



---

# Alternate Guidance for Identifying Students for English Learner Programming in the 2020-21 School Year

*\*This alternate guidance is only intended for the 2020-21 School Year. When using provisional identification tools, formal EL status must be verified for 20-21 with a formal ELP screener as soon as it is possible to do so in your district or charter school.*

Equity and Opportunity Division

651-582-8579

[mde.el@state.mn.us](mailto:mde.el@state.mn.us)

Revised September 2020

---

## Rationale

During the 2020-21 school year, district and charter schools may provide in-school [English language proficiency \(ELP\) assessments](#) for the purpose of screening for English learner (EL) program eligibility. Students, staff, and families must follow the [Minnesota Department of Health \(MDH\) Guidance for Social Distancing in Youth and Student Programs](#) including utilizing a health check for students and staff prior to entering the school and social distancing at least six feet of separation at all times. Per Governor Walz's [Executive Order 20-81](#), as of July 25, 2020, masks are required indoors in public spaces in Minnesota. This includes school buildings. For more information about face coverings and face shields, visit the [MDH Masking Recommendations for Schools and Child Care Settings webpage](#). If the above conditions can be met, initial ELP screening may be done in districts offering any of the three learning models (in-person, hybrid, distance learning). Staff who have questions about implementing these guidelines should first confer with local staff involved in these efforts. This guidance is subject to change based on ongoing public safety decisions.

Nothing in this guidance should be construed to encourage or require school staff, students, or families in at-risk categories to act inconsistently with public health recommendations or the advice of their medical providers.

During the 2020-21 school year, it may not always be possible to administer an in-person ELP screener to determine a child's formal English learner (EL) status.

If in-school ELP assessments cannot be provided in a way that adheres to MDH guidance, a provisional identification tool must be used remotely to temporarily determine if the student will benefit from EL programming until a formal ELP screener can be administered to verify the child's EL status.

Districts and charter schools are still required to identify students for EL programming and notify families of participation in EL programming. Every effort should be made to identify eligible students and notify parents within 30 calendar days, at the start of the school year, and within 14 calendar days, after that initial 30-day window.

Refer to the [MDE 2020-21 Planning Guidance for Minnesota Public Schools](#), as a starting point regarding considerations for Multilingual learners and English learners while hybrid and distance learning models are in place.

## Purpose of this Document

This document provides guidance regarding ELP screening during the 2020-21 school year only. This temporary guidance is intended to inform staff in identifying students for temporary EL programming until a formal English Language Proficiency screener can be administered to verify the child's formal EL status. This process should only be used when there is not sufficient documentation from a previous school to make continuing programming decisions within 30 calendar days for enrollment (at the start of the school year) and within 14 calendar days after the initial 30-day window.

This guidance is also intended for staff to use in state-approved Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten and School Readiness Plus programs. It is intended for use by all staff who play a role in the identification of students for EL programming. It is not intended to replace earlier guidance on identifying English learners or to replace existing guidance on student screening for English language proficiency. After the 2020-21 school year, this guidance is no longer valid. At that time, all districts must return to the former standardized guidance for identification of English learners which includes identification and screening.

This guidance is subject to change. For updates, refer to the [MDE Covid-19 page](#). If districts elect to provide formal, in-person ELP screening, public health guidelines outlined in [MDH 2020-21 Planning Guidance for Schools](#) must be followed. Nothing in this guidance should be construed to encourage or require school staff, students, or families in at-risk categories to act inconsistently with public health recommendations or the advice of their medical providers.

## English Learners and Equity

It is important to remember that identifying students for EL programming is a matter of equity. States, districts and charter schools have clear obligations under Title VI civil rights laws to identify qualifying students for EL programming. Any student whose primary home language is not English and who has not yet reached proficiency in English has the right to participate in EL programming. Supports need to be in place throughout the school day to ensure access to academic content. See the [School's Civil Rights Obligations](#) that states and local education agencies have under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act and the Equal Educational Opportunities Act as well as the United States Department of Education (ED) Fact Sheet released on May 18, 2020 titled, [Providing Services to English Learners during the COVID-19 Outbreak](#).

## Overview of Significant Updates to this Document Since it was First Posted in April

There have been a number of important changes to this process since this document was first posted in April of 2020 during the special distance learning period when all schools in Minnesota were closed.

- Districts will decide locally if in-person ELP screening can be completed during any of the three learning models. MDH public health guidelines must be followed and student, staff and families in at-risk categories should not act inconsistently with public health recommendations or the advice of their medical providers.
- Provisional EL identification tools can be used to identify young children in Kindergarten and in state approved VPK and School Readiness Plus programs for temporary EL programming.
- For the 2020-21 school year only, the LAS Links online ELP screener can be used remotely as a formal screening option (no need to verify EL status later).
- Students can be temporarily reported as “EL –Yes” in MARSS based on provisional identification, though they must use a formal screener as soon as possible to verify the student’s EL status.
- There are now three provisional identification tools that can be conducted remotely: (1) the WIDA remote “screener”; (2) the CGCS sample student questionnaires and optional writing assessment; and (3) the parent interview process, which is described in more detail on page 5 of this document.

# Identifying Students for EL Programming in 2020-21

## Formal English Language Proficiency Screening

1. **In-person screener** – Students can be identified for ELD by using the WIDA screener and following MDH guidelines.
2. **LAS Links Online screener** (for use in 2020-21 only) – Students can be identified for ELD by purchasing and administering all four domains of the Language Assessment Scales (LAS) remote screener. Scores for a student to be proficient on the LAS remote screener (and not need EL Programming):
  - Overall level 4 or 5 and;
  - Reading score 4 or higher and;
  - Writing score 4 or higher

Note: formal ELP screeners include all four domains (except for in early learning settings and in the first semester of Kindergarten). They allow staff to determine a student’s formal EL status. No additional screening tool will be needed after this assessment, though students eligible for EL status will be expected to take the annual ACCESS test until they meet the proficiency criteria.

## Provisional Identification for Temporary EL Programming (2020-21 only)

**Provisional Identification Tools for 2020-21** – Students can be provisionally identified for ELD programming in the 2020-21 school year during the COVID-19 pandemic. Formal identification must take place as soon as possible once in-person screening is feasible for any student who has been provisionally identified for ELD. Minnesota has adopted three provisional screening options:

1. Remote Provisional Screening Tools Available in the [WIDA Secure Portal](#) (WIDA Remote “Screener”).
2. [Council of the Great City Schools \(CGCS\) Guide for Assessing Language Proficiency During Extended School Closures.](#)
3. The Parent Interview Process Described Below.

## Steps for Enrolling Students

**Step 1:** Administer the Minnesota home language survey (MNLS) to all newly enrolling students. The survey is found under a user’s account in the [TransACT Parent Notices Portal for Minnesota](#).

**Step 2:** Use a formal ELP screener or temporary identification tool to determine if a student whose primary home language is **not** English will benefit from EL programming in 2020-21.

**Step 3:** Make a placement decision when the in-person, remote, or provisional identification process is completed. If a provisional identification tool is used, note that the student will need to be screened in-person or using the LAS remote screener.

**Step 4:** Notify parents and/or legal guardians of screening test results and placement or provisional placement decisions.

**(New) Step 5:** Code the student as an EL=Yes in MARSS/Ed-Fi. Students can be coded as EL=Yes in MARSS/Ed-Fi if a formal screening option is used. If a temporary identification tool is used, the student should be marked as EL=Yes in MARSS/Ed-Fi temporarily until a formal screener is administered to verify EL status.

## Parent Interview Protocol (to be documented in the child’s cumulative file)

1. Confirm the child’s primary home language. Do this by verifying that your interpretation of the completed Minnesota Language Survey (MNLS) is correct.
2. If the student uses a language other than English at home, discuss the potential benefits of EL programming and supports for their child. After this discussion, determine with the family if it is in the student’s best interest, to temporarily enroll in temporary English language programming (English language development instruction and supports) for their child during the Distance Learning Period.
3. Make sure the family understands that the child will take an English language proficiency screener when regular schooling resumes (after the Distance Learning Period) to determine official EL status.
4. Let the family know that they have the right to opt out of EL programming at any time and also the right to reenroll in their child in the program at any time.

Depending upon the capacity of the district, schools might appoint a staff person who is responsible for working with parents or guardians on understanding the purpose of the MNLS, resolving errors on the MNLS, including discrepant or omitted data, and explaining the English language development program.

## Next Steps for Districts and Charter Schools

Use the information from the MNLS and the family interview to report the student’s home language in MARSS. If the student will benefit from EL programming during the 2020-21 school year, temporarily indicate the student’s EL status in MARSS as “EL – Yes,” until the status can be verified using a formal ELP screener.

### ***Provisional EL Identification Tool Indicates a Need for Temporary EL Programming***

In the cumulative file, note which provisional ELP screening tool was used to identify the need for temporary EL programming. This child must take an approved English language proficiency screener as soon as it is possible for staff to do so in your district or charter school.

### ***Provisional EL Identification Tool Indicates that Temporary EL Programming is not required at this Time***

In the cumulative file, note which provisional ELP screening tool was used. Indicate that temporary EL programming is not recommended at this time. However, this child will take an approved Minnesota English language proficiency screener as soon as it is possible for staff to do so in your district or charter school.

## Verifying a Student’s EL Status

As soon as it is possible to do so (and MDH guidelines can be followed), any student identified with a language other than English during the Distance Learning Period will take [an approved Minnesota ELP Screener](#) to verify the child’s formal EL status. If the student’s EL status changes, indicate that for MARSS FY 2021 as soon as possible. Once the changes have been made, the MARSS Coordinator will submit the updated MARSS report to MDE based on MARSS submission timelines.

## Decision Table for Determining a Need for EL Programming

The process outlined below is to be used when enrolling students into grades KG-12, state-approved Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten, and School Readiness Plus programs during the Distance Learning Period.

*Question: Are student\* records of EL programming/ELP assessments available within 30 days of enrollment at the start of the school year (or within 14 calendar days at any other time)?*

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Yes</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>The student is transferring from a MN school.</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Yes</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>The student is transferring from another state or territory.</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Yes</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>The student is from another country.</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>No</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Student records are not available within the 14-day window for EL identification.</b></p>
<p>Use the MARSS EL eligibility report or the Student Assessment History report to view the student’s EL status. Use this information to report continuing EL status in MARSS and inform EL programming</p>	<p>Use ELP assessment records or evidence of participation in EL programming (from the state or territory) to determine continuing EL status.</p>	<p>Confirm the primary home language by using the MNLS and review the student’s records to inform student placement decisions.</p>	<p>Make every effort to contact the previous school to make the determination of the need for EL programming. If records are not available within the 14-day identification window, have the student complete the MNLS following the process outlined in this document.</p>
<p>If the reports or school transcripts indicate EL programming or if the student does not have a qualifying exit score, the student remains in EL programming.</p>	<p>Use the completed MNLS to determine primary home language.</p> <p>If evidence of EL programming exists, the student remains in EL programming. The student is reported as “EL-Yes” in MARSS.</p> <p>If the student has a proficient score on an ELP assessment from another state, document it in the student’s cumulative file and the student will be reported as “EL - No” in MARSS.</p>	<p>Use the completed MNLS to determine primary home language.</p> <p>If records indicate a primary home language that is not English, use a provisional ELP screening tool (page 3)</p> <p>The student receives temporary EL programming and is <b>temporarily</b> reported in MARSS as “EL - Yes” until EL status can be confirmed by administering a formal ELP Screener.</p> <p>When possible, an approved Minnesota ELP screener must be administered to verify EL status.</p>	<p>Use the completed MNLS to determine primary home language.</p> <p>If records indicate a primary home language that is not English, use a provisional ELP screening tool (page 3)</p> <p>The student receives temporary EL programming and is <b>temporarily</b> reported in MARSS as “EL - Yes” until EL status can be confirmed by administering a formal ELP Screener.</p> <p>When possible, an approved Minnesota ELP screener must be administered to verify EL status.</p>

## Determining Continuing EL Eligibility

There are four different types of enrolling students: (1) students coming from a Minnesota district or charter school; (2) students transferring from another state or territory; (3) students arriving from another country; and (4) any other students, including Voluntary PreK, School Readiness Plus and kindergartners.

### Continuing students from a Minnesota District

For enrollment of continuing students from a Minnesota district during the Distance Learning Period, school and district staff will have 14 calendar days to make continuing EL eligibility determinations for enrollment in EL programming. For continuing students from a Minnesota district, there are two reports to examine the student's EL status: MARSS or Student Assessment History. Upon official enrollment of a new student:

1. The MARSS coordinator can confirm EL status by running the MARSS EL eligibility report. After running the report, the new district can see the student's EL status as entered by the former district. A Minnesota student that is proficient in English will be identified as "EL-No" on the MARSS report. A student who requires additional EL programming will be identified as "EL-YES" on the MARSS report.
2. The District Assessment Coordinator (DAC) can use the Student Assessment History Report in MDE Secure Reports to look up a student's ACCESS testing history in Minnesota using that student's MARSS number. A Minnesota student with documentation of a proficient score on any state English Language Proficiency (ELP) assessment within the last five years should be identified as "EL-No" in MARSS. If the student has a qualifying ACCESS score, the student should be reported as "EL-Yes" in MARSS and placed into English language programming.

### Students transferring from another state or territory

If the enrolling student is coming from another state or territory, confirm the primary home language using the MNLS and enter that information in MARSS. Then, use ELP assessment records or evidence of participation in EL programming to determine continuing EL programming. If a student is not proficient, the student is eligible to receive continued EL programming ("EL-Yes" in MARSS). If the student was determined proficient in another state using that state's proficiency criteria, the student should be considered proficient and will not be classified as an English learner ("EL-No" in MARSS).

Make every effort to contact the previous school to make the determination of the need for EL programming. If records are not available within the 30-day (start of school year) 14-day identification window (any other time), have the student's family complete the MNLS following the adjusted process for identification of English learners outlined in this document.

If the primary home language is not English (or is not clear) a provisional ELP screening tool must be used. If the provisional screening tool identifies a need for temporary EL programming the student will be temporarily enrolled in EL programming.

EL staff must ensure that the child takes the WIDA Screener when it is possible to do so in your district following MDH guidelines.

#### **Important Note about [MARSS Reporting](#)**

The student will be temporarily reported in MARSS as “EL - Yes” until EL status can be confirmed by administering the WIDA Screener. EL staff will need to ensure that an approved Minnesota ELP screener is administered to verify the child’s EL status when it is possible to do so in your district following MDH guidelines.

A start date is entered in MARSS when the student begins participating in regular English language development instruction offered by a licensed ESL teacher.

As soon as it is possible to do so, any student identified for temporarily EL programming in 2020-21 will take an approved Minnesota ELP screener. If the student qualifies for English learning programming, the MARSS FY 2020 should be edited to “EL – Yes.” If the student’s EL status changes, indicate that for MARSS FY 2021 as soon as possible. Once the changes have been made, the MARSS Coordinator will submit the updated MARSS report to MDE based on MARSS submission timelines.

#### **Students transferring from another county**

If the enrolling student is coming from another country, determine the home language by using the MNLS and review the student’s records to inform student placement decisions. Work closely with the school counselor to assist in the final determination for credits and the need for EL programming at the secondary level.

If the primary home language is not English (or is not clear) a family interview should be conducted using the protocol outlined in this document. If the family interview identifies a need for temporary EL programming the student will be temporarily enrolled in EL programming.

#### **Important Note about [MARSS Reporting](#)**

The student will be temporarily reported in MARSS as “EL - Yes” until EL status can be confirmed by administering the WIDA Screener. EL staff will need to ensure that an approved Minnesota ELP screener is administered to verify the child’s EL status when it is possible to do so in your district following MDH guidelines

A start date is entered in MARSS when the student begins participating in regular English language development instruction offered by a licensed ESL teacher.

As soon as it is possible to do so, any student identified for temporarily EL programming in 2020-21 will take an approved Minnesota ELP screener. If the student qualifies for English learning programming, the MARSS FY 2020 should be edited to “EL – Yes.” If the student’s EL status changes, indicate that for MARSS FY 2021 as soon as possible. Once the changes have been made, the MARSS Coordinator will submit the updated MARSS report to MDE based on MARSS submission timelines.

## Students who do not fit the above criteria

During the enrollment process, students and families should be asked to provide school or assessment records, as available. If the student or family does not have school records available, every effort should be made to obtain the records from the other school, which may include contacting a school outside of the United States. If no transcripts and assessment records are available within 30 days (start of school year) or 14 days (any other time), district and school staff should use a provisional ELP screening tool (page 3) to determine temporary English learner status.

All enrolling students must have a completed MNLS in their cumulative folder. If an enrolling student does not have an MNLS, their parent should complete the MNLS. For information on the administration of the MNLS, see MDE's English Learner Education page on [English Learner Identification](#).

If the primary home language is not English (or is not clear) a family interview should be conducted using the protocol outlined in this document. If the family interview identifies a need for temporary EL programming, the student will be temporarily identified for EL status and temporarily enrolled in EL programming.

### Important Note about [MARSS Reporting](#)

The student will be temporarily reported in MARSS as "EL - Yes" until EL status can be confirmed by administering the WIDA Screener. EL staff will need to ensure that an approved Minnesota ELP screener is administered to verify the child's EL status when it is possible to do so in your district following MDH guidelines.

A start date is entered in MARSS when the student begins participating in regular English language development instruction offered by a licensed ESL teacher.

As soon as it is possible to do so, any student identified for temporarily EL programming in 2020-21 will take an approved Minnesota ELP screener. If the student qualifies for English learning programming, the MARSS FY 2020 should be edited to "EL – Yes." If the student's EL status changes, indicate that for MARSS FY 2021 as soon as possible. Once the changes have been made, the MARSS Coordinator will submit the updated MARSS report to MDE based on MARSS submission timelines.

## Screening Incoming Kindergarteners for EL Status for the 2020-21 School Year

During the Distance Learning Period, if it is not possible to provide in-person ELP screening following MDH guidelines, districts should use a provisional ELP screening tool to determine the temporary EL status of incoming Kindergarteners. These students must take a formal ELP screener when it is possible to do so.

### Parent Notification of EL Status

Within 30 calendar days (at the start of the school year) or within 14 calendar days of enrollment (at any other time), parents or guardians must be notified when a student is enrolled in EL programming. When districts initially enroll a student in an EL program, they should utilize the English Learner Program Placement letter located on the [TransACT.com](#) website. To register for the website, contact TransACT.com. **Note:** TransACT's

*Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) documents are provided free of charge to all Minnesota districts. All TransACT documents and translations can be reproduced on district letterhead.*

The parent notification letter must be sent home in a language accessible to the parent and guardian. The notification informs the parents or guardians that the student has been enrolled in an EL program. Additionally, the letter informs the parents or guardians that they have the right to visit the program, to request a conference to understand the program and to withdraw the child. The district should include additional information about the description of the purpose, method and content of the program. MDE recommends that all letters are sent home in English as well as the preferred language of communication, as indicated by the parent.

## **Parent Rights**

A parent or guardian has the right to withdraw the student from the EL program at any time by providing written notice of this intent. Email or text messages are acceptable modes for parents or guardian to provide such written notice to opt out of EL programming during the Distance Learning Period. The parent or guardian may re-enroll the child in the program at any time. The student continues to have EL status in MARSS and will continue to take the annual ACCESS test. The opt-out procedure is an annual process. When parents choose to waive EL programming for their child, it does **not** change the child's EL status. The student will still need to meet the proficiency criteria on ACCESS before the student will exit EL status and be reclassified as "EL – No" in MARSS. Students who have been opted out of EL programming are reported as "EL – Yes" and the Start Date is left blank in MARSS.

## **Communicating with Students and Families**

Districts and charter schools should be proactive in communicating specifically with multilingual communities. It is not sufficient to send out a generic email or robo-call without following up to ensure families received the message and it was understood. In addition, districts and charter schools must send out information to families in their preferred language(s) and have clear outreach strategies that include connecting with multilingual/multicultural families and community organizations through bilingual staff, community elders, and planned calling trees. Refer to the [Supporting Students and Families COVID-19 Resources](#) for more information about communication.

## **MARSS local report to verify EL status of students.**

The MARSS Coordinator needs to edit their MARSS A and B files. Once that is done they will need to go to the MARSS WES local reports and select the MARSS\_24 List of Students report. Once they have the report, the MARSS Coordinator will need to export the report into Excel (data-only). After the report is exported, they can get into the Excel file and sort the data by the EL flag, then by the EL start date. This allows districts to verify the EL data. The statewide report EL-Eligibility would be another report they can use after the MDERuns end of year MARSS statewide edits.

## District Reporting Using the Student Support Data Collection

District reporting for the Student Support Data Collection (SSDC) should continue during the Distance Learning Period with the regular collection dates still being in place unless otherwise announced.

### Immigrant Grant Identification and Reporting

Identification of newly enrolled immigrant students who have been in US schools for three years or less continues as usual. Designated District SSDC Coordinators are asked to finalize data reporting for this data element by June 1, 2021. See the following websites and guidance documents for more information:

Websites:

1. [MDE Immigrant Children and Youth Grant](#)
2. [MDE Student Support Data Collection](#)

Guidance Documents:

1. [Title III Immigrant Children and Youth Program](#)
2. [Student Support Data Collection \(SSDC\) User Guide](#)

### Recently Arrived English Learners (RAEL) Identification

An RAEL is a K-12 student who has been identified as an English learner in Minnesota who has been enrolled in a school in one of the 50 states in the United States or the District of Columbia for less than 12 months at the time of testing. Aside from a rare circumstance, a student can only be identified as an RAEL one time.

#### *Reporting*

The required reporting procedures are outlined in the [Recently Arrived English Learners guidance](#) on the MDE [English Learner Education webpage](#). RAEL identification is reported in the [Student Support Data Collection \(SSDC\) system](#) and the information for reporting purposes will be collected by MDE on June 1, 2021.

### Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE) Reporting

The reporting procedures need to be followed and are outlined in the [Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education \(SLIFE\) Identification Guidance](#) on the MDE SLIFE webpage. Special attention should be made to the 2019 changed definition of SLIFE (see below). In all cases, SLIFE must be English learners and have two years less schooling than their peers. In most cases, elementary and middle school students will be included in SLIFE reporting. Sample student and parent interview questions can be found on the [MDE's SLIFE webpage](#). If schools are uncertain how to ascertain if younger students have two years less schooling than their peers, a family interview could be conducted and responses recorded in the student's cumulative file. Remember that SLIFE are reported in the Student Support Data Collection (SSDC) system, and the information for reporting purposes will be collected by MDE on June 1, 2021.

### *Current Definition of SLIFE:*

#### **Statute 124D.59 Subdivision 2(a): English learner; interrupted formal education**

Consistent with subdivision 2, an English learner includes an English learner with an interrupted formal education who meets three of the following five requirements:

1. comes from a home where the language usually spoken is other than English, or usually speaks a language other than English;
2. enters school in the United States after grade 6;
3. has at least two years less schooling than the English learner's peers;
4. functions at least two years below expected grade level in reading and mathematics; and
5. may be preliterate in the English learner's native language.

#### ***Serving Students Identified as SLIFE***

The education of students is very important, especially as schools are moving to distance learning. Many SLIFE in Minnesota have a critical need for English language development as well as academic content support. Special attention should be paid to students who need more support to complete academic work whether because of technology needs or academic needs to complete the work and meet content standards for school. Educators should be advised that many SLIFE also have needs for school breakfast and lunch and may have a more difficult time accessing the information due to language access needs. It is important that educators work to reach out to SLIFE and their families to ensure students have the same access and information as all students.

There are several websites and apps that can be used to supplement language learning, but none of those should be used in place of academic language learning from a licensed teacher. Teachers are encouraged to use videos or technology as long as all students have equal access. Schools can also utilize interpreters or translation services for communication with families. Schools are encouraged to be flexible and supportive especially to students with more challenges during this difficult time.

#### **Active-Duty Parent Identification**

Districts must submit information about which students have had a parent on active duty in the U.S. military (excluding the National Guard) in the past year. All districts are expected to report active duty parent (ADP) status for students in tested grades annually by June 1. Section 1111(h)(1)(C)(ii) of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires that student achievement on state assessments be disaggregated by “status as a student with a parent who is a member of the Armed Forces (as defined in section 101(a)(4) of title 10, United States Code) on active duty (as defined in section 101(d)(5) of such title).” Section 101(a)(4) of title 10 of the United States Code defines the Armed Forces as, “the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard.” Section 101(d) of Title 10 of the United States Code defines “active duty” as “full-time duty in the active military service of the United States. Such term includes full-time training duty, annual training duty, and attendance, while in the active military service, at a school designated as a service school by law or by the Secretary of the military department concerned. Such term does not include full-time National Guard duty.”

## *Reporting*

Since there is an annual reporting requirement, a student's status as a child with an ADP can change from year to year. To satisfy this requirement, MDE is asking districts to report students' ADP status through the SSDC each year. A student should be included in ADP status if one or more parents has been on active duty in the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, or Coast Guard – excluding National Guard duty – between the end of the previous school year and the beginning of the current year's accountability window. If a student's parent was on active duty during the summer, that student should still be included as having an ADP.

The required reporting procedures are outlined in the Active Duty Military Parent section in the [Student Support Data Collection \(SSDC\) User Guide](#) on MDE's Student Support Data Collection page. ADP identification is reported in the [Student Support Data Collection \(SSDC\) system](#) and the information for reporting purposes will be collected by MDE on June 1 each year.

## Frequently Asked Questions about Identifying Students for EL Programming in 2020-21

### **1. Do students in grades K-12 who are new to a Minnesota district or charter school in 2020-21 need to take an approved English language proficiency (ELP) screener?**

Only a student whose home language is not English and who did not meet initial identification criteria in a previous district needs to complete the formal or provisional EL identification process.

### **2. If a district or charter school is beginning the school year with a distance learning model, can in-person ELP screening still be completed?**

Initial ELP screening may be offered in-person even if a district or charter school is not offering in-person or hybrid instructional models, as long as all public health guidelines can be adhered to. This guidance is subject to change based on ongoing public safety decisions. Students, staff, and families must follow the [MDH 2020-21 Planning Guidance for Schools](#), including utilizing a health check for students and staff prior to entering the school and social distancing at least six feet of separation at all times. If in-school ELP assessments cannot be provided in a way that adheres to MDH guidance, the guidance outlined in this document should be followed.

### **3. Do students or families in at-risk categories have to complete in-person ELP screening?**

No, nothing in this guidance should be construed to encourage or require school staff, students, or families in at-risk categories to act inconsistently with public health recommendations or the advice of their medical providers.

### **4. If staff provide in-person ELP screening, how should they manage materials and equipment?**

Sharing materials should be avoided. Any shared materials or equipment should be disinfected before and after each use if users are not using gloves. *Please refer to pages 11 to 13 of the [MDH 2020-21 Planning Guidance for Schools](#) for more details about the requirements and recommendations provided by the MDH Cleaning and Materials Handling guidance.* Please work with your school nurse as you implement public health guidelines in your school district.

### **5. Do districts have to identify students who will benefit from English language programming within 30 days at the start of the school year and within 10 days after the initial 30-day window?**

The U.S. Department of Education has published guidance that includes this requirement: [May 18, 2020 Fact Sheet: Providing Services to English Learners During the COVID-19 Outbreak](#). We encourage districts to do their best to meet this requirement. If it is not possible to complete formal screening for all potential students within 30 days, districts can use provisional identification tools to determine if EL programming is in the best interest of a student. These provisional tools help district staff determine if EL programming is in the best interest of the child.

### **6. What provisional identification tools should districts and charter schools in Minnesota use when in-person ELP screening is not possible?**

If in-school ELP screening is possible, administer the grade-level appropriate WIDA screener. If in-school ELP screening is not possible, use a provisional tool to determine if EL programming is in the best interest of the child until formal screening can be completed. Districts and charter schools in Minnesota can use the WIDA remote “screener” as a provisional tool to determine if EL programming will benefit a student. These provisional

tools can be used with students in grades K-12 and are available now by logging into the [WIDA Secure Portal](#). Please work with your District Assessment Coordinator if you need to request access to the WIDA Secure Portal.

**7. What should staff do if the results of the provisional identification process are inconclusive and the student’s EL status is still unclear?**

Use the parent interview process described on page 5 to determine if temporary EL programming is in the best interest of the child.

**8. When districts use provisional identification tools, do they need to send the EL parent notification letter?**

Yes, MDE requires that notices be sent out to parents even if the child is only provisionally identified for EL status. The EL parent notification letter should be adjusted to indicate that the child will still need to complete a formal ELP screener, but until that time, the child will be enrolled as an English learner.

**9. Where can district staff find ongoing updates about EL programming during the 2020-21 school year?**

Visit the [MDE EL Education webpage](#) and the [MDE COVID-19 Updates webpage](#) for the most current information.

**10. Where can district staff find additional information about English language proficiency screening?**

The [Screening for English Language Proficiency](#) guidance document, and other guidance documents related to Minnesota EL entry and exit procedures and criteria, are found on the [MDE EL Education webpage](#).

Information about the proficiency criteria used for Minnesota approved ELP screeners can be found on the [MDE EL webpage](#).

The Minnesota EL Identification and Placement Guidance Document provides a quick overview of identification procedures and staff training requirements. [Visit Minnesota’s WIDA membership page](#) for more information, including the [Minnesota Identification and Placement Guidance](#).

**11. Can districts and charter schools use provisional identification tools with Kindergarteners in 2020-21?**

Yes

- The K-1 WIDA Remote “Screener” estimates English language proficiency in speaking only.
- The Council of Great City Schools (CGCS) document includes a sample questionnaire for K-3 provides examples to help educators estimate if students are at beginning or intermediate/advance English language proficiency levels.

**12. Can the WIDA Screener be administered remotely?**

No, the only formal ELP screener approved for 2020-21 that allows remote screening via video conferencing is the LAS Links Online ELP Screener.

**13. Is the tool that WIDA calls the WIDA Remote “Screener” a formal ELP screener?**

No, this is a temporary identification tool. It is available in the WIDA Secure Portal, though a formal ELP screener must later be used to verify formal EL status as soon as it’s possible to do so in your district or charter school.

#### 14. What are the training requirements for the WIDA Screener?

- Staff administering an approved ELP screener will need to complete the WIDA training sessions every year.
- Staff scoring any portion of the screener locally will need to complete the quizzes in the WIDA secure portal annually.

#### 14. How should staff report students identified for EL programming in MARSS?

- Students identified as needing EL programming in 2020-21 should be identified as “EL – Yes” in MARSS.
- The USDE requires that students identified for temporary EL programming take a formal ELP screener as soon as it’s possible to do so to verify the student’s EL status.
- If the student’s EL status is not confirmed by the formal screener, the student’s status in MARSS will need to be corrected. *This is a unique situation for the 2020-21 school year only.*
- A start date is entered in MARSS when the student begins participating in regular English language development instruction offered by a licensed ESL teacher.

#### 15. Can the ACCESS test be used to verify a student’s formal EL status after provisional EL identification?

- Districts are encouraged to verify EL status prior to ACCESS testing if at all possible as some students may not need to take the ACCESS test based on formal ELP screener results.
- If it’s not possible to verify a student’s EL status with an ELP screener prior to your district’s ACCESS testing window, the ACCESS test would be a secondary way of verifying the child’s formal EL status for 2020-21.

## Contact Information

- Contact MDE EL Programs for information on eligibility and exiting, ELP screening, EL programming and WIDA eLearning courses: [mde.el@state.mn.us](mailto:mde.el@state.mn.us).
- Contact WIDA Client Services for questions about training materials, test administration procedures, classroom resources, or problems with your WIDA Secure Portal account: 866-276-7735; [help@wida.us](mailto:help@wida.us).
- Contact MDE Statewide Testing for testing policies and procedures for ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS: [mde.testing@state.mn.us](mailto:mde.testing@state.mn.us).
- For student data reporting or financial questions, please contact staff in the Minnesota Automated Reporting Student System (MARSS) at [marss@state.mn.us](mailto:marss@state.mn.us).
- For questions about publicly reported data or the MDE Secure Reports, please contact staff in Data and Analytics at [mde.analytics@state.mn.us](mailto:mde.analytics@state.mn.us).