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	During registration, all students entering school in Virginia are required to answer three identifying questions developed by the U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Justice which are included verbatim on registration documents or on a separate Home Language Survey provided to all students enrolling in a division. If a parent or guardian responds with any language other than English for one or more questions below, then the student is progressed to the language screening process. • What is the primary language used in the home, regardless of the language spoken by the student? • What is the language most often spoken by the student? • What is the language that the student first acquired?
Timelines	For students who enroll at the beginning of the school year, divisions complete the screening and parent notification process within 30 calendar days of enrollment. For students who enter during the school year, the process must be completed within 14 calendar days.

Initial Assessment and Identification

Home Language Survey	Divisions administer the following questions verbatim to all students enrolling in a Virginia public school on registration documents or on a separate Home Language Survey: • What is the primary language used in the home, regardless of the language spoken by the student? • What is the language most often spoken by the student? • What is the language that the student first acquired? If a parent or guardian responds with any language other than English for one or more questions, then the student is progressed to the language screening process. Designated division personnel review registration and/or home language survey documents submitted to the school for educational information, language, and ELD assessment scores to determine the next steps. If a current WIDA ACCESS score (within one year of testing) is provided, the score can be used to determine the student's EL status and the services to be provided. If a current ACCESS for ELLs score is not provided, designated division personnel should ascertain if the student took the WIDA ACCESS in the last year and follow up with that division in a timely manner or administer a WIDA screening tool to determine the student's English proficiency level. Virginia is not using the WIDA Alternate Screener until the 2026-2027 school year. Once we have established entrance and exit criteria, this document will be updated.
State Approved Assessments	Divisions must select from the available WIDA screener options below. **Kindergarten** • WIDA Screener for Kindergarten **Grades 1-12** • WIDA Screener • WIDA MODEL **Alternate** • Virginia is not using the WIDA Alternate Screener until the 2026-2027 school year. Once we have established entrance and exit criteria, this document will be updated. Additional information on screening is provided in *Superintendent's Memo 189-22: Required Entrance Procedures and Criteria for Identifying Potential English Learners*

Initial Assessment and Identification

	WIDA Screener for Kindergarten is available in Virginia. WIDA supports the use of WIDA Screener for Kindergarten for students: • as they enter kindergarten, beginning in July prior to the start of the school year, • throughout the kindergarten school year • as they enter first grade, until the end of the first semester of the school year. In July 2021, WIDA convened a panel of early childhood education experts to provide recommendations regarding when and under what conditions WIDA Screener for Kindergarten should be administered to students in the spring prior to entering Kindergarten. Their recommendations can be found in the WIDA Secure Portal. Please contact the VDOE Office of Student Assessment at student_assessment@doe.virginia.gov for assistance with implementing this screening option.
Paper Based Screener Costs	School divisions are responsible for purchasing WIDA materials. Divisions can purchase the screener with state or local funds. For more information, go to the WIDA Store.

Initial Assessment and Identification

Identification/Placement Criteria	Recommended screening criteria are provided in *Superintendent's Memo 189-22: Required Entrance Procedures and Criteria for Identifying Potential English Learners*. The Department *recommends* the criteria below for EL identification.

Grade	Screening Tool	Domains	Levels indicating Student is an EL
Rising Kindergarten (summer) through Kindergarten 1st semester	WIDA Screener for Kindergarten	Listening and Speaking	Oral Language Below **4.5**
Kindergarten 2nd semester (and 1st semester of first grade)	WIDA Screener for Kindergarten	Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing	Overall Language Below **4.5**
Kindergarten 1st semester	WIDA MODEL	Listening and Speaking	Oral Language Level less than **5.0**
Kindergarten 2nd semester through 12th grade	WIDA MODEL	Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing	Overall less than **5.0**
Grade 1 - 12	WIDA Screener (online and paper)	Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing	Overall less than **4.5**

| Other Useful Resources or Information | Student Transfers: If it is determined that the student was administered an English language proficiency test while enrolled in a previous school, then staff should seek to obtain test results from the sending school to determine the student's EL status.

If a Home Language Survey was completed in another Virginia public school prior to enrolling at the current school, then staff should compare the response on the two forms for consistency. If inconsistencies are found, staff should determine if the student should be progressed to the language screening process. |
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Initial Assessment and Identification

	If documentation indicates the student is an EL, and if no documentation of the student's English proficiency level is provided, then the student should be administered a WIDA screening instrument to determine an English proficiency level.
	WIDA Screener and ACCESS for ELLs scores should be entered in the division student information system by designated division personnel.
	Contact the VDOE Office of Student Assessment at student_assessment@doe.virginia.gov for assistance with determining the status of transferring ELs.

Test Administrator Training and Certification

Question/Topic	State-specific Guidance
Test Administrator Qualifications	Division test examiners who successfully complete the online WIDA Screener test administrator training in the WIDA Secure Portal and complete any local training required are qualified to administer the assessment(s).
Test Administrator Training Requirements	**WIDA Alternate Screener:** Test administrators must complete the WIDA Alternate Screener: Administration and Scoring training course. **WIDA Screener:** Test administrators must complete the following courses, including passing all applicable certification quizzes, for the tests they will be administering: • WIDA Screener Online: Administration • WIDA Screener Paper: Administration 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: • Speaking for Grades 1-5: Scoring WIDA Screener and ACCESS Braille • Speaking for Grades 6-12: Scoring WIDA Screener and ACCESS Braille • Writing for Grades 1-5: Scoring WIDA Screener • Writing for Grades 6-12: Scoring WIDA Screener New for 2025-2026: WIDA Screener training courses for scoring Speaking and Writing no longer include content related to WIDA ACCESS 1-5 or 6-12. **WIDA Screener for Kindergarten** Test administrators must complete the WIDA Screener for Kindergarten: Administration and Scoring training course and pass the following certification quizzes: • WIDA Screener for Kindergarten: Oral Language • WIDA Screener for Kindergarten: Literacy **WIDA MODEL**

Test Administrator Training and Certification

	Test administrators should review the training CD/DVD and materials included in the assessment kit. Division test examiners must complete all training components, including quizzes/certification, annually.
Website Permissions	**WIDA Secure Portal** (portal.wida.us): Contact Division Director of Testing (DDOT) for access to assessment training. **WIDA AMS (DRC)** (wida-ams.us): Contact Division Director of Testing (DDOT) for permissions to access WIDA Screener test tickets and score reporting.

EL Program Requirements – Services & Support

Question/Topic	State-specific Guidance
EL Services or Program Requirements	All identified ELs grades K-12 other than 'parent refusals' ELs must be placed in effective LIEP services. For divisions accepting Title III funds, the LIEP services are described in their annual Title III application. WIDA Screener Online results are stored in the WIDA AMS application. Enter student proficiency levels in the division Student Information System and code the appropriate Student Record Collection Data (Code 1 for identified ELs receiving EL services, Code 2 for opt-out of EL services). See the Title III Program Website
Declining Services	School divisions must screen potential ELs using the WIDA Screener or WIDA MODEL, prior to the division procedure of parents declining LIEP services. For more information about this requirement, please see Ensuring English Learner Students Can Participate Meaningfully and Equally in Educational Programs. Parents can decline LIEP services ('parent refusals') per division procedures. This should include a written and signed declaration of parental choice documenting that they have full understanding of the LIEP services that they have declined. Annual English language proficiency testing cannot be declined by parents. The division must have a process in place to monitor the academic progress of identified ELs who have declined LIEP services, and they must be provided the same academic programs and services as any student at risk for academic failure. The linguistic needs of these ELs must also be addressed within the general education program.