

## Provisional English Learner Identification Procedure

This procedure provides a means of provisionally identifying English learners (ELs) in times of extended school closure due to COVID-19 and/or the tornadoes impacting middle Tennessee during which virtual continuity of education services may be provided and face-to-face screening is not possible. This process may not replace the formal identification process when face-to-face screening is possible, and formal screening must take place as soon as possible once safe to do so for any student who has been given a provisional status. No part of the process already completed must be repeated once school resumes.

- **STEP 1:** Review the [Home Language Survey \(HLS\)](#).  
If the HLS indicates a language other than English for **any** question, **proceed to STEP 2.**

*NOTE: The Home Language Survey is a required school registration/enrollment document and must still be administered during extended school closure or virtual continuity of education services. The HLS can be found on pages 1 – 2 in the [ESL State Board Policy](#)*

- **STEP 2:** Conduct a review of the student’s academic records from previous schooling, if available. Review evidence to assess whether the student has sufficient English proficiency to benefit from instruction in English without specialized supports or accommodations. Acceptable evidence includes, but is not limited to, scores from standardized summative or interim tests in English, passing grades for core content classes conducted in English, and/or work samples. If the academic records are not available, or they do not contain robust evidence of English proficiency, **proceed to STEP 4.**

*NOTE: A student who has both WIDA ACCESS composite and literacy proficiency scores from the previous school year that fail to meet or exceed the threshold for reclassification are **not** re-screened. For students whose overall WIDA ACCESS composite and literacy proficiency scores from the previous school year fail meet or exceed the threshold for reclassification, **proceed to STEP 6.** If a student has an overall WIDA ACCESS composite and a literacy proficiency score from the previous school year that meets or exceeds the threshold for exit from English as a Second Language (ESL) services (as specified in [State Board of Education ESL Program Policy 3.207](#)), the student should be classified as Transition (T1) and monitored as required.*

- **STEP 3:** If the student has an Individualized Education Program (IEP)/504 plan or is suspected of having a disability (e.g., the parent states that the student has or may have a disability), proceed to [Appendix A](#) .

- **STEP 4:** If the LEA and family have the capability and technology to conduct the WIDA Screener virtually, the LEA should administer it. If it cannot, **proceed to STEP 5.**
- **STEP 5:** With written parental consent, the LEA will conduct a virtual screening with the student using a FERPA compliant platform to complete the SOLOM Student Oral Language Observation Matrix. Proceed to [Appendix B](#).

The screening should consist of questions targeting various proficiency levels in speaking and listening and be designed to elicit ongoing interaction between the test administrator and the student. Ongoing interaction will make it possible to ascertain the student’s proficiency level across the domains of speaking and listening, along with general proficiency with interactions in English. The difficulty of questions should progress as the screening continues.

Below are *examples* of questions at various levels of difficulty, but test administrators must tailor the interaction as necessary based on the apparent proficiency of the student, student age, disability (if applicable), and the student’s comfort with the topic area.

- Start with questions to build rapport and progress in difficulty from there.
  - Examples of questions to build rapport with the student and prepare them for screening:
    1. “What is your name?”
    2. “How old are you?”
    3. “Where are you from?”
  - Examples of Beginner level questions:
    1. “Tell me about your family.”
    2. “Can you tell me a story about your best friend?”
    3. “What do you like to do for fun (with your friends/family)?”
    4. “Can you tell me about a book you like?”
  - Examples of Intermediate level questions:
    1. “What would you like to do when you grow up/graduate from high school?”
    2. “What do you not like about school? How would you change that part of school if you were the teacher or principal?”
    3. “Tell me about your favorite (sports team/video game/toy/pet/place)?”

4. "Do you like reading? How often do you read? What types of things do you read and why do you like them?"
- o Examples of Advanced level questions:
    1. "What is your favorite school subject and why?" / "How is this subject useful to people in their everyday lives?"
    2. "How has science or technology made your life better?"
    3. "Describe a job that you think is useful for society and why."
    4. "Please give me an example of something you've read that changed the way you think."
- Stop the screening at the level where the student has difficulty responding.
  - If the student has difficulty responding at a particular level, ask a similar question or two from a previous level in order to end on a positive note.
  - Similar types of questions may be asked throughout the screening if the test administrator determines that more information is necessary to assess proficiency.

*NOTE: The test administrator should consider the difference between basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP). Oral fluency in English may not be an indication that an EL has the overall English language skills necessary for academic success. This is also known as the basic interpersonal communicative skills – cognitive academic language proficiency (BICS-CALP) gap; the incorrect assumption that a student who is conversationally fluent is also academically fluent can lead to misclassifications.*

- **STEP 6:** Determine the most appropriate academic placement and supports based on the student's English language proficiency information and the LEA's chosen method of instructional delivery. If an LEA is providing the general student population with distance learning opportunities, it must ensure that ELs are provided equal access to such opportunities, which may include the provision of ESL services in a virtual environment.

*NOTE: If the student has an IEP/504 plan, ESL and special education personnel MUST collaborate to determine program and academic placement and supports. All ELs must have an individual learning plan (ILP) to inform differentiation and needed language supports.*

- **STEP 7:** Provide the parent with a call or virtual meeting to share the results of the screening, the student's qualification status, and a detailed description of the academic placement and supports that will be made available. Parents should sign a

consent form either accepting or waiving direct ESL services. Services should not begin until parental consent is received.

*NOTE: Given that this is a provisional identification process, it is essential that parents of all students involved in this provisional process—including students who are screened and do not qualify for ESL services—understand that students will be rescreened using the formal process once face-to-face instruction begins, and a student's EL status may change as a result of the formal screening.*

- **STEP 8:** If the parent consents to ESL services, notify the receiving teachers of the student's identification and placement. The LEA will follow their procedure for creation and implementation of the student's ILP.

*NOTE: The school is responsible for ensuring that all teachers with whom ELs are scheduled have English language proficiency information for their students. This includes general education and content area teachers.*

- **STEP 9:** Correctly code the student in the LEA's chosen Student Information System (SIS) package. Verify that this is accurate in the Education Information System (EIS).

*NOTE: It is the LEA's responsibility to ensure that students are properly coded once provisional EL status is determined and again after the formal screening process is administered or following the summative assessment if a student's EL status changes. It is the LEA's responsibility to maintain accurate information on the provisional EL status of students while school while instruction is being provided virtually.*

- **STEP 10:** Schedule the student based on program placement and English language proficiency. The [School Closure Toolkit for Districts: Special Populations](#) provides further detail on serving English learners during this time.

**The procedure is complete. Attach the completed HLS to this form, along with the completed rubric and parental consent form, and file them in the student's record. Copies of this form and the completed rubric should be given to ESL and general education teachers who will be working with this student.**

**When it is safe to do so, formal screening must be completed for all students who were provisionally screened during the school closures and/or periods of distance learning regardless of whether or not they were identified as ELs.**

## **Appendix A**

### **Students who have or are suspected of having a disability**

If a student enrolls with an IEP/504 plan or the parent informs enrollment personnel that the student has or may have a disability, enrollment personnel must coordinate with special education staff to complete this procedure with appropriate accommodations and the results must be interpreted in consultation with special education personnel.

### **If the student is suspected of having a disability but an initial evaluation for special education and related services cannot be completed prior to completing this procedure:**

This procedure must be completed in accordance with the outlined guidelines and the student must be placed in the appropriate academic program based on the information available at the conclusion of the procedure

## Appendix B

<b>SOLOM Teacher Observation Student Oral Language Observation Matrix</b>					
Student's Name:				Grade:	Date:
Language Observed:			Administered By (signature):		
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>A. Comprehension</b>	Cannot be said to understand even simple conversation.	Has great difficulty following what is said. Can comprehend only social conversation spoken slowly and with frequent repetitions.	Understands most of what is said at slower-than-normal speed with repetitions.	Understands nearly everything at normal speech. Although occasional repetition may be necessary.	Understands everyday conversation and normal classroom discussions.
<b>B. Fluency</b>	Speech so halting and fragmentary as to make conversation virtually impossible.	Usually hesitant: often forced into silence by language limitations.	Speech in everyday conversation and classroom discussion frequently disrupted by the student's search for the correct manner of expression	Speech in everyday conversation and classroom discussions generally fluent, with occasional lapses while the student searches for the correct manner of expression.	Speech in everyday conversation and classroom discussions fluent and effortless; approximating that of a native speaker.
<b>C. Vocabulary</b>	Vocabulary limitations so extreme as to make conversation virtually impossible.	Misuse of words and very limited: comprehension quite difficult.	Student frequently uses wrong words: conversation somewhat limited because of inadequate vocabulary.	Student occasionally uses inappropriate terms and/or must rephrase ideas because of lexical inadequacies.	Use of vocabulary and idioms approximate that of a native speaker.
<b>D. Pronunciation</b>	Pronunciation problems so severe as to make speech virtually unintelligible.	Very hard to understand because of pronunciation problems. Must frequently repeat in order to make him/herself understood.	Pronunciation problems necessitate concentration on the part of the listener and occasionally lead to misunderstanding.	Always intelligible, although the listener is conscious of a definite accent and occasional inappropriate intonation patterns.	Pronunciation and intonation approximate that of a native speaker.
<b>E. Grammar</b>	Errors in grammar and word order so severe as to make speech virtually unintelligible.	Grammar and word order errors make comprehension difficult. Must often rephrase and/or restrict him/herself to basic patterns.	Makes frequent errors of grammar and word order that occasionally obscure meaning.	Occasionally makes grammatical and/or word order errors that do not obscure meaning.	Grammar and word order approximate that of a native speaker.

Source: <http://www.cal.org/twi/EvalToolkit/appendix/solom.pdf>