



Standardized Entrance and Exit Procedures for Iowa's English Learners

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Introduction

Iowa is responsible for identifying which of its students are English learners. This is critical to the success of these students. To ensure consistent identification of English Learners (ELs), reclassification of English learners, and the monitoring of Former English Learners (FELs), the Iowa Department of Education continues to implement standardized statewide entrance and exit procedures. The procedures were effective upon the implementation of the statewide ESSA plan. Iowa districts are expected to implement each step as each step is important to the entire standardized protocol. Iowa's standardized entrance and exit procedures were developed in collaboration with representatives from several school districts, all area education agencies and other English learner professionals.

Standardized Statewide Entrance and Exit Procedures

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), requires that state education agencies (SEAs) that receive Title III grants, create and implement “standardized, statewide entrance and exit procedures” for ELs, “including an assurance that all students who may be [ELs] are assessed for such status within 30 days of enrollment in a school in the State.” [ESEA section 3113(b)(2)]. To that end, the purpose of this document is to ensure standardized procedures for the entrance and exit of English learners in the state of Iowa.

This guidance document establishes standardized statewide entrance and exit procedures that correspond to both federal legislation and state policy regarding the identification, support, and reclassification of English learners.

This document was developed and informed by the following:

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Equal Educational Opportunities ACT (EEOA) establish that all States and LEAs must ensure that English learners (ELs) can participate meaningfully and equally in educational programs and services.

Case law: *Castaneda v Pickard*, *Lau v Nichols*, and *Plyler v Doe*

- Federal Guidance from the Office for Civil Rights and the Department of Justice: Dear Colleague Letter of Jan. 2015
- Federal Law-ESEA as amended by ESSA (2015)
 - Title I
 - Title III
 - Title III Non-Regulatory Guidance (2016)
 - Title III Addendum to Non-Regulatory (2019)
- Iowa State Code
 - 281—60.3(1)

Identifying and Assessing Potential English Learners (EL)

According to chapter one of the U.S. Department of Education's EL toolkit, identifying and assessing all potential English learners is one of the most critical “affirmative steps” and “appropriate action[s]” that local education agencies (LEAs) must take to ensure eligible English learners receive language assistance services in a timely manner. Eligible students must receive placement in language instruction programs as soon as possible and within 30 days of enrollment.

Step 1: Administering the Home Language Survey

The completion of the Home Language Survey (HLS) is the first step in identifying potential English learners. In accordance with federal law and required by Iowa code 281—60.3(1), LEAs are required to administer an HLS for all students at the time of enrollment. The HLS is designed to gather information about a student's language background and identify students whose primary language or home language is other than English. This is the first step in ensuring the timely process of identifying potential ELs who qualify for language instruction programming which is critical for success in content learning. To obtain accurate information, schools should reassure parents that the HLS is used solely to offer appropriate educational services, not for determining legal status or for immigration purposes (*Plyler v Doe*). To ensure effective administration of the HLS, as well as compliance with state requirements, LEAs may consider using this [checklist](#) (see page 2) as a resource.

Prior to August 1, 2022 (or enrollment for the 22-23 school year), LEAs must use the existing HLS found on [Transact](#), which is a broad form that includes language use questions and additional data elements. One data element seeks to determine "immigrant" status for funding purposes. The term "immigrant children and youth" refers to individuals who: Are aged 3 through 21 and were not born in any state or US territory (ESEA Title III, Sec. 3201(5)). The contents of this form can also be used for online enrollment and registration. This form should be administered by someone with background knowledge of the purpose of the form and has the ability to analyze answers and ask appropriate follow up questions to determine whether or not a student is a potential English learner. All of the information collected is required in Iowa code and therefore the complete HLS and other information on the form found on [Transact](#) should be used. Please note, only ONE HLS should be administered upon initial enrollment and NOT each year. If a student comes from another state, an Iowa HLS must be administered. If student is transferring from within Iowa, the original HLS is to be used. The HLS is always requested with the student's entire cumulative file.

Effective August 1, 2022 (or enrollment for the 22-23 school year), Iowa will implement a new HLS which replaces the language use current questions with three required questions. The three questions have been approved by the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) and the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ).

The required questions are:

1. What is the primary language used in the regardless of the language spoken by the student?
2. What is the language most often spoken by the student?
3. What is the language that the student first acquired?

Reminder: While the 3 questions will determine screening eligibility, the broader form should be considered as it contains other data elements the LEA needs to collect.

**It should also be noted that LEAs not obtain a new HLS for existing students but must use the new form as described above for all new students entering the district beginning August 1, 2022 (or enrollment for the 22-23 school year).

LEAs may access the new form through [Transact](#). The HLS must be appropriately filed with the other permanent student enrollment documentation.

FAQs

1. Is it permissible to have office staff administer the HLS?

While it is permissible, it is not recommended. This is a crucial step in the identification of potential English learners. At the very least, if it is necessary to have office staff administer the HLS, they should be well trained to do so.

2. What if a district initially determines a student is not a potential EL and does not administer the screener but later learns information which indicates the student is a potential EL, how should the district proceed?

The district should screen if there is reasonable indication that the student has been missed and is a potential EL. The district is responsible for using additional information (e.g. observations, conversations, late records, etc.) to determine whether or not the screener should be administered.

3. If a parent indicates a language other than English on one of the three required questions, should the student be screened?

Barring a legitimate error in a parent's response, if the answer to any of the three questions is a language other than English (beginning August 1, 2022 or enrollment for the 22-23 school year) the student must be screened.

4. With conflicting HLSs which one should be considered?

The initial HLS should be used. The original HLS should travel with the cumulative file.

5. Should a student be screened again if they move into a new district?

No, the student should not be rescreened.

6. Can the screener be used for formative assessments?

No. This is not permissible as it may create problems with funding levels for state weighted funds and it is developed only for the purposes of identifying ELs.

7. How often do parents need to complete the HLS? Is this the same for online registration?

The HLS must be completed *only once* upon initial enrollment into the school. The district has the responsibility to ensure that parents are not completing one each year, this includes online registration. In the case that an additional HLS is filled out in error and they do not match, the LEA should rely on the initial HLS.

8. Should LEAs administer the HLS to preschool and Kindergarten students?

Yes. Pre-school and kindergarten require the HLS. Preschool programs may use the K-12 HLS or the one in TS GOLD. The Department encourages the TS GOLD one as they have to complete the GOLD assessment under Iowa Code 279.60. Kindergarten (including transitional Kindergarten programs) must use the K-12 HLS as found on [Transact](#).

9. Should schools screen or assess preschool students?

Preschool students do not take the screener or the Iowa's summative English language proficiency assessment. However, in the case of transitional kindergartners, who are funded as kindergartners, they do take Iowa's screener and summative assessment.

10. Do preschool students qualify for EL services? Do they qualify for Title III funds?

Preschool students do not generate Title III funds. Title III funds may be used for preschool programs. It is allowable, but not required, that LEAs serve them.

11. Do home school students qualify for EL?

If homeschooled students are screened and qualify for services, they may enter into shared enrollment in their home district for services which they would receive at the school site.

12. Are nonpublic schools required to serve their ELs?

The nonpublic school has an affirmative responsibility to ensure its English learners are provided services. It can send students to the public district to meet this requirement or provide the service for students at its own expense. See Serving Nonpublic School English Learners attached [here](#).

13. Do foreign exchange students qualify for EL services?

Typically, foreign exchange students are supposed to have English proficiency; however, if they need language support a district could provide them services.

Reference and Resource

United States Department of Education. (2015). English Learner Toolkit: *Chapter 1 [Tools and Resources for Identifying All English Learners](#)*. Office of English Language Acquisition. <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/chap1.pdf>

Step 2: English Language Proficiency Screening

Iowa Code (281--60.3(1)(b))

Students identified as prominently using a language other than English in the home shall be assessed by the LEA. The assessment shall include (1) an assessment of the student's English proficiency in the areas of speaking, listening, reading, and writing;

If the HLS indicates a language other than English, the ELPA21 Dynamic Screener is the approved instrument to be administered to potential English learners (ELs) enrolling in Iowa schools. The purpose of the screener is to determine whether a student is eligible for EL services.

In the case of Kindergartners, the Future Kindergarten version of the screener is to be used for Spring enrollees for the fall term and for Kindergartners enrolling in August through the end of the fall term. Beginning in mid-January, current year enrolling Kindergartners are screened using the ELPA21 Kindergarten Dynamic Screener.

The process for identifying potential ELs will typically fall into one of three categories:

- Students enrolling in a U.S. school for the first time (typically kindergartners and students arriving from another country)
- Students moving within the state of Iowa
- Students moving to Iowa from an ELPA21 state
- Students moving to Iowa from a non-ELPA21 state

Each situation requires different considerations for screening as outlined below:

Students Enrolling in a U.S. School for the First Time

All kindergarten students, including transitional kindergarten students (TK), and students newly arrived from another country are given the ELPA21 Dynamic Screener upon enrollment to determine eligibility for language development services if a language other than English is indicated on the HLS.

Students Moving within the State of Iowa

If Dynamic Screener results exist, those results should be used to determine EL eligibility. When a student moves between Iowa schools, the Dynamic Screener does not need to be re-administered. The incoming LEA identifies the student as an EL based on the previous LEA's ELPA21 Dynamic Screener results.

If ELPA21 Summative results indicate lack of EL proficiency, the scores may be used to determine program placement.

If the student arrives with a determination of Proficient on an ELPA21 Summative assessment, the student is not identified as an EL.

Students Moving to Iowa from Another ELPA21 State

When students move to Iowa from another state that administers the ELPA21 Dynamic Screener and Summative assessments, the scores may be used to determine program placement. Students with scores of Emerging and Progressing should be identified as ELs and should continue receiving services. Students arriving with a Proficient determination should not be identified as an EL. Other ELPA21 states are:

- Arkansas
- Louisiana
- Nebraska
- Ohio
- Oregon
- Washington (score only)
- West Virginia

Students Moving to Iowa from a Non-ELPA21 State

Students moving to Iowa from a non-ELPA21 state **may** be able to show proficiency as measured by another English language proficiency (ELP) instrument. In order to consider another instrument in lieu of a proficient ELPA21 score, **all** of the following criteria must be met:

- The proficient score must be from a **summative** ELP assessment, not a screener;
 - State summative tests include WIDA ACCESS for ELs, LAS LINKS, NYSESLAT (NY), AZELLA (AZ), ELPAC (CA), and TELPAS (TX). Note: All of these assessment systems have a screener component which would *not* be approved for use.
 - Examples of instruments not approved for this purpose are screener-only assessments such as IPT, Woodcock-Munoz, and QIA.
- The instrument should be valid and reliable for measuring English language proficiency, not English language arts (ELA);
- The instrument must assess all domains of language—Speaking, Listening, Reading, and Writing;
- The student's score determination must be considered Proficient as measured by the instrument.
- Results must be reviewed and approved by the LEA's EL Director or EL Assessment Coordinator. The Iowa Department of Education's EL Assessment Consultant should be contacted if there are any questions or concerns related to incoming scores and/or assessment related concerns or questions.

The LEA must document that the student's out-of-state summative ELP assessment score met the above criteria. This documentation along with required approval is to be kept on file in the student's cumulative file.

Documentation must include:

- Name of the test and state in which it was administered
- Date administered and grade level of the student at the time of the assessment
- Proficient score or determination achieved--this should include a Proficiency Level Descriptor (PLD) or other evidence to show the score achieved is Proficient as measured by the assessment
- Name of the LEA EL coordinator making the determination
- Other evidence to support the decision

If the evidence supporting a score of Proficient on another state's summative assessment is not clear or there are questions, the LEA should proceed with testing the student on the ELPA21 Dynamic Screener.

FAQs

1. What if a student's summative score of Proficient is not recent?

If the Proficient determination meets the criteria, it should be accepted barring some unusual circumstances such as the student having been out of the country for an extended period of time in the interim.

2. What if the student scored proficient on a summative ELP assessment, but moved out of the country for an extended time and is now returning to an Iowa school?

This should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. If the student has not had the opportunity to practice English for an extended period of time, screening should always be an option. Students who are out of the country for weeks or a couple of months may not see a change in their skills, however, students who have been out of the country for a time period that stretches into years, likely will need to be reevaluated.

3. What if records for the summative ELP score arrive after a student has been screened on the ELPA screener and the scores are conflicting? For example, out-of-state summative results are Proficient and ELPA21 is Progressing?

This is a situation that will need to be looked at on an individual basis. It comes down to meeting the needs of the student, documenting the evidence for the decision, and timeliness. Additionally, it is important to consider if and how the information has been shared with parents. For example, if parents have not yet been notified, and it is early in the process, it may be less problematic to make a change. If the student has been served and parents have been notified, it may be best to stay with the original decision.

4. What if the Proficient score is from the ALT-ACCESS (Alternate ELP Assessment for ELs with the most significant cognitive disabilities)?

A Proficient determination from the ALT-ACCESS should be accepted as evidence of the student's proficiency.

5. What if obtaining the records becomes difficult and has the potential to extend past the 30-day limit for identification?

LEAs are obligated to complete the identification process within the 30-day time period; therefore, if a LEA cannot obtain evidence of proficiency within that time frame, the student must be administered the ELPA21 Screener.

6. What if a student comes with an ELP score from a previous LEA, but it is unclear what the score actually means?

The EL coordinator evaluating the out-of-state score will need to understand the proficiency levels that the test uses to describe the student's skills in order to determine whether the student is considered a Proficient English speaker as measured by the instrument. If the EL coordinator cannot determine what the student's score means, then the ELPA21 Screener should be administered.

7. What if the student comes with a Proficient ELP summative score and is, therefore, not initially identified as EL, but over time it becomes clear the student could benefit from services?

Just as in the case with any former EL who may reenter the program to receive language development services, the student assistance team should meet to determine factors that may be contributing to the student not being successful and apply interventions or other support. If the team determines that the student is struggling due to language acquisition, then the screener should be administered. If the results of the screener show the student is not proficient, the student will be identified as an EL.

8. Would the Home Language Survey (HLS) still be filled out by family?

Yes, the HLS is always part of the registration process for any new students to the state.

9. What if we can ascertain the student scored Proficient on a non-ELPA21 screener and has high grades in recent content classes?

Unless the LEA has evidence of a Proficient determination on a Summative ELP Assessment, the student must be administered the ELPA21 Screener to determine proficiency.

10. What if the previous school receives information by phone on the student's previous EL history and is able to ascertain the student scored Proficient on the state's ELP summative assessment while waiting for records to arrive?

The LEA must make every effort to complete the identification process within the 30-day timeline. It is important to document the necessary information the previous school is able to provide by phone or other means. LEAs should proceed based on the phone call evidence with the caveat that if evidence to the contrary arrives, steps will be taken to modify the initial decision. Always keep in mind student privacy concerns when communicating by email. Follow LEA guidelines on transfer of student data as required by FERPA.

11. If students enroll in an Iowa school with a Proficient score from an ELPA21 summative or other out-of-state summative assessment, must the LEA monitor them?

In these situations, the time since the assessments were administered may vary widely. The students should be monitored informally to ensure they are successful in content classes and are not struggling due to language acquisition challenges. It is not necessary to officially code the student as monitored in the student information system.

Erroneously EL Identified Students

An erroneously identified EL is a student who was identified as an EL but should not have been because the student does not in fact meet the definition of “English learner” in ESEA section 8101(20). The erroneous identification may have occurred as part of the initial identification process, e.g., due to a parent’s inaccurate completion of the home language survey, administration of an EL screening assessment without providing for appropriate accommodations for a student with disabilities, inaccurate scoring on the annual ELP assessment, or other reasons.

On these rare occasions, when a student is erroneously identified, it is the role of the LEA to determine if a mistake was made. If a district has evidence that the student is an EL, the student remains an EL and should be supported as such. If a mistake has been made and the LEA has evidence that the student is not an EL, then the LEA’s EL administrator should contact the state to rectify the error. In all cases, careful documentation should be made regardless of the decision. It should be noted that a parent’s objection to the designation of “English learner” is not grounds for considering erroneous identification.

FAQs

1. What if a parent objects to the EL identification and does not agree that the student is an EL.

A parent’s objection to the EL identification does not mean that the designation of EL should be removed. If the parent wishes to waive services, every effort should be made to communicate with the parent about the benefits of services. While the parents may decline services, the student remains an EL student until s/he performs proficiently on the summative ELP assessment. Even if a parent declines services it does not relieve the LEA’s responsibility to ensure the EL student’s language and academic needs are met.

2. May an LEA remove a student’s EL designation if that student was erroneously identified as an EL, even if the student does not score proficient on the annual ELP assessment?

If the student is not an EL and was erroneously identified as such, yes, the LEA can remove the EL designation. The circumstances for doing such should be carefully documented and placed in the student’s cumulative file.

Parent Notification

Communicating EL Identification and Eligibility for EL Programming

LEAs must provide notices ([Transact](#)) within thirty days to parents of English learners regarding the EL student’s identification and placement in a language instruction educational program (LIEP). LEAs must, to the extent practicable, translate such notices in a language that the parent can understand. If written translations are not practicable, LEAs must offer EL parents free oral interpretation of the written information. In light of these obligations and the duty to timely identify all English learners, LEAs will need to assess potential English learners’ English proficiency and identify non-proficient students as EL as soon as practicable and should be well before the thirty-day notice deadline.

Reference and resource:

United States Department of Education. (2015). English Learner Toolkit: [Chapter 10 Ensuring Meaningful Communication with Limited English Proficient Parents](#). Office of English Language Acquisition. <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/chap10.pdf>

Placement in Language Instruction Education Program

While types of EL programs may differ in practice, all must be designed to provide English language services and support ELs in content learning. EL services and programs must be educationally sound in theory and effective in practice. EL programs must be designed to enable ELs to attain both English proficiency and parity of participation in the standard instructional program within a reasonable length of time. LEAs must offer EL services and programs, until ELs are proficient in English and can participate meaningfully in educational programs without EL support. To be able to participate equally and meaningfully in instructional programs, English learners have to acquire English proficiency and recoup any deficits that they may incur in other areas of the curriculum as a result of spending extra time on English Language Development (ELD) (Castañeda, 648 F.2d at 1011). Additionally, LEAs must provide appropriate special education services to ELs with disabilities. LEAs must ensure that English learners who have or are suspected of having a disability under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 are located, identified, and evaluated in a timely manner and that the language needs of students who need these related services are considered in evaluations and delivery of services. (20 U.S.C. §§ 1400-1419; 34 C.F.R. pt. 300; 29 U.S.C. § 794; 34 C.F.R. pt. 104)

If parents opt their children out of an EL program or specific EL services, the children retain their status as English learners, and the LEA remains obligated to take the “affirmative steps” required by Title VI and the “appropriate action” required by the EEOA to provide these English learners access to its educational programs, OCR Guidance; 20 U.S.C. § 1703(f)

References and resources:

United States Department of Education. (2015). English Learner Toolkit: *Chapter 2 [Providing English Learners with a Language Assistance Program](https://ncela.ed.gov/files/english_learner_toolkit/2-OELA_2017_language_assist_508C.pdf)*. Office of English Language Acquisition.
https://ncela.ed.gov/files/english_learner_toolkit/2-OELA_2017_language_assist_508C.pdf

United States Department of Education. (2015). English Learner Toolkit: *Chapter 3 [Staffing and Supporting an EL Program](https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/chap3.pdf)*. Office of English Language Acquisition.
<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/chap3.pdf>

United States Department of Education. (2015). English Learner Toolkit: *Chapter 4 [Meaningful Access to Core Curricular, Extra Curricular Programs](https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/chap4.pdf)*. Office of English Language Acquisition.
<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/chap4.pdf>

United States Department of Education. (2015). English Learner Toolkit: *Chapter 5 [Creating an Inclusive Environment and Avoiding Unnecessary Segregation](https://ncela.ed.gov/files/english_learner_toolkit/5-OELA_2017_inclusion_rev_508C.pdf)*. Office of English Language Acquisition.
https://ncela.ed.gov/files/english_learner_toolkit/5-OELA_2017_inclusion_rev_508C.pdf

Opting Out (Waiving) EL Services

The law allows parents the right to opt their children out of EL programs (i.e. waive services) or particular EL services. This decision must be voluntary and based on a full understanding of the EL child’s rights, the range of services available to the child, and the benefits of such services to the child. If a parent decides to opt his or her child out of EL programs or particular EL services, that child still retains his or her status as an EL. LEAs must continue to monitor the English language proficiency (ELP) and academic progress of students who opt out of EL programs and services. If a student does not demonstrate appropriate growth in ELP or maintain appropriate academic levels, the LEA must inform the parents in a language they understand and offer EL services. This must occur annually.

FAQs

1. Can the parent request the student only receive some services (e.g. only in class support, etc.)?

Yes, a parent may accept only portions of the LIEP.

2. Can an LEA encourage groups of parents to waive services? (e.g. alternative programs, special ed, scheduling conflicts, etc.)

No. This violates the law. All English learners must be encouraged to participate in EL programming.

3. Can an LEA recommend only portions of a program or recommend waiving services due to scheduling issues, building location of the services, etc.

No. The LEA cannot encourage parents to pare down or waive programming for any reason.

4. Is a phone call sufficient for waiving services?

A phone call is generally not sufficient unless a call is the only means of communication, for example, in a health emergency. The LEA should appeal to the parents letting them know the benefits of accepting services and the possible drawbacks to waiving services. If parents waive services, the LEA should keep documentation of the conversation and parent signatures should be kept on file.

5. Do parents need to waive services annually?

Yes, each year the LEA must meet with parents to ensure that they understand the benefits of EL programming as well as the possible detriment of waiving EL services for their child.

Reference and resource:

United States Department of Education. (2015). English Learner Toolkit: *Chapter 7 [Serving English Learners who Opt-Out of EL Programs](https://ncela.ed.gov/files/english_learner_toolkit/7-OELA_2017_optout_508C.pdf)*. Office of English Language Acquisition.
https://ncela.ed.gov/files/english_learner_toolkit/7-OELA_2017_optout_508C.pdf

Monitoring the EL Student

(Note: the term monitoring can be confusing as it is used in many contexts consistent with the use of the word monitor by the federal government. In this portion, the word monitor is referring to the monitoring which is required during the student's language instruction education program. English learners, including those who have opted out of EL programs and services, are to be included in the monitoring process. Monitoring must occur at least annually for progress in achieving English Language Proficiency (ELP) and acquiring content knowledge.)

LEAs monitoring of ELs' should include progress toward established benchmarks for expected growth in ELP and the grade-level content areas and assisting students who are not making timely progress towards those goals. Considerations for language support as well as academic support must be made.

Annually, in Iowa, all English learners must take the ELPA21 summative assessment. There are no exceptions to this requirement. Until a student scores Proficient on the annual ELPA21, the student must continue to receive EL services. It is prudent at this time to review the student's individual LIEP to ensure that the student's language needs (frequency and intensity of support) are being met effectively and in a timely fashion. It is also equally important to ensure that each student is getting the appropriate level of support in academic areas. *Lau v. Nichols* requires English learners be provided access to the curriculum with support when appropriate, regardless of their language proficiency levels, and will benefit from the same high level of rigor offered to non-English learners in content areas.

United States Department of Education. (2015). English Learner Toolkit: *Chapter 8 [Monitoring and Exiting English Learners from EL Programs and Services](https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/chap8.pdf)*. Office of English Language Acquisition. <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/chap8.pdf>

FAQs

1. Should a student be enrolled in grade level coursework even if they have limited English skills?

Yes. *Lau v. Nichols* requires that students be given adequate support in content classes so they do not fall (further) behind in content learning while they are learning English.

2. If a newcomer with limited formal education comes with very low skills and knowledge in content learning, should s/he be included in grade level courses?

School districts may use a curriculum that temporarily emphasizes English language acquisition over other subjects, provided that any interim academic deficit in other subjects are remedied within a reasonable length of time (DOJ/OCR Dear Colleague Letter, Jan. 2015, page 19).

Reclassification (i.e. Exiting) of English Learners

This portion of the manual provides guidance for when and how to Reclassify/Exit English learners (ELs) from a LIEP. More specifically, this section reviews the criteria for reclassifying/exiting ELs in the state of Iowa as well as the ELPA21 proficiency scores required for reclassification/exit.

This section is also a reminder that Iowa no longer uses academic test scores to keep students in EL services. As indicated by the Office of Civil Rights, students should be in EL services and programming because of language needs and not because of academic or content deficits. Therefore, upon receiving a proficient score on the ELPA21 summative assessment, the student has the language skills to access curriculum and if deficits in content areas exist, the LEA is responsible for remedying those deficits swiftly. Further, if this is a common occurrence within the LEA, program effectiveness should be considered and ineffectiveness addressed.

LEAs must wait until ELPA21 test scores are available before exiting (i.e. reclassifying) ELs. When students score 4s and/or 5s on all domain subtests of the ELPA21 (Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing), they will receive a determination of Proficient. Proficient students are no longer considered English learners and are, therefore, exited. Proficient students must be reclassified or “exited” between the posting of the summative assessment (ELPA21) results and September 30 in order that reclassified students are reported properly.

FAQs

1. Can ELs remain in the program even if they test as proficient on ELPA21? (For example, they are not proficient in ISASP, FAST, or successful in gen. ed. classes.)?

No, once they have scored as proficient in English as measured by Iowa’s ELP summative assessment, they are to be exited and reclassified as a former EL. These students are no longer considered ELs and should be supported in the same manner as all learners are supported. They are to be supported by building student support teams such as building assistance teams, MTSS teams, etc. Further, every effort should be made to swiftly address any academic deficits.

Monitoring the Former English Learners (FEL)

(Note: The term monitoring can be confusing as it is used in many contexts but is consistent with the use of the word monitor by the federal government. In this portion, the word monitor is referring to the monitoring which is required after a student has been reclassified to a former EL (FEL) and is deemed to have English language proficiency. This portion also uses the term “monitoring” in reference to the federal government’s monitoring of the academic achievement of FELs.)

Once reported as reclassified/exited, students exiting from EL status must be monitored for at least two years to ensure that they are successful. LEAs must ensure proper tier one support; academic deficits have been remedied and FELs are meaningfully participating in the standard program of instruction comparable to their never-EL peers. Please note, while the state requires formal monitoring of FELs for two years, the ESEA requires LEAs to report on the number and percentage of former ELs meeting state academic standards for *four years*.

While LEAs are required to monitor former EL student performance in core academic areas, no specific protocol or form is required. However, LEAs should establish rigorous monitoring systems that include benchmarks for expected growth in acquiring academic content knowledge during the academic year and take appropriate steps to assist students who are not adequately progressing toward those goals.

LEAs may want to consider implementing the tools in the back of the document [here](#) when planning.

FAQs

1. What if an LEA finds that its English learners often struggle with grade level content and have many deficits upon reclassification?

This indicates that students are not getting enough academic and content support during their LIEP. The program should be evaluated for its effectiveness and the LEA should be certain that changes are made to ensure that ELs are getting proper academic support throughout their LIEP.

2. Is monitoring required of the English learners? Is there a specific monitoring form required by the state?

Yes, FELs must be formally monitored at the LEA level. No, there is not a specific form. The district is free to use a monitoring form that works best for them as long as they perform regular monitoring of the student’s academic performance and achievement.

3. Do districts have to report who is doing the monitoring?

No, the state no longer requires reporting of the person who is doing the monitoring.

4. Who is responsible for monitoring? Is it the responsibility of the ESL teacher only or can the content/classroom teacher who currently have them in courses assist as well? Is this a team process?

While most often it is an EL teacher who does the monitoring, this is not considered best practice and certainly not required by law. Many times, it works best to have mainstream teachers and/or MTSS teams to monitor these learners.

5. Do districts need to monitor English learners for 2 years or 4 years?

The LEA is *required* to do formal monitoring for two years, the state monitors the English learners for 4 years, reporting academic progress by LEA to the federal government. So, the LEA may wish to monitor for four years as they are held accountable for learners, reported by district, to the federal government for four years. The state reports ISASP scores of English learners for 4 years, by district.

6. What should be monitored?

The LEA must monitor student success and academic progress to be sure that academic deficiencies continue to be addressed after the student exits EL services.

7. Should parents be notified annually of results of monitoring?

It is good practice to notify parents of a FEL student's progress whenever possible, but the law does not require the district to notify the parents of the specific monitoring of the FEL student.

8. If a student who exited from EL, has not completed monitoring and moves away from the district, is the new district required to monitor?

Yes. The state requires students to be monitored by the attending district for two years. There should be evidence of this monitoring passed to the new district. The receiving district will want to monitor progress if they receive insufficient monitoring information. It is in the best interest of the current district to continue or pursue monitoring of this student since they are responsible for this student's success.

9. How can building assistance teams, MTSS teams, collaborative inquiry teams, etc. be of help in monitoring the FEL student?

English learners must be afforded the same support as never EL peers getting the same consideration for interventions and instructional support as any other student would. These are the best teams of people to monitor the progress of English learners and address any problems the students have.

Reference and resource:

United States Department of Education. (2015). English Learner Toolkit: *Chapter 8 [Monitoring and Exiting English Learners from EL Programs and Services](https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/chap8.pdf)*. Office of English Language Acquisition. <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/chap8.pdf>

Re-entry Considerations

Occasionally there are circumstances in which re-entry into EL programming is warranted. In accordance with the Office of Civil Rights, these circumstances should be due to a lack of English language proficiency and NOT due to academic deficits which must be addressed during EL services. If academic deficits persist after a student becomes English proficient, the LEA is responsible for remedying it as quickly as possible regardless of access to specialized funds.

FAQs

1. What if a student exited the program and returned to their native country for a few years then returns and is struggling with English and content learning?

This student could be rescreened to determine his/her English language proficiency. If s/he does not pass the screener s/he should be reentered into a LIEP program.

2. Can we consider re-entry for an exited EL student if they have excessive absences and/or behavior issues and therefore are falling behind?

No. These are not reasons for reentry. These issues should be handled as they are handled with never ELs (e.g., problem solving through the building assistance, MTSS or other student support teams within the school).

3. What happens when an exited (FEL) student is not making adequate academic progress? Should these students be considered for special ed services?

Not necessarily. Struggling after exiting EL services is not an indication of the need for special education services. These students should be afforded the same support and interventions provided their never EL peers. Every effort should be made to remedy academic deficits prior to reclassification. When an LEA's monitoring of an exited EL student indicates that academic deficits exist, the LEA should take affirmative steps to remedy those deficits. These supports and services are not dependent on specialized funds.

Conclusion

Thank you for adherence to Iowa's important standardized entrance and exit protocols for English learners. If you have any questions about these procedures or about providing services to English learners, contact Pam McDonnell (pam.mcdonnell@iowa.gov) or your AEAs EL consultant. Either can assist you in understanding the protocols and supporting your LEAs English learners. For ELPA21 and assessment related questions and support, contact Terri Schuster (terri.schuster@iowa.gov).

References and Resources

Additional support for each step outlined in the Standardized Entrance and Exit Procedures for Iowa's English Learners can be found below.

U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights and the U.S. Department of Justice Dear Colleague Letter, 2015

<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-el-201501.pdf>.

U. S. Department of Education. Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA). (2015). English Learner Toolkit: <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/index.html>

Chapter 1 [Tools and Resources for Identifying All English Learners](https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/chap1.pdf). Office of English Language Acquisition. <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/chap1.pdf>

Chapter 2 [Providing English Learners with a Language Assistance Program](https://ncela.ed.gov/files/english_learner_toolkit/2-OELA_2017_language_assist_508C.pdf). Office of English Language Acquisition. https://ncela.ed.gov/files/english_learner_toolkit/2-OELA_2017_language_assist_508C.pdf

Chapter 3 [Staffing and Supporting an EL Program](https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/chap3.pdf). Office of English Language Acquisition. <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/chap3.pdf>

Chapter 4 [Meaningful Access to Core Curricular, Extra Curricular Programs](https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/chap4.pdf). Office of English Language Acquisition. <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/chap4.pdf>

Chapter 5 [Creating an Inclusive Environment and Avoiding Unnecessary Segregation](https://ncela.ed.gov/files/english_learner_toolkit/5-OELA_2017_inclusion_rev_508C.pdf). Office of English Language Acquisition. https://ncela.ed.gov/files/english_learner_toolkit/5-OELA_2017_inclusion_rev_508C.pdf

Chapter 6 [Addressing English Learners with Disabilities](https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/chap6.pdf). Office of English Language Acquisition. <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/chap6.pdf>

Chapter 7 [Serving English Learners who Opt-Out of EL Programs](https://ncela.ed.gov/files/english_learner_toolkit/7-OELA_2017_optout_508C.pdf). Office of English Language Acquisition. https://ncela.ed.gov/files/english_learner_toolkit/7-OELA_2017_optout_508C.pdf

Chapter 8 [Monitoring and Exiting English Learners from EL Programs and Services](https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/chap8.pdf). Office of English Language Acquisition. <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/chap8.pdf>

Chapter 9 [Evaluating the Effectiveness of a Districts EL Program](https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/chap9.pdf). Office of English Language Acquisition. <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/chap9.pdf>

Chapter 10 [Ensuring Meaningful Communication with Limited English Proficient Parents](https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/chap10.pdf). Office of English Language Acquisition. <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/chap10.pdf>

U. S. Department of Education. Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA). (2016). Newcomer Tool Kit. <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/newcomers-toolkit/ncomertoolkit.pdf>

U. S. Department of Education. (2016) Non-Regulatory Guidance: English Learners and Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/essatitleiiienglishlearners92016.pdf>

U. S. Department of Education. (2016) Addendum to September 23, 2016 Non-Regulatory Guidance: English learners and Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as Amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/elandiitleiiiaddendum1219.pdf>

Questions

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