

Identification and Screening for New Directors: An Introduction

Multilingual/Language Development Department

FY26 Annual Statewide Meeting for Administrators
Supporting English Learners

September 17-19, 2025



Multilingual Directory/Assigned Principal Consultants

- Assigned Consultant Listing
 - Simply type in your district to find your assigned principal consultant.

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MULTILINGUAL
Assigned Consultant Listing

MULTILINGUAL
ASSIGNED CONSULTANT LISTING
Each school district in Illinois has an assigned principal consultant from the Multilingual/Language Development Department who is available to provide technical assistance. Use the search feature below to find the contact information for your district's assigned consultant.



District Name ▼	RCDTS Code	Assigned Consultant	Phone Number	Email
A-C Central CUSD 262	010092620260000	Lydia Kvinta	(312) 814-3607	lkvinta@isbe.net
Abingdon-Avon CUSD 276	330482760260000	Seng Naolhu	(312) 814-2229	snaolhu@isbe.net
ACE Amandia Charter School	150169020250000	Lauren Ligammarl	(312) 814-0902	lligamma@isbe.net

Federal Legislation and Landmark Cases

Federal Requirements

Title VI, Civil Rights Act of 1964

- Prohibits denial of equal access to education because of language minority students' limited proficiency in English.

Title VII of the ESEA of 1968: The Bilingual Education Act

- The first federal legislation to recognize the unique needs of English learners and the need for specialized instruction. It established federal funding for the training of bilingual teachers and bilingual programs.

Equal Educational Opportunity Act of 1974

- Defines denial of equal educational opportunity as “failure by an educational agency to take appropriate action to overcome language barriers that impede equal participation by students in an instructional program.”

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1975

- Provides for free appropriate public education to eligible children with disabilities throughout the nation.
- Ensures special education and related services to those children

English learners (ELs) must be able to participate effectively in all programs and content areas.

Landmark Cases

Lau v. Nichols, 414 U.S. 563 (U.S. Supreme Court, 1974)

- Districts must take affirmative steps to overcome educational barriers faced by the non-English speaking students in a district.

Castañeda v. Pickard (648 F.2d 989, U.S. Court of Appeals, 5th Circuit, 1981)

- Program for ELs should be:
 - **Theory:** Based on “a sound educational theory”;
 - **Practice:** “Reasonably calculated to implement effectively the educational theory adopted by the school,” with adequate resources and personnel; and
 - **Results:** Evaluated as effective in overcoming language barriers after a trial period.

Plyler v. Doe, 457 U.S. 202, 102 S. Ct. 2382, 72 L. Ed. 2d 786 (1982)

- The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that undocumented children have the same right as U.S. citizens and permanent residents to receive a free public education.

Legislative Update for TBE Programs

Revised: Illinois School Code (105 ILCS5/14C-3)

"Every school-age English learner, not enrolled in existing private school systems, shall be enrolled and participate in the Transitional Bilingual Education program established by the school district in which they reside, according to the classification to which they belong. They shall remain in the program until they have developed sufficient English language skills to succeed in classes conducted entirely in English. An annual examination in oral language (listening and speaking), reading, and writing, as prescribed by the State Board, will be administered to all English learners participating in the TBE program. No school district shall transfer an English learner out of the TBE program unless the student has achieved a score on this examination that, in the State Board's determination, reflects a level of English proficiency appropriate to their grade level."

Amended to remove the obligation to get parental permission for students to continue receiving EL services beyond three years, effective Jan. 1, 2026

Key Changes for Districts on Jan. 1, 2026

More Flexibility for ELs: No more parental permission required to continue services beyond three years.

Streamlined Enrollment/Placement Procedures: No need for separate letters to notify parents of enrollment/placement for students in one to three years of service versus beyond three years.

Streamlined Exit Procedures: No need for separate reclassification letters for students who've achieved proficiency prior to receiving three years of service versus after three years of service.

Ongoing Support for ELs: ELs get the support they need for as long as they need it. Students remain in the EL program until they have reached proficiency on the annual WIDA ACCESS assessment and developed enough English skills to succeed in English-only classrooms.

Transition Period and Implementation

- Districts will have a full school year (2025-2026) to adjust their local procedures and documentation practices.
- The updated requirements will take effect in the 2026-2027 school year.
- Enrollment/placement and reclassification letters on ISBE website will be updated and available for use on Jan. 1, 2026



Agenda

- Timely Identification
- Effective Administration of Home Language Survey
- Screening Potential English Learners
- Notification of Services to Parents
- Annual English Language Development Assessment
- Exit Criteria for Reclassification
- IWAS/Student Information System Review
- Resources

Timely Identification

Home Language Survey in Illinois

The state **requires** the district to collect a Home Language Survey for **every** new student.

- This information is used to indicate if the family and/or the student speak a language other than English at home. In turn, this helps to identify the students who need to be assessed for English language proficiency and may qualify for language services.
- Questions cannot be altered
- Parent/guardian signature and date is required

[Home Language Surveys](#)

Home Language Survey

The state requires the district to collect a Home Language Survey for every new student. This information is used to count the students whose families speak a language other than English at home. It also helps to identify the students who need to be assessed for English language proficiency.

Please answer the questions below and return this survey to your child's school.

Student's Name: _____

1. Is a language other than English spoken in your home?

Yes _____ No _____

Which language? _____

2. Does your child speak a language other than English?

Yes _____ No _____

Which language? _____

If the answer to either question is yes, the law requires the school to assess your child's English language proficiency.

Parent/Legal Guardian Signature

Date

Effective Administration of the Home Language Survey

Step 1

The HLS is completed by the parent/guardian of the student in a language they understand. It is signed and dated.

Step 2

District reviews the responses on the HLS

Step 3

Look in the student's file and/or in SIS to see if the student has been previously screened/tested or has an EL record.

Step 4

District determines if a student needs to be screened based on the following:

- HLS responses
- SIS history
- Initial HLS responses
- Statewide assessments

Home Language Survey Process

ELP Screening Exceptions

ACCESS for ELLs results for the previous school year are available.

Screening results from within the last 12 months are available.

Exceptions

Student previously demonstrated proficiency on screener or ACCESS for ELLs.

Ill. Admin. Code 228 Section 228.15 (e)(1) (C) -- next slide

ELP Screening Exception: Ill. Admin. Code 228 Section 228.15 (e)(1) (C)

All
criteria
must
be TRUE

For students
eligible to
participate in
statewide
assessments

- Resides in home where a language other than English is spoken, **AND**
- The student was not identified as an English learner in the previous district, **AND**
- The student did not receive EL services in the last school year, **AND**
- The student has met state standards in reading and math on the most recent state assessment or on a nationally normed assessment.

Screening Potential English Learners

Preschool English Proficiency Screening

- ❑ **ISBE lists vendors** of established screening instruments for assessing English language proficiency (ELP) in preschool for children ages 3 to 5 on the [ISBE Multilingual Identification webpage](#).
- ❑ **Screening procedures shall at least:**
 - ❑ Consult **family** on child's English language experience.
 - ❑ Be **culturally and linguistically** appropriate.
 - ❑ Be **age and developmentally** appropriate.
 - ❑ Be **research-based**.
 - ❑ Include **multiple observations**.
 - ❑ Use **multiple measures** and methods.
 - ❑ Be conducted by **qualified staff** with background in preschool education and second-language acquisition.

K-12 English Proficiency Screening

Grade	Required Screening	Domains Included	Minimum Score for English Proficiency
Kindergarten semester 1	WIDA Screener for Kindergarten	• Listening • Speaking	5.0 oral composite
Kindergarten semester 2; Grade 1 semester 1	WIDA Screener for Kindergarten	• Listening • Speaking • Reading • Writing	5.0 overall composite
Grade 1 semester 2 – 12th grade	WIDA Screener	• Listening • Speaking • Reading • Writing	

Screening must take place within 30 days of student enrollment in the district.

(IL Admin Code 228.15(e))

MODEL for Kindergarten was retired in 2023-2024 school year.

Determining Which Screener to Administer

Grade	1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8		9		10		11		12	
Semester	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
Grade-Cluster Form	K	1	2-3		4-5		6-8		9-12															

Source: WIDA, *Online Test Administration Manual*

Certified Test Administrators

- Licensed instructional or non-instructional personnel:
 - Must hold a Professional Educator License or Educator License with Stipulations (e.g., transitional bilingual educator).
- Must complete required training from:
 - Vendors' online training.
 - WIDA Screener and/or ACCESS modules.
- District test coordinators may create WIDA and Data Recognition Corp. (DRC) accounts or contact ISBE for first-time coordinators.

Test Administration Requirements

- Most test administrator (TA) training for ACCESS is done online. Training modules are in the [WIDA Secure Portal](#), which requires a user account (see below).
- Test Administrators (TA) must [annually recertify](#) their training for one-to-one ACCESS tests for which the TA uses the speaking or writing rubric to score responses.
 - **Kindergarten ACCESS**
 - **Those who administer Kindergarten ACCESS will need to recertify after September 29, 2025, when the new course is released.**
 - Kindergarten Screener
 - Alternate ACCESS
 - ACCESS Paper mode for Speaking domain
 - WIDA Screener Scoring for Speaking and Writing (Online and Paper)

Test Administration Requirements

- Other ACCESS forms should recertify the training every three years.
 - Online ACCESS
 - Paper mode for listening, reading, and writing domains
 - WIDA Screener Administration (Online and Paper)
- Test administrators who do not participate in the ACCESS administration for a year (or more) should recertify their training before resuming.

After the ELP Screening



If a student meets ELP criteria on the screener, EL services/program are not required. The parents should be informed of the screening results.

Notification of Services to Parents

Notification of Placement Letters

- Letter in English **and** the **student's home language** (language listed on HLS).
- Sent within **30 days of beginning of the school year** or within **14 days after enrollment in the program**.

Notification of Placement Letters

- Program type and description
 - Explain how the EL program will **support the student**.
- Expected rate of transition
- Screener/ACCESS scores
- Rate of graduation (high school only)
- Exit requirements (minimum ACCESS score 4.8 overall composite)
- Special Education Statement
- Parent's right to visit the classroom
- **Notification of the right to withdraw** student from the program or choose different EL services, if offered.
 - If the parent refuses services for their child, it **MUST** be organic from the parent/guardian.
 - Student is always placed first.

Annual Testing

ACCESS Testing



WIDA ACCESS for Kindergarten

Kindergarten ACCESS is a paper-based test individually administered to kindergarten students in an interactive format.



WIDA ACCESS Online

ACCESS Online is a computer-based, adaptive test that responds to student performance and may be administered in group or individual settings. This assessment is given annually to students in grades 1-12.



WIDA ACCESS Paper

ACCESS Paper is a paper-based, semi-adaptive test that may be administered in group or individual settings.



WIDA Alternate ACCESS

[Alternate ACCESS](#) is a large-print, paper-based test individually administered to students in grades K-12 who are identified as English learners with the most significant cognitive disabilities.

Exit Criteria

WIDA ACCESS Exit Criteria for Reclassification

- WIDA ACCESS – Minimum composite proficiency score for reclassification is 4.8 overall composite.
- Student's EL information will be **automatically** updated in the Student Information System (SIS) to last one year.
- Student will be a “Former EL” in SIS report.

Note: Local districts must update their student management platform to reflect the student is no longer EL. If not, student could roll back into EL the next year because the EL indicator was not switched to EL=NO.

Fall 2025

- Students who achieved a 4.8 composite or higher have their English learner status changed to “No” in SIS based on 2025 results.
 - District must change those students who reclassified to “No” in their local student management system.
- October 31 is when districts need to have enrolled students screened to be captured in the Pre-ID file.

Reminders

- The K MODEL for screening kindergarten students was retired after the 2022-23 school year. The [WIDA Screener for Kindergarten](#) is the prescribed ELP screener for Illinois.
- Communicate with parents to inform them that they **cannot** refuse screening to ID for EL.
- Communicate to parents that they **cannot** refuse administration of the ACCESS for ELLs.

Reminders

- [The 2020 English Language Development Framework](#) is our current resource for ELD standards.
- The two questions asking about home language presence and use are not to be altered.
- The **NEW** [Alternate ACCESS](#) was implemented FY 2024 for ACCESS testing.
- Redesigned Kindergarten ACCESS
 - Implemented in 2025-26.
 - All staff need to recertify to administer this assessment beginning September 29, 2025.
- ACCESS will have standard setting completed in summer of 2026

Resources

Screeners Guidance at Multilingual Webpage



KEY DATES



MULTILINGUAL DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTERS

English Learners /
Bilingual Education

Migrant Education
Program

Illinois State Seal of
Biliteracy

Visiting International
Teacher Program

Multilingual /
Language
Development
Department
Complaint Process

Illinois Advisory
Council on Bilingual
Education (IACBE)

Newcomer
Resources

World Languages

Screeners Guidance at Multilingual Website

MULTILINGUAL

English Learners / Bilingual Education

- [Resources for Districts](#)
- [Resources for Teachers](#)
- [Resources for Parents](#)
- [Accountability](#)
- [EL Enrollment](#)
- [Title III Grants](#)
- [English Learners with IEPs](#)

MULTILINGUAL

ENGLISH LEARNERS / BILINGUAL EDUCATION

The Multilingual / Language Development Department provides leadership, advocacy and support to districts, parents and policy makers by promoting equitable access to language support services for students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds who have been identified as English Learners. ISBE offers resources for District staff, Teachers, and parents about English learners and students in bilingual programs. In addition, Title III grants, Accountability, dually-identified English Learners with IEPs, and Multilingual Early Learners are also addressed.

Resources for
Districts

Resources for
Teachers

Resources for
Parents

Accountability

EL Enrollment

Title III Grants

English Learners
with IEPs

Multilingual Early
Learners

Screeners Guidance at Multilingual Webpage

MULTILINGUAL English Learners / Bilingual Education

EL Enrollment

- Identification
- Placement
- Assessment

MULTILINGUAL EL ENROLLMENT

The enrollment of any new student to the district must include a Home Language Survey. Potential English Learners (ELs) must be screened and placed in EL services if they qualify. Additionally, all ELs must take the annual English language proficiency assessment (ACCESS). Districts must make annual placement determinations for ELs based on the ACCESS scores.

Identification

Placement

Assessment

RESOURCES

- 2025-26 State Assessment Dates 📄 (Updated 07/24/2025)
- 2024-25 State Assessment Dates 📄 (Updated 01/06/2025)
- Immigrant Students: Your Rights to Free Public Education (Available in 8 languages) 📄

Screeners Guidance at Multilingual Webpage

MULTILINGUAL
English Learners / Bilingual
Education
EL Enrollment

Identification

MULTILINGUAL IDENTIFICATION

This page contains information and resources on the identification of newly enrolled English learners (ELs). The enrollment of any new student to a district must include a [Home Language Survey](#) . Potential ELs must be screened and [placed in EL services](#) if they qualify. Districts must make [annual placement determinations](#) for ELs based on the ACCESS scores.

Enrollment



Identification



Home Language Surveys



Screeners/English Language Proficiency Test



After the Screener



Questions?

Lauren Ligammari

Principal Consultant

Identification and Assessment of ELs

Multilingual/Language Development

Department

lligamma@isbe.net

multilingual@isbe.net

Steve Silver

Principal Consultant

Multilingual Professional Development

Multilingual/Language Development

Department

ssilver@isbe.net

multilingual@isbe.net

Randi Sucic

Principal Consultant

Multilingual/Language Development

Department

rsucic@isbe.net

multilingual@isbe.net

Barry Pedersen

Principal Consultant

WIDA ACCESS

Assessment Department

bpedersen@isbe.net

assessment@isbe.net

Thank you