

Greetings, ESOL Coordinators.

Thank you for joining us for lunch today as we Munch and Learn!

Today's topic is a hot & spicy one – Identifying English learners and notifying their parents during the fluid process of deciding how to reopen and restart the new school year. I know many of you are wondering – Are we still using the provisional entrance procedures?

Note: We are recording this session and will post it on the ESOL language program website.

2.

This is our lunch menu for today.

Bear with me if your tastes are different than mine, but school lunches are not typically gourmet, right?

After a few lunch items, we will stop and digest. This is when you get to type your questions and comments in the chat box for us. Thank you for your active engagement in our lunch session today.

3.

Federal and state laws on identifying English learners will be our appetizer today.

According to the *Office for Civil Rights Dear Colleague Letter* of January 2015, all public schools must have procedures in place to accurately and timely identify potential English Learners and then determine if they are truly English learner students through a valid and reliable English language proficiency screener.

Under Section 3113(b)(2) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act, each State educational agency is required to establish and implement statewide standardized procedures for English learners to enter and exit from EL status and language instruction educational programs (LIEPs). This means the procedures must be consistently applied across the State.

The State Board of Education ESOL rule establishes the statewide standardized procedures that are required of all school systems in Georgia for identifying English learners. These are repeated in the State ESSA plan and described in detail in the EL Language Programs State Guidance document found on the ESOL language program website.

4.

Here is a snapshot of the sections on the website where you can find information on English learner entrance procedures.

Your school system will want to understand these procedures and then create a district-specific handbook to describe how these procedures work specifically in your district. For instance, if you copy and paste portions of the state guidance, you will want to ensure that your handbook specifies the personnel and departments involved at the local level and how it works for you.

5.

The identification process begins at registration with a standardized HOME LANGUAGE SURVEY. Only these three questions may be used. No more. No less. No different. Only these 3 questions in order to ensure our procedures are standardized statewide and implemented consistently. By the way, these three questions will **not** be changing this year. It stays the same as it has the last three years.

And - *these questions should be in a language and format the parents can understand.* For this reasons, the state has provided you with a Home Language Survey template in 15 languages. If you are going to embed the questions into your online registration process, please make sure they are presented to parents in a language and format they can

understand, to the extent possible. For instance, some parents would prefer an oral interpretation than a written translation based on their level of comfort or literacy in their home language.

Registration, whether in person or online, is a local decision. The state does not determine the logistics of how a district might decide to collect this information. However, remember that the parents' answers to the Home Language Survey, with their signature and date, is a legal document. If the school asked the questions orally, documentation should be maintained with the interpreter's signature and date as well. This can also be a virtual or online process.

The Home Language Survey is a "one and done" document – **Not an annual document.** Therefore, the original HLS must be maintained in the student's permanent or cumulative file. If you are using the EL Tab in S.L.D.S, you can upload the H.L.S. Some school systems upload the Home Language Survey to their Student Information System as well.

Please read the EL Language Programs State Guidance document to learn about the Home Language Survey amendment process for two scenarios: (1) Parents who report that they incorrectly completed the survey and (2) parents who report that their child is multilingual/multiliterate and developing two or more languages currently/simultaneously and does not need to be screened for English language support.

Regarding foreign exchange students in your high schools, students with a J-1 visa, the school system has flexibility to decide whether they should the English learner identification process or whether the agency that brings them must provide documentation of the student's level of English proficiency. Please see the EL Language Programs State Guidance Handbook on the ESOL language program website for more information.

6.

After administering these three questions, then what?

If the answer to any of the three state-required questions indicates a language other than English, the student is considered to be a potential English Learner.

If potential English learners are **new to United States schools** (such as Kindergarten students or newcomers in grades 1-12) then they **must be screened** with the state-required grade-level-appropriate English language proficiency screener. The eligibility criteria explained in the Entrance Flowcharts must be followed.

However, if the potential English learner student **has been in United States schools before**, for instance if he is a transfer student from either within Georgia or another state in the U.S., then the original Home language survey and possible screening results and/or the annual English proficiency assessment results will determine whether the student has already been identified as an English learner student or has already exited English learner status.

If the student is transferring from another school system in Georgia, then registration personnel must capture GA-transfer students in GUIDE and check to see if they already have a state-reported EL status or not.

After that, registration personnel should review the SLDS student information page to determine whether the student is still identified as an English learner due to previous ACCESS test results.

Your school system's written EL Entrance Procedures should outline the procedures that address three types of students enrolling in the school district as shown on this slide.

Lastly, If the answer to all three questions on the **original** Home Language Survey is English, the student is NOT a potential English learner and **should not** be administered the ELP screener. Even if the student is from a country where English is the primary language. English is English.

If the answer to all three questions is English, but this is not the first time the student has enrolled in a U.S. school, then you must still track down the original HLS and possible EL screening and or assessment documents to determine whether the student is already identified as an EL student or has already exited EL status.

In Georgia, this information is in GUIDE and in SLDS, which should be checked before you receive the transferring documentation.

7.

8.

It is important to have written procedures that outline how the screening process will be implemented and used in your school system:

- What grade level is the student? Which screener is appropriate for that grade level? Is the student enrolling at the beginning of the school year or mid-year? How does that affect which screener we choose?
- Is the student blind, deaf, and/or non-verbal? Does he already have an IEP?
- Do all our staff know what the eligibility criteria is and are they following it correctly? What reports do we review to ensure this process is standardized?
- Do all our staff have access to and understand the Entrance flowcharts?

9.

Since 2006, Georgia has been a member of the WIDA Consortium. Therefore, LEAs must use **one** of the following WIDA ELP screeners to determine whether a potential English Learner qualifies as an English Learner.

There are two screener options for Kindergarten students:

- The Kindergarten WIDA-ACCESS Placement Test for students in Kindergarten and 1st semester grade one.
- The Kindergarten Measure of Developing English Language (K MODEL)

For the rest of the students, there is the... WIDA Screener (Online) for students in 2nd semester grade 1 all the way up to grade 12.

As you know, WIDA provides training on the administration of their screeners, and teachers must be trained before they can administer a screener. This training is online. Please contact Dr. Mary Nesbit-McBride for more information on obtaining WIDA login/password for your teachers and where to access WIDA screener trainings.

And, as needed if the school is operating completely online this school year, we will soon have a WIDA Remote Screener available for you to train your staff to use to formally screen potential English learners new to U.S. schools. You cannot simply administer the regular WIDA screener remotely – you must use the WIDA remote screener when you need to screen remotely. Thank you.

10.

We don't know much about the new WIDA Remote Screener, so we won't be able to answer your questions, until WIDA provides us and you with training on the use of this new screener administered remotely.

As you know, all WIDA training is in the WIDA secure portal access on the WIDA webinar calendar. Please contact the Georgia Department of Education Assessment Division for your questions about administration of the WIDA Screener. Dr. Mary Nesbit-McBride is the Assessment Specialist overseeing the WIDA suite of screeners and assessments.

11.

On May 18 of this year, USED's Office of Elementary & Secondary Education published a Fact Sheet on Providing Services to ELs during periods of school closures. If the school district is operating via remote learning, then they must screen new students to determine EL status, to the extent possible.

In the spring, the Georgia Department of Education provided guidance on an informal interview screening process to be used temporarily to identify EL students for ESOL services. This method is no longer valid, now that WIDA is providing us with a standardized WIDA Remote Screener for K-12 to be used statewide as needed.

We know that your situation, just like ours, is a fluid situation as you wrestle with the important decisions about how to restart school and how to ensure a continuity of learning for all students, including English learners. Therefore, we are showing you're the screener options in three categories.

If your school buildings are open and you are able to screen face-to-face, you should use the screeners on the green side of this chart.

If you are opening in a hybrid or stagger manner, and some potential English learners needed to be screened cannot come to your building, then please use the screener options in the yellow column.

If your schools are operating completely online or distance, then use the screener option in the peach column.

The reminder at the bottom directs you to the Georgia Insights website where the Georgia Department of Education provides school systems with updated and current information.

12.

According to the EL Language Programs State Guidance, the WIDA ELP screeners that we have may not be valid for making EL eligibility determinations for students whose IEP precludes the assessment of one or more language domains.

To determine if a student with disabilities qualifies as an English Learner, the student's IEP team should be convened to discuss EL eligibility when one or more language domains are missing. The IEP Team decision must be maintained in the student's cumulative record along with evidence supporting the committee's decision. This decision may be revisited at any time. This information is found on the EL Programs State Guidance handbook on our website.

Students who are deaf, blind, and/or non-verbal would be considered as having a disability that precludes assessment in one or more language domains. Beyond these disabilities, the Assessment Director should seek counsel from the GaDOE Assessment Division who would consult with Special Education and EL Learner Programs.

13.

The Kindergarten Eligibility Flowchart describes the ELP screening process for students in **2nd semester Pre-kindergarten through 1st semester Grade 1** and is found on the ESOL language programs website.

Be sure to follow the eligibility criteria according to which semester the Kindergarten student is enrolling in.

If you have questions about this flowchart, please contact us after today's session.

14.

The Kindergarten Eligibility Flowchart describes the ELP screening process for students in **2nd semester Pre-kindergarten through 1st semester Grade 1** and is found on the ESOL language programs website.

Be sure to follow the eligibility criteria according to which semester the Kindergarten student is enrolling in.

If you have questions about this flowchart, please contact us after today's session.

15.

The WIDA Screener is used as the ELP screener for students who are in the **second semester of grade 1 through grade 12**. Please contact Dr. Mary Nesbit-McBride with all your questions about the training and administration of these Screeners. Also contact her if you do not have a WIDA login and password. Thank you.

16.

It is very important to properly code identified English learners in the local Student Information System and EL=Yes, EL=No, or other codes used for exited ELs and incorrectly identified English learners.

It is also important to maintain the original screener in the student's permanent or cumulative file and ensure it is never purged. In addition to the student's file, the state has provided schools with a special TAB in SLDS where the ELP Screener information can be recorded for all Districts in Georgia to access. The state recommends the use of the EL Screener Tab in SLDS to maintain vital ELP Screener information for all ELs in Georgia. The GaDOE SLDS Department offers WIDA Screener training to all LEAs.

In addition to recording the ELP Screener results in the SIS and in SLDS, the LEA must also record in the SIS the Date the ELP Screener was administered. When an LEA is unable to determine with certainty the Date of ELP Screener for Out-of-State or In-State Transfer EL Students, the LEA will construct this date as follows:

- Determine the school year for which you have the earliest ELP assessment results.
- Use the first day of school for that school year, as the Date of ELP Screener.
- Out-of-State errors in Data Collections for missing Date of ELP Screeners will be relievable with explanation.

17.

18.

19.

20.

21.

Federal statute requires that students be identified for English learner status within 30 days of enrollment in a school; for students who enroll after the beginning of the school year, the LEA must send the required parent notice within two weeks of a student being placed in a language instruction program.

U.S.E.D. has **not** provided states with flexibility on these timeframes. Many of you have asked me, and there is no change in the deadline to identify English learners.

Of course, many times, if enrolling during the school year, the student may already had been identified in another school and the process is not one of screening, but rather one of securing previous documentation and records.

22.

There is a great flowchart on the Federal Programs' English Learner Programs website to help schools and school districts establish procedures for determining what supports an English learner needs. Please visit this page and click on the Flowchart. You can see that first, EL students should receive core Tier 1 English language instruction in the ESOL program. After that, if they need additional support, they could receive supplemental language assistance services from the Title I, Part A federal program and/or the Title III, Part A federal program.

23.

It is important to understand that the HLS consists of just three questions. All districts are required to determine the Parent Language of Communication and thus, most include that question on the new student enrollment form. We recommend that this question not be placed near the HLS questions so as to not confuse district staff when they review the results of the three-question HLS.

The purpose for the Parent Language of Communication question is to determine the language preference of the parent for oral and written communication between the school and the family.

Remember that this question is a Data Collection Question ONLY and is NOT part of the HLS.

24.

The Georgia Department of Education ESOL language program has provided school districts with several translations of an initial eligibility parent notification letter to use with students who are identified as an English learner for the first time in their school life. And a “continuing eligibility parent notification letter” to send home to parents of students who, based on the annual ACCESS score results, continue to meet the eligibility criteria for English learner. In the Fiscal Year 2021, the GaDOE has provided a combined Parent Notification Letter that combines the initial letter with the continuing letter and it also combines the Title I Parent Notification letter, which I’ll explain on the next few slides.

25.

26.

If the student is going to receive supplemental language services from either Title I or Title III, then the parents must be notified following all the requirements in the federal ESEA statute. Schools districts have the option to use a separate Title I/Title III Parent Notification Letter, or the new combined parent notification letter. Both letters are provided in 15 languages and can be found on the Federal Programs English Learner Programs and the Parents of English Learners website.

27.

28. ad lib

29. ad lib

30. ad lib

31.

For questions about your **Title III-A supplemental services program**, please contact your Title III-A Program Specialist noted on this slide. If you receive Title III subgrant, your specialist will be monitoring the district’s implementation of these statewide standardized English learner entrance procedures.

32.