



Frequently Asked Questions about English Learners Identification

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How is a student identified as an English Learner?

In order to meet federal requirements, Ohio has developed a two-step system for identifying English learners.

Step One: The first step is the Language Usage Survey. Parents of all students enrolling in a public school district or community school complete a Language Usage Survey as part of the enrollment process. The LUS is available in English and 12 other languages. If there is a language other than English spoken by the student or in the home, the student is a potential English learner. Questions 2, 3, and 4 on the LUS ask about language usage.

Step Two: The second step is the screener. The free online Ohio English Language Proficiency Screener, OELPS, is administered one to one. OELPS is found on Ohio's Test Portal. Students receive a score in each of four domains – listening, speaking, reading and writing. The scores range from 1 – 5. Students who score as proficient do not qualify for English Language services. Students who are not proficient are classified as English learners. On the ODE website you can find templates for [individual student reports](#) in English and 12 other languages.

All Kindergarten students identified as potential English learners on the LUS will be given the OELPS, even if the student was identified as an English learner in a preschool program. All students newly arrived in the USA will also be given the OELPS. For students transferring from another school in Ohio or from another state, see below.

A school or district has 30 days from the beginning of the school year, or 14 days if the student enrolls during the school year, to notify parents of EL status.

Occasionally parents answer “English” to the home language questions on the Language Usage Survey, LUS, but it is obvious that the child isn’t proficient in English. Should I assess the student with OELPS?

It is important to build trust and to respect the parents’ decision. Ensure that the parents understand the questions. If you think the child is not proficient, take time to observe him or her in the first thirty days. Share your observations with the parents. If the parents amend their LUS, you can screen the child. If the parents do not change the enrollment form, respect their decision and do not screen the child.

Is it necessary to ask parent permission to give the OELPS?

It is not necessary, but a district may choose to do so.

Can parents refuse to have their child screened?

Parents can refuse. However, the school staff should ensure that the parents understand the consequences of their decision, and why the screening may benefit their child.

If a student transfers from one school district in Ohio to another, is it necessary to administer the OELPS if the LUS has a language other than English?

No, it is not necessary. Check the student's records for evidence that he or she has been screened for EL services, has been identified as an EL, or has exited from an EL program. If a student is already identified in Ohio, he or she continues to be an English learner. Send home a letter informing the parents of continuation of services.

If it is proving difficult to obtain school records in a timely manner, check the Online Reporting System in the Testing Portal. Look at "Students currently my students" and you may find the results of OELPS and/or OELPA there. Another option is to call the Help Desk at 877-231-7809. A further resource is to ask your EMIS coordinator to check ODDEX. Remember that if you call or email the staff of ODE regarding a student, use only the SSID number, and never use the student's name.

If a student transfers from another state to Ohio, is it necessary to administer the OELPS if the LUS has a language other than English?

Check the student's school records for evidence that he or she has been screened for EL services, has been identified as an EL, or has exited from an EL program. Regardless of whether the other state is affiliated with ELPA21 or WIDA or has its own standards, Ohio will accept the results. Send home a letter informing the parents of continuation of services, or that the records were examined and that there is no need for EL services.

Is there any training on how to administer the OELPS?

The Office of Assessment plans to update the training PowerPoint as needed. Paula Mahaley is also available to Skype with school staff around Ohio. Jill Kramer can also assist with training. Contact her at jill.kramer@escoco.org.

If a student qualifies for English services on the OELPS, does that necessarily mean that he or she should be designated as an English Learner? Is there any teacher discretion in classifying students as ELs?

If a student qualifies, he or she is designated as an English Learner. There is no teacher discretion.

What are the EMIS codes for English learners?

EL students are given one of the following LEP codes in EMIS-

L – first 180 days in U.S. schools

S – second year or 180 – 360 days in U.S. schools

Y – more than 360 days in U.S. schools. Y = Yes, the student is an English Learner

M – Trial Mainstream – a code given to students who score 4s and 5s and one 3 on the OELPA. Trial Mainstream is only based on OELPA scores, not on OELPS. The M code only applies for one year. If, for example, a student is trial mainstream one year, but the next year scores 5, 4, 3, he or she is no longer Trial Mainstream. Being Trial Mainstream does not dictate how a school district serves a student. Provide English services as needed.

Is the Parent Notification Letter available in languages other than English?

Schools must notify parents of the child's identification as an English Learner. Parents should be notified within 30 days of the beginning of the school year, or within 14 days if the child is enrolled during the school year. Currently the [Parent Notification Letter](#) is available on the Ohio Department of Education's website in English and Spanish. The letter is a template that districts can customize or complete. Districts should translate documents into other languages or provide interpretation to ensure parents understand. This notification letter can be sent in conjunction with the OELPS Individual Student Report referenced above.

For more detailed information, click this link to "Identifying English Learners in Ohio"

<http://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Other-Resources/English-Learners/Teaching-English-Language-Learners/Identification-and-Assessment/Guidelines-for-Identifying-English-Learners-in-Ohio.pdf.aspx?lang=en-US>