/Topic	State-specific Guidance
<b>Process Overview</b>	<p>The department-approved New Mexico Language Usage Survey (LUS) must be completed for all new students initially enrolling in a public school.</p> <p>If any of the answers to questions 1-6 on the LUS are "yes" or if a language other than English is indicated on question 7, the department-approved English language proficiency screener will be administered to the student. The department-approved English language proficiency screeners are the WIDA Screener for Kindergarten and the WIDA Screener Online for grades 1-12.</p> <p>Results of the English language proficiency screening assessment will indicate whether the student is identified as initially fluent English proficiency (IFEP) or as an English learner (EL).</p>
<b>Timelines</b>	<p>Initial identification of a student as an EL and parent notification must <b>occur not later than 30 days after the beginning of the school year</b>, or within two weeks of initial enrollment if not enrolled at the beginning of the school year.</p>

## Initial Assessment and Identification

<b>Language Usage Survey</b>	<p>Parents must complete the department-approved New Mexico Language Usage Survey (LUS) upon initial enrollment in public school. The LUS is completed one time and must be kept in the student's cumulative file, to be transferred as part of the student's records to another district, if necessary.</p> <p>If any of the answers to questions 1-6 on the LUS are "yes" or if a language other than English is indicated on question 7, the English language proficiency screener will be administered to the student.</p> <p>An answer of "yes" in response to any of the Language Usage Survey questions #1-6 and indicating American Sign Language (ASL) only for #7 would not result in administering the department-approved English language proficiency screeners. The use of ASL cannot, in and of itself, serve as the basis for determining that a student is an EL. In the case that a parent or guardian answers "yes" in response to any of the Language Usage Survey questions #1-6 and indicates one or more language(s) other than English as well as/in addition to ASL, the student would continue to be screened using the department-approved English language proficiency screeners.</p> <p>If the student has been classified as having a most significant cognitive disability, the student would be administered the WIDA Alternate Screener. Please contact the Language and Culture Division for further support prior to administering the WIDA Alternate Screener.</p>
<b>State Approved Assessments</b>	<p>Kindergarten: <b>WIDA Screener for Kindergarten</b></p> <p>Grades 1-12: <b>WIDA Screener Online</b></p> <p>*<b>WIDA Screener Paper</b> is administered to students whose IEP or 504 Plan requires it.</p> <p><b>WIDA Alternate Screener</b></p>

## Initial Assessment and Identification

**Paper Based Screener Costs**

Districts may use WIDA Screener Paper for students who require a paper-based form due to IEP or 504 Plan requirements.

Districts are responsible for WIDA Screener Paper purchases. New Mexico PED recommends districts purchase a kit in advance in case it is needed.

For more information on purchasing WIDA Screener Paper, go to the [WIDA Store](#).

WIDA Alternate Screener can be downloaded and printed from the [WIDA Secure Portal](#) for free. The WIDA Alternate Screener: Administration and Scoring training course is available online through the [WIDA Secure Portal](#).

## Initial Assessment and Identification

<b>Identification/Placement Criteria</b>	<p><b>Identification Criteria:</b></p> <p><b>WIDA Screener for Kindergarten scores</b></p> <p>1<sup>st</sup> Semester: Students are identified as ELs with a score of <b>4.0 or lower in the Oral Language Composite score</b>, which includes Listening &amp; Speaking</p> <p>2<sup>nd</sup> Semester: Students are identified as ELs with a score of <b>4.0 or lower in the Overall Composite score</b>, which includes Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing.</p> <p><b>WIDA Screener for Grades 1-12 scores</b></p> <p>Students are identified as EL with an <b>Overall Composite score of 4.0 or lower</b>.</p> <p><b>WIDA Alternate Screener</b></p> <p>Please contact the Language and Culture Division for support with the WIDA Alternate Screener.</p> <p>1<sup>st</sup> Semester Kindergarten: Students are identified as ELs with a score of <b>&lt;3 in the Oral Language Composite score</b>, which includes Listening &amp; Speaking. Students are initial fluent English proficient with a score of 3 or higher in the Oral Language Composite score.</p> <p>2<sup>nd</sup> Semester Kindergarten: Students are identified as ELs with a score of <b>&lt;3 or lower in the Overall Composite score</b>, which includes Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. Students are initial fluent English proficient with a score of 3 or higher in the Overall Composite score.</p> <p>Grades 1-12: Students are identified as EL with an overall composite score of <b>&lt;3 or lower in the Overall Composite score</b>, which includes Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. Students are initial fluent English proficient with a score of 3 or higher in the Overall Composite score.</p> <p><b>Exit Criteria:</b></p> <p>Overall Composite PL <math>\geq</math> 4.7 on ACCESS for ELLs</p> <p>Overall Composite PL <math>\geq</math> Level 3 on WIDA Alternate ACCESS</p>
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## Initial Assessment and Identification

**Other Useful Resources or Information**

The completed LUS form and WIDA Screener for Kindergarten, WIDA Screener for Grades 1-12 or WIDA Alternate Screener results must be included in the student's cumulative file and must transfer as part of student records.

If a student transfers from another school, the receiving school/district must contact the sending school/district to request that the student's original LUS and WIDA Screener for Kindergarten (or W-APT for students who entered Kindergarten prior to SY 2021-2022), WIDA Screener for Grades 1-12 or WIDA Alternate Screener results be sent to the receiving school/district. Further guidance on transfer students can be found on pages 9-10 of the Serving English Learners Technical Assistance Manual that can be found on the [English Learners page](#) of the Language and Culture Division's website.

For more information, please see the document on the Process for Identifying, Serving, and Reclassifying EL Students, the LUS Form, sample parent notification letters and other resources available on the [English Learner Identification page](#) of the Language and Culture Division's website.

Please see the [English Language Development Instructional Framework Guidance Handbook](#) for further information.

For the state's definition of most significant cognitive disabilities please visit the [State of New Mexico Public Education Department Website](#).

## Test Administrator Training and Certification

Question/Topic	State-specific Guidance
<b>Test Administrator Qualifications</b>	Only licensed school instructors, counselors, student success advisors, administrators, or instructional support providers can be test administrators (TAs) for the WIDA Screener for Grades 1-12, the WIDA Screener for Kindergarten, or the WIDA Alternate Screener. TAs for the WIDA Alternate Screener should have familiarity with the student, student's needs and student's responses and communication style.
<b>Test Administrator Training Requirements</b>	<p>Test Administrators (TAs) must re-certify each school year to administer the tests. New Mexico defines the school year as July 1-June 30. To be certified, TAs must complete the required training courses, including certification quizzes. Certifications must be kept on file by the district test coordinator (DTC) for five years.</p> <p><b>WIDA Screener Grades 1-12:</b> 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>• 2025-2026 English Learner Identification Process Training</li> <li>• WIDA Screener Online: Administration</li> <li>• WIDA Screener Paper: Administration</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 WIDA Screener and ACCESS Braille</li> <li>• Speaking for Grades 6-12: Scoring WIDA Screener and ACCESS Braille</li> <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 2025-2026:</b> WIDA Screener training courses for scoring Speaking and Writing no longer include content related to WIDA ACCESS 1-5 or 6-12.</p> <p>TAs must be certified for the grade levels they will be administering to. All training and certification quizzes are located on the WIDA Secure Portal.</p>

## Test Administrator Training and Certification

	<p><b>WIDA Screener for Kindergarten:</b> To be certified to administer the WIDA Screener for Kindergarten, TAs must complete the 2025-2026 English Learner Identification Process Training and WIDA Screener for Kindergarten: Administration and Scoring training course and certification quizzes.</p> <p><b>WIDA Alternate Screener:</b> Test administrators must complete the 2025-2026 English Learner Identification Process Training and WIDA Alternate Screener: Administration and Scoring training course.</p> <p><b>New for 2025-2026:</b> The WIDA Alternate Screener training course will be available July 1.</p>
<b>Website Permissions</b>	<p><b>WIDA Secure Portal</b> (<a href="https://portal.wida.us">portal.wida.us</a>)</p> <p>Contact District Test Coordinator for access to the training materials.</p> <p><b>WIDA AMS (DRC)</b> (<a href="https://wida-ams.us">wida-ams.us</a>)</p> <p>Educator Scoring for WIDA Screener: The local scorer must meet the requirements of a Test Administrator (TA) and complete the Speaking and Writing scoring certifications. TAs contact their District Test Coordinator for permissions.</p> <p>NM Learning Management System (<a href="https://nmped.instructure.com/login/canvas">https://nmped.instructure.com/login/canvas</a>)</p> <p>The 2025-2026 English Learner Identification Process Training is completed in Canvas. Information on Canvas is available here: <a href="https://web.ped.nm.gov/bureaus/learning-management-system/">https://web.ped.nm.gov/bureaus/learning-management-system/</a>). TAs who do not have an existing Canvas account may contact the Learning Management System team for support: <a href="https://web.ped.nm.gov/bureaus/learning-management-system/contacts-and-support/">https://web.ped.nm.gov/bureaus/learning-management-system/contacts-and-support/</a>.</p>

## EL Program Requirements – Services &amp; Support

Question/Topic	State-specific Guidance
<b>EL Services or Program Requirements</b>	<p>EL programs must be designed to meet two goals:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Attainment of English language proficiency</li> <li>2. Meaningful access to all grade-level content instruction</li> </ol>

## EL Program Requirements – Services &amp; Support

	<p>EL programs consist of English language development (ELD) at least 45 minutes daily, which can be a separate pull-out class (K-12) or an ELD block (elementary grades only) and is differentiated based on the English language proficiency level of the ELs. Sheltered instruction is used in all content area classes K-12<sup>th</sup> grade.</p> <p>Please see the <a href="#">English Language Development Instructional Framework Guidance Handbook</a> for further information.</p>
<b>Declining Services</b>	<p>Parents may opt out of EL programs or services; however, the district is still required to provide language support services within the general education classroom. EL students must continue to take the annual ACCESS for ELLs assessment until they reach the minimum exit criteria. Parents cannot opt out of EL identification or ACCESS for ELLs assessment to exit EL status on behalf of the students.</p> <p>To decline EL programs or services, parents annually complete and sign an opt-out form. The students will still be required to take the annual ACCESS for ELLs assessment.</p> <p>Districts/Schools must continue to monitor the English language proficiency and academic progress of students who opt out of EL programs or services. If the district/school determines through its monitoring process that the student is struggling, it should take appropriate steps to assist the student, including, but not limited to, notifying parents and again offering EL services.</p>