GaDOE English Learner Program Decision Guide
for the Identification of English Learners in SY2020-2021

The questions and answers provided in this guidance document are based on the available information as of the date below. As new information is available or GaDOE procedures are revised and changed, this guidance will be updated.

1. *What is the purpose for administering the English language proficiency (ELP) screener?*
   - To identify which students <u>new to U.S. schools</u>, including upcoming Kindergarten students, are English learners (ELs) needing English language instruction services (ESOL).

2. *To whom do we administer the ELP screener?*
   - To students <u>new to U.S. schools</u>, including upcoming Kindergarten students, who are potential ELs based on their parents' responses on the original Home Language Survey's (HLS) three questions given to them in a language and format they understand.
   - The ELP screening process is **not intended for transfer students** who may already have English learner documentation, which must be used first for identification purposes.

3. *Which WIDA Screener do we administer?*
   - If the test administrator and the potential English learner being screened can be in the same location at the same time, then the LEA <u>must administer</u> the grade-level appropriate standard WIDA Screener, following WIDA guidelines and instructions.
     - Please review the [EL Language Programs – State Guidance](#) document, pg. 16 for information on the standard WIDA Screeners**:** Kindergarten W-APT, Kindergarten MODEL, WIDA Screener (Online or Paper).
   - If the test administrator and the potential English learner being screened **cannot** be in the same location at the same time, then, the LEA **has flexibility** to use the new grade-level appropriate WIDA Remote Screener, following WIDA guidelines and instructions.

4. *May we administer the new WIDA Remote Screener differently than how WIDA's instructions indicate?*
   - The state recommends that LEAs follow WIDA's guidelines and instructions for the administration of the new WIDA Remote Screener.
   - LEAs have flexibility to determine the best way to administer the new WIDA Remote Screener in the most compassionate, health- and safety-conscious manner.
   - WIDA provides LEAs with flexibility to decide how the test administrator calls the students and what technology to use for this call.
   - GaDOE recommends that ESOL Directors collaborate with System Testing Coordinators (STC) to decide how the screener materials will be presented to the students.

- If LEAs choose to present screener materials electronically, or in a manner different than what is described in WIDA guidelines and instructions, then this deviation in procedure must be documented by the System Test Coordinator (STC) on the testing irregularity form under ACCESS and submitted as the LEA's different remote screener procedures.
    - The testing irregularity form does not need to be submitted on an individual student basis.
    - The testing irregularity form does not need to be submitted if the testing materials are provided to the families in the manner prescribed by WIDA.
- Please see the WIDA Remote Screener FAQ document on the ESOL Language Program website for more information.

5. *How will the results of the new WIDA Remote Screener help us identify English learners?*
    - The WIDA Remote Screener Score Sheet, lists three outcomes from the screening process that correspond to English proficiency levels.
      Outcomes:
        a. Outcome #1 – Beginning level of English proficiency = student is identified as an English learner. EL=Yes.
        b. Outcome #2 – Developing level of English proficiency = WIDA recommends additional in-person screening to identify student's status.
        c. Outcome #3 – Fluent level of English proficiency = student is not identified as an English learner. EL=No.

6. *Is the WIDA Remote Screener a **temporary identification process**, i.e. will we need to re-screen students on the standard WIDA Screener when possible?*
    - This depends on the student's grade level.

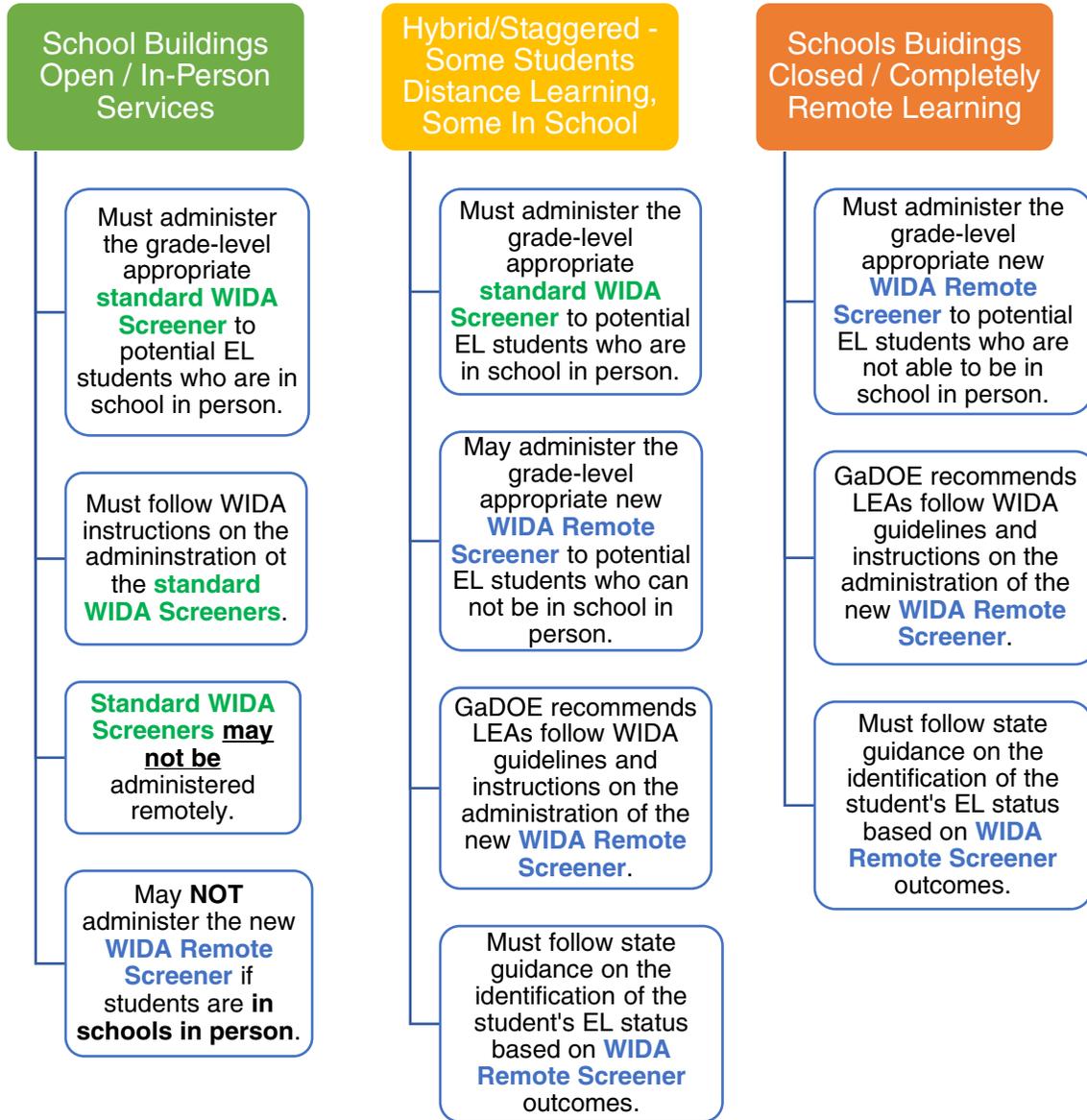## Kindergarten:

- **LEAs have flexibility** to choose whether to consider the WIDA Remote Screener results as temporary or not.
    - Both the standard WIDA Kinder Screener and the Remote Screener test the same two language domains – listening and speaking.
    - The Kindergarten class of students is typically the largest group of potential ELs to screen each year.
- LEAs **may choose** to re-screen Kindergarten students who score at the "Fluent" level, if the LEA is concerned about mis-identifying students.
- If any questions arise from parents or teachers concerning the student's identification, the LEA should attempt to rescreen the student with the standard Kindergarten WIDA Screener to provide parents will more information.
    - **Note:** All statewide standardized Kindergarten EL identification criteria remain the same.
- If it is not possible to re-screen students before the ACCESS testing administration in January 2021, then the LEA will administer the Kinder ACCESS test to all remote-screener-identified ELs to determine continued eligibility for EL status.
    - **Note:** All EL exit decisions for Kindergarten ELs must follow the statewide standardized Kindergarten EL Exit criteria, which have not changed. (Please see the EL Exit flowcharts on ESOL Language Program website.)

Grades 1-12:

- LEAs will use WIDA's recommendations to identify a temporary EL status and ESOL placement for students in grades 1-12 who were screened remotely.
- LEAs may code temporarily identified students in SIS as EL=YES or EL=No.
  - If temporarily coded students' status change after formal re-screening, the status in SIS may also be changed and an explanation provided.
  - Data Collection errors due to EL status changes from re-screening students will be relievable.
- LEAs must serve all temporarily-identified EL=Yes students in the ESOL language instruction program, even when services are provided through distance learning means.
  - See USED Fact Sheet, May 18, 2020.
- LEAs must notify parents of their child's placement in the ESOL language program within 30 days at the beginning of the school year or within ten days of being placed in the EL program, if the student enrolled after the beginning of the school year.
- Parents have the right to waive ESOL language services. LEAs have flexibility to determine how to manage this procedure in a virtual environment.
- Given that the new WIDA Remote Screener does not screen students in all four language domains as required by the Office for Civil Rights, but instead, for logistical reasons, omits the writing domain, **LEAs must re-screen any student in Grades 1-12 using the standard grade-appropriate WIDA Screener.**
- If the re-screening process changes the student's EL status, parents must be notified again of any change in status and program placement.
- If the re-screening process cannot occur before the ACCESS testing administration window opens in January 2021, all temporarily identified students must be administered the ACCESS for ELLs assessment, which will provide more complete information regarding the student's level of English proficiency.
  - **Note:** All EL Exit criteria based on ACCESS test results remain the same and would be applied. (Please see the EL Exit flowcharts on ESOL Language Program website.)

Decision Guide for Determining Which Screener to Administer:

School Buildings Open / In-Person Services

- Must administer the grade-level appropriate **standard WIDA Screener** to potential EL students who are in school in person.

- Must follow WIDA instructions on the admininstration ot the **standard WIDA Screeners**.

- **Standard WIDA Screeners may not be** administered remotely.

- May **NOT** administer the new **WIDA Remote Screener** if students are **in schools in person**.

Hybrid/Staggered - Some Students Distance Learning, Some In School

- Must administer the grade-level appropriate **standard WIDA Screener** to potential EL students who are in school in person.

- May administer the grade-level appropriate new **WIDA Remote Screener** to potential EL students who can not be in school in person.

- GaDOE recommends LEAs follow WIDA guidelines and instructions on the administration of the new **WIDA Remote Screener**.

- Must follow state guidance on the identification of the student's EL status based on **WIDA Remote Screener** outcomes.

Schools Buidings Closed / Completely Remote Learning

- Must administer the grade-level appropriate new **WIDA Remote Screener** to potential EL students who are not able to be in school in person.

- GaDOE recommends LEAs follow WIDA guidelines and instructions on the administration of the new **WIDA Remote Screener**.

- Must follow state guidance on the identification of the student's EL status based on **WIDA Remote Screener** outcomes.

WIDA Remote Screener Student Outcomes – Next Steps

Outcome #1: Newcomer Level (ELP 1 & 2)

- Students in Kindergarten may be identified as English learners, unless the LEA chooses to re-screen Kinder students with the standard K Screener.
- Students in Grades 1-12 may be temporarily identified as an EL, but **must be re-screened** with the standard WIDA Screener, to the extent in-person screening is possible.
- Code identified EL students as EL=Yes in SIS.
- Serve identified EL students in ESOL.
- Must notify parents within Federal parent notification timeline.*
- Must provide parents the opportunity to waive ESOL.
- May upload Screener Score results in EL Screener Tab in SLDS as evidence of EL=Yes status.

Outcome #2: Developing Level (ELP 3 & 4)

- LEAs may identify Kindergarten students as English learners
- Students in Grades 1-12 may be temporarily identified as EL.
- Code identified EL students as EL=Yes in SIS.
- Serve identified EL student in ESOL.
- Must notify parents within Federal parent notification timeline*.
- LEA has flexibility to re-screen Kindergarten EL students with standard grade-appropriate WIDA Screener, to the extent in-person screening is possible. (WIDA Recommendation / Best Practices)
- LEAs **must re-scree**n all students in Grades 1-12 to the extent in-person screening is possible.
- If re-screening with standard WIDA Screener, and if re-coding students, any EL status changes after Oct FTE are relievable with explanation.
- May upload Screener Score results in the EL Screener Tab in SLDS.

Outcome #3: Fluent Level (ELP 5 & 6)

- LEA has flexibility to code Kindergarten students as EL=No in SIS or to re-screen with the standard WIDA Screener, when possible.
- LEA **must re-screen** all Grades 1-12 students with standard WIDA Screener, to the extent in-person screening is possible. (Federal identification timeline is "within 30 days of enrollment in a school in the state.")
- Temporarily code grades 1-12 students EL=No in SIS.
- Temporarily do not serve students in ESOL.
- (Optional) LEA may notify parents of students' temporary status and lack of services, within Federal parent notification timeline.*
- May upload all Screener Score results in EL Screener Tab in SLDS as evidence of EL=No status.

*Federal Parent Notification Timeline: 30 days at the beginning of the school year or within 2 weeks of placement in an EL program if student enrolls after the beginning of the school year