



Illinois State Board of Education

100 North First Street • Springfield, Illinois 62777-0001
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Darren Reisberg
Chairman

Dr. Carmen I. Ayala
State Superintendent of Education

Phase 4 English Learner Screening Considerations

The Illinois State Board of Education recommends considering the following suggestions during Phase 4 while planning and screening potential English Learners (ELs) over the summer and for the 2020-21 school year. Social-emotional, cultural, linguistic, and age-appropriate considerations were taken into account during the development of this document. These recommendations align with the joint guidance issued by ISBE and the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) for [Starting the 2020-21 School Year](#).

Districts should deliberately plan the English proficiency screening logistics for their potential pre-K, kindergarten, and grades 1-12 students to ensure that families, students, and staff maintain safe and healthy spaces. We strongly encourage that screening should be done during the summer, if at all possible.

This screening process is the first time many parents, students, and families are interacting with the district. The use of masks, gloves, and social distancing may add stress to the language screening experience. We encourage districts to make their screening process as welcoming as possible. Districts should make every effort to ensure communication to families is done in a language the parents understand. Expectations for safety need to be clearly communicated so families know what to expect when bringing their children in to be screened.

We recognize that different districts and schools have different resources. We encourage districts to look at utilizing funding available via the [Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security \(CARES\) Act](#) to pay for materials and resources needed to implement safe EL screening. CARES Act funding can be used to purchase personal protective equipment (PPE) and other materials that can help maintain social distancing. It can also be used to purchase testing supplies (e.g., WIDA Model kits, Pre-IPT test materials).

These considerations are for Phase 4 of the [Restore Illinois](#) plan. We recognize that these times are fluid, and the State may need to implement additional mitigation requirements. ISBE previously released [Provisional Identification and Placement Procedures During Remote Learning Situations](#). All considerations and screening plans should align with your district's health and safety plan.

Should districts have further questions or concerns, we encourage them to email COVID19@isbe.net. [IDPH](#) and the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) are also good places to find additional information.



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Considerations with a 🌞 are specific for screening during the summer. Considerations with a 🏠 are for during the school year while children are present in the building.

Considerations for Screening

Parent Considerations

- 🌞 🏠 Parents may be bringing additional family members with them to a screening. This may bring the number of individuals close to the limit of 10 people allowed at a gathering during Phase 3. Districts should clearly communicate how many individuals will be allowed in the room with the student and have a place where additional family members can wait.
- 🌞 🏠 Consider allowing parents to sit with pre-K or kindergarten students or have the children sit on their lap. If this is done, test administrators should explain to parent that they are only there to sit with children to help make them comfortable. This also allows parents to feel less nervous because they can see the safety features put into place.
- 🌞 If there are multiple reasons a family must come to district office; the district should try and coordinate efforts so that the family only makes one trip.
- 🌞 Recognize that families may be hesitant to bring their students in for screening over the summer. Schedule screening for students once school starts.

Student Screening Considerations

- 🌞 🏠 Identify who will be administering the screening test. Depending on your local context, the test administrator might be the child's teacher, an EL/bilingual specialist, or another approved staff member. Consult the guidance located on the [Multilingual website](#) to help you identify who is qualified to administer English language screening.
- 🌞 🏠 Follow local, CDC, IDPH, and state guidelines for the number of individuals allowed in the room when screening is taking place.
- 🌞 🏠 Consider limiting the number of students tested per day over the summer and once school starts. Leave time between screening sessions to clean and sanitize the testing space and equipment.
- 🏠 Consider strategic scheduling of staff. During the school year when students are in the building, your district might consider testing one grade or grade band at



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a time to limit movement/cross-contamination (e.g., EL teacher tests pre-K on Mondays only, kindergarten on Tuesdays, grades 1-2 on Wednesdays, etc.).

Staff Considerations

- 🌞 🏠 It is advisable to include your language screening team in the discussions regarding safety precautions and planning your screening.
- 🌞 🏠 Regularly check in with your staff on their well-being. Screening in this Phase 4 environment is going to be different from how it was normally done, and the additional precautions may add stress to your staff.

Possible Testing Accommodations

Where appropriate, the following accommodations have been approved by WIDA (MODEL or WIDA Screener[®]) and/or Ballard & Tighe (Pre-IPT[®]) for use during Phase 4. If you use any other assessment as part of your pre-K screening process, be sure to clear the use of these accommodations with the test provider as accommodations may impact scoring.

- 🌞 🏠 Consider the effect that PPE may have on listening and speaking tests. Masks may impact the comprehension of spoken speech. The student may not understand the test administrator, and the administrator may not understand the student. There are masks available with a clear plastic window over the mouth that may be beneficial and facilitate conversations. Please note that face shields are not effective for source control; clear face coverings are the preferred alternative for individuals conducting screenings for whom cloth face coverings are not appropriate. Face shields may only be used with the understanding that they are not effective for source control and with heightened adherence to strict social distancing.
- 🌞 🏠 Remember to smile with your eyes! Students and families will not be able to read your emotions when you're wearing a mask.
- 🌞 🏠 Consider documenting that the screener test was administered with masks and that it may impact the score.
- 🌞 🏠 Consider making paper copies of manipulatives that are part of the screening instrument. These copies must be disposed of immediately after screening. If this option is used, follow this recommendation from the vendor:



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- For testing security, copied manipulatives must be destroyed after they have been used and no further copies can be made after the need for remote administrations has concluded.
- 🌞 🏠 Consider laminating manipulatives or sealing them into Ziploc/resealable bags so that they may be disinfected and rotated out with multiple sanitized copies of manipulatives. Children should not share manipulatives.
- 🌞 🏠 Consider using a document camera/projector to project the storybook/board onto a wall or board. If this option is used, follow this recommendation from WIDA:
 - Perform a small number of pilot administrations between two adults before attempting with any students. If it is at all possible, pilot with a student before attempting official screening to work out any complications.
- 🌞 🏠 Consider using a barrier with opening at bottom to move materials back and forth.
- 🌞 🏠 Consider using pointers (yardsticks) to point at targets to maintain social distance.
- 🌞 🏠 For the writing domain, consider either giving the pencil to the child as a gift or sanitize the pencil after the session.
- 🌞 🏠 If headsets and mics are not in sufficient supply to rotate out for sanitization during multiple same-day testing administrations, consider conducting the speaking domain through the built-in mic (within a screening device). Tips from the vendor are below:
 - Built-in mics on devices vary in picking up ambient noises that may distort the sample.
 - Test administrators should set the appropriate volume during a pilot or mock administration to test the devices' built-in microphone prior to live administration.
 - When the live administration begins, encourage the students to speak loudly and clearly.
- If the built-in mic is problematic (e.g., a student speaks softly and the mic does not pick up the sample for the test administrator to be able to score later in the WIDA Assessment Management System [AMS]), another option is available below:



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- A test administrator can score as they are listening to the student respond to the prompt in real time (as the student is responding to the prompt), taking notes and writing down a score. Additional steps are required for the test administrator to bypass the recording check and still record a score in WIDA AMS for a student to receive complete results, including the composite language level on the student score report.

1) The test administrator will start the online speaking domain; the administrator or the student will need to record a short, loud sound with the mic engaged. This will allow navigation past the recording check on the online speaking domain.

2) The test administrator will administer the speaking domain to the students and will score in real time, writing down the score.

3) After administering the speaking domain in real time, the test administrator will access the online speaking domain audio files created earlier in WIDA AMS and will add the “real time” scores to the corresponding audio file.

-   When scheduling test sessions, consider that there may be delays in getting screening materials to some schools from their central office or the test companies. Plan accordingly.

Acknowledgement Section

These recommendations for EL screening in Phase 4 are a result of a collaborative, thoughtful effort with partners from across the state. We are grateful for your time and effort on this project and extend our sincerest thanks.

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