

Provisional English Learner Identification Process Guide

Fall 2020



The Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) Office of Student Assessment released [English Learner \(EL\) Screening Guidance for Fall 2020](#) identifying additional flexibility to support schools implementing instruction in virtual (remote) settings. This supplement to the guidance details the provisional identification of ELs during the fall semester of the 2020-2021 school year. The provisional identification process must be followed only if attempts to schedule in-person testing have been exhausted, as detailed in the [EL Screening Guidance for Fall 2020](#). Additionally, the United States Department of Education (USED) released the [Fact Sheet: Providing Services to English Learners during the COVID-19 Outbreak](#) in May 2020, which provides additional information on meeting requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and other federal laws pertaining to ELs, and serves as the basis for this guidance.

It is important to note the following:

- The provisional identification process does not replace the requirement to formally screen students via the Kindergarten W-APT or WIDA Screener. A formal, in-person screening must be conducted as soon as possible or once school resumes for any student given a provisional status utilizing this protocol.
- Students identified provisionally have not formally “entered” EL status until the formal screener is administered, the results of which must meet Indiana’s [entrance requirements](#). Because of this, students are not assigned a formal numerical proficiency level based on the provisional identification.

The provisional identification process is a temporary measure intended to:

- Meet the federal requirements of identifying ELs and notifying families within the first 30 calendar days of the start of the school year, or within two weeks if enrolling after the beginning of the year.
- Provide context for delivering language services and supports until being able to administer Kindergarten W-APT or WIDA Screener.

The USED Fact Sheet cites the following regarding provisional identification of ELs:

“SEAs and LEAs could apply temporary entrance procedures that permit the presumption of EL identification based on a home language survey and rely on appropriate follow up, including but not limited to, discussion with parents and/or students (as appropriate) in order to provide needed language services, if the alternative is failing to provide any English language services to students in need of them.”

Indiana has chosen to provisionally identify ELs based on a Home Language Survey listing a language other than English. Ensuing interviews and interactions with the family and student will be required to inform the design of services. Documentation of this process is also required and must be kept in the student’s cumulative folder. Consult the attached Provisional English Learner Identification Process for step-by-step instructions and documentation requirements.

Provisional English Learner Identification Process

The below steps are to occur after the proper administration of the Home Language Survey for students enrolling in Indiana for the first time, and after attempts to schedule in-person, formal screening have been unsuccessful, as detailed in the English Learner Screening Guidance. If in-person screening cannot be conducted within the federally required timeline, then the Local Education Agency (LEA) must ensure that a provisional method is utilized to provide services until a WIDA placement assessment can be administered for formal identification and funding determinations. An LEA completing the steps below will be considered compliant in meeting the 30-day legal requirement to assess and begin services in the scenario when a placement test cannot yet be administered.

| Steps | Documentation |
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| <p>1. Gather and review student's past academic records, if applicable.</p> | <p>Students who already have a WIDA assessment result within the past year that does not meet Indiana's exit criteria should automatically enter EL status. A formal screener would not need to be administered in this case.</p> <p>Regardless of the presence of past WIDA results, past academic records, such as past summative and formative assessment results, grade reports, and work examples, should be reviewed to gain an understanding of the students' English proficiency and academic progress.</p> |
| <p>2. Conduct a phone interview with the family to further understand language context.</p> | <p>The purpose of this phone interview is to confirm the responses of the Home Language Survey, and gain additional context on the student's linguistic background beyond that of the HLS.</p> <p>The interview should include discussions on topics such as past schooling and academic progress, language history, and current language use. It is imperative that the purpose of the questioning is explained: to gain a further understanding of the student's language use to inform services and supports.</p> <p>Example Questions pertaining to student language use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• When at home, how often does this student hear a language other than English?• When at home, how often does this student speak a language other than English?• When interacting with their parents or guardians, how often does this student hear a language other than English?• Within the last 12 months, when interacting with caregivers other than parents/guardians, how often did this student hear a language other than English?• When interacting with siblings or other children in their home, how often does this student hear or use a language other than English? |

| Steps | Documentation |
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| <p>3. Conduct a virtual, one-on-one meeting with the student to observe student language use.</p> | <p>The purpose of this meeting is to obtain a baseline understanding of a student's English proficiency, and should be conducted by trained EL staff. IDOE recommends this meeting be, at least initially, informal in nature, to increase the student's comfort level and for the teacher to get to know the student. While the meeting may only consist of oral language (listening and speaking domains), it is recommended that reading and writing samples also be acquired to make the most informed decision regarding level of services.</p> <p>A consistent and structured method must be used within the LEA to provisionally determine services. The options below can support teachers as they conduct this meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Council Great City Schools EL Use Questionnaire</u>: This questionnaire was developed specifically for this purpose, and has example questions categorized by grade level. This is the basis of a more informal interview. • <u>CCSSO: Discerning and Fostering What English Learners Can Do with Language</u>: This document contains language use observational rubrics (see appendices), which can assist with gaining a more in-depth understanding of the student's proficiency level based on observations of the student participating in grade level instruction. <p>Based on the results of the one-on-one, IDOE recommends classifying English learner proficiency into broad groupings, such as Beginning - Intermediate - Advanced, per the tools referenced above.</p> |
| <p>4. Collaborate to design English Language Development services and supports (including the creation of an ILP).</p> | <p>Students in provisional status must have their language needs met by a language instruction educational program. Based on the results of steps 1-3, students must receive a level of services commensurate with an EL at a similar level of proficiency. All provisionally identified students must have an ILP created, as would any other EL student. Accommodations for instruction and formative assessments should be implemented as appropriate.</p> <p>Collaboration between EL staff, classroom teachers, and other staff serving the student (i.e. Special Education teacher, when applicable) is critical to developing responsive services and supports.</p> <p>NOTE: While students may demonstrate high levels of English proficiency, a determination of "Proficient" cannot be made from this provisional process. Services for students with higher levels of proficiency should align with services for other ELs at higher levels (i.e 4.0-4.9), until a formal screener can occur.</p> |

| Steps | Documentation |
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| <p>5. Notify parents of provisional services.</p> | <p>Per the USED Fact Sheet, “An LEA may also communicate with parents by telephone...and explain to parents orally the information required by Section 1112(e) (3) of ESEA to be included in the parent notice in order to start providing EL services remotely to those students.”</p> <p>A school must communicate with parents the provisional EL status, along with the required information shared in the Annual Parent Notification Letter (i.e. program model) within 30 days of the start of the school year, or within two weeks for students enrolling later in the school year. NOTE: A numeric proficiency level should not be shared, as it is not applicable in the provisional process.</p> <p>An Annual Parent Notification letter is also able to be sent, utilizing existing formats with adjustments to account for the provisional status. Indiana schools have access to Transact to generate Parent Notification letters, which can also be altered to detail the provisional designation and lack of numeric proficiency level.</p> <p>Regardless of the communication method utilized, it is required to document this outreach to parents and families. Communication must occur in a language the parents understand, which may require interpretation.</p> |
| <p>6. Document process and complete Jotform.</p> | <p>Documentation of this process must be collected for students in provisional status, and placed in the student cumulative folder. An example form is attached to this guidance. Once steps 1-5 have been fulfilled, complete this Jotform to inform IDOE of which students are in provisional status.</p> |
| <p>7. Continue to monitor student language and gather more data via formative assessments and student language use examples.</p> | <p>Because no formal assessment data will be initially collected, it is especially important to continue to monitor student’s academic and language progress throughout the period of provisional identification. Initial interviews and language observations may not fully reflect the student’s language proficiency, and ongoing formative and informal assessments and analysis of language use should dictate alterations in services, the ILP, or supports.</p> |
| <p>8. Formally screen the student via Kindergarten W-APT or WIDA Screener, when able.</p> | <p>This will remove the provisional status and formally determine EL placement. Formal parent notification is also still required, if the student qualifies for services.</p> |

Additional Considerations

Language Minority (LM) Reporting

All students who have a language other than English, assigned based off of HLS response(s), must be reported annually on the IDOE Language Minority (LM) Report. The LM reporting window will begin on October 1, and the close has been extended to December 16. This will allow schools the entirety of the first semester to formally screen ELs and report an accurate proficiency level on the LM report. IDOE will release guidance on how to report provisional ELs, in the event students are still unable to be formally screened prior to the reporting deadline.

Test Label (DOE-TL) Reporting

All ELs must be reported via the DOE-TL data submission for participation in the annual WIDA ACCESS test window. The DOE-TL window is open now through November 6. IDOE recommends that only formally identified ELs be reported initially. Provisional ELs who are eventually formally screened and identified can be submitted through November 6. Provisional ELs formally identified after November 6 can be manually added in WIDA AMS beginning December 2. An Additional Materials Order can be placed, if needed, January 4 through February 19, 2021.

Indiana ILP

Students who are in provisional status must have an ILP, and this can be accomplished for those utilizing the Indiana ILP system. Due to the fact that an entered proficiency level score of less than 5.0 is what triggers EL status code, which allows for an ILP to be created, entering provisional status will require additional guidance. Please reach out to Adam Pitt (apitt@doe.in.gov) or Emma Everson (eeverson@doe.in.gov) for instructions.

Special thank you to Council for Great City Schools, Council of Chief State School Officers, and the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

Sample Provisional English Learner Identification Documentation Form

| Steps | Date Completed | Signature | Notes |
|---|----------------|-----------|-------|
| 1. Gather and review student's past academic records, if applicable. | | | |
| 2. Conduct a phone interview with the family to further understand language context. | | | |
| 3. Conduct a virtual, one-on-one meeting with the student to observe student language use. | | | |
| 4. Collaborate to design English Language Development services and supports (including the creation of an ILP). | | | |
| 5. Notify parents of provisional services. | | | |
| 6. Document process and complete <u>Jotform</u> . | | | |
| 7. Continue to monitor student language and gather more data via formative assessments and student language use examples. | | | |
| 8. Formally screen the student via Kindergarten W-APT or WIDA Screener, when able. | | | |