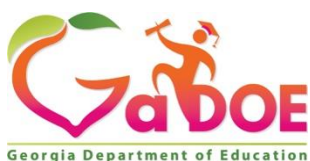


# Provisional EL Entrance and Exit Procedures during Extended School Closures

**This guidance is only intended for use during extended periods of school closures at the end of the 2019-2020 school year and the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year and does not represent a change in State Board Rule.**

**As new information from the U.S. Department of Education is provided to states, this document and the procedures outlined within will be updated, posted on the GaDOE website, and shared with schools.**

**When schools resume normal operations, the *temporary flexibility* granted will no longer apply.**



**April 22, 2020**



## Rationale

Given that Local Education Agencies (LEAs) continue to enroll students using online registration processes and are providing educational services through various means; and given that the statewide standardized English learner (EL) entrance procedures established in State Board of Education (SBOE) Rule [160-4-5-.02](#) require schools to administer an initial English language proficiency screening measure to students new to U.S. schools; and given that face-to-face administration of this screener is not possible during school closures, it is therefore necessary to provide LEAs with provisional procedures to determine whether language assistance services during periods of school closures are in the best interest of potential English learners.

When LEAs receive the 2020 English language proficiency (ELP) assessment results, according to SBOE 160-4-5-.02, educators must conduct EL Reclassification review meetings in order to determine whether EL students are English proficient when their scores do not meet the state's clear exit criterion but rather meet the LEA's established exit criterion. In order to provide LEAs with greater flexibility during school closures, the following two options could be considered for conducting EL Reclassification review meetings: (1) **consider alternate methods for the EL Reclassification review at the end of the school year** or (2) **consider holding the EL Reclassification review meetings face-to-face at the beginning of the new school year within the federally-required 30-day window to identify student's EL status.**

## English Learners and Equity

It is important to note that identifying students who need an English language assistance program is required under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Equal Educational Opportunities Act. All states and LEAs must ensure that ELs can participate meaningfully and equally in educational programs and services (see [Schools' Civil Rights Obligations to EL Students](#)); this requirement has not been removed even though instruction is now conducted remotely. Therefore, language supports must be provided to ensure students' access to academic content within the context of distance learning.

## Purpose of This Guidance

This guidance is designed to provide clarity regarding expectations of LEA staff to identify potential English learners while schools are closed. These provisional procedures provide LEAs with a decision-making process to identify students in need of preemptive English language support during the time that schools are closed for normal operations and the face-to-face screening process is not possible. The provisional identification process should only be used when there is not enough documentation from a previous school to make continuing programming decisions within the two-week established timeline, or when the student is new to U.S. schools. These provisional procedures may be updated to include guidance from the U.S. Department of Education, as applicable.

These provisional procedures will no longer be valid once schools have resumed regular operations. They may not be used to replace the formal screening process, which must be

implemented as soon as possible once schools resume normal operations for any student who has been given a provisional status. As such, regardless of any provisional status applied through the steps outlined in this document, formal identification using the state adopted WIDA Screener must take place as soon as possible once school resumes. This applies to any student new to U.S. schools who 1) enrolled during the period of school closure with a language other than English on the Home Language Survey and 2) who does not have transferable EL records from another LEA or state in the U.S.

## Process for the Identification of English Learners During Periods of Extended School Closures

**Step 1:** Administer and review the state-required [Home Language Survey \(HLS\)](#) to all students enrolling in the LEA.

The HLS may be embedded in the LEA's online registration process, or district-trained enrollment personnel in the LEA could contact the parents to complete the HLS remotely by phone or using a secure device with limited access and no external access, as accessible to both LEAs and families, or the LEA could mail parents the HLS to complete and return to the school district.

- When the answer to all the HLS questions is English, **stop**, do not proceed to any of the next steps.
- When the answer to any of the HLS questions is a language other than English, and the student is new to U.S. schools, **proceed to Step 2** below.
- If the student is transferring from another Georgia LEA or another state and may already have an active or former EL status, the LEA must secure EL records, as applicable, to determine whether the student was previously screened or assessed for English proficiency. Records may be electronic, paper, or verbal, as available.

**Step 2:** Conduct an interview remotely with the student (by phone or using a secure device with limited access and no external access).

Follow the procedures below and complete the [listening](#), [speaking](#), and [interaction rubrics](#) found at the end of this document. Both the interview answers and the rubrics should be maintained as documentation of the provisional identification process. These documents can be maintained in a digital file.

Exceptions for which a remote interview does **not** need to be conducted:

- a. Students transferring from another LEA with records that demonstrate an EL=1, EL=2, EL=3, EL=4, EL=F, or EL=No status. This student is not an EL.
- b. Students transferring from another WIDA state whose most recent ACCESS assessment scores demonstrate they have met the LEA's EL exit criteria. This student is not an EL.
- c. Students transferring from another Georgia LEA or WIDA state with ACCESS assessment score results from the **last calendar year** showing the student is still an

English learner (EL=Yes). This student is an EL and does not need to be provisionally screener.

- d. Students whose HLS indicates American Sign Language (ASL) or a non-American English language. These students are not potential ELs in need of screening.

The sample [Interview Questions](#) below are at progressive levels of difficulty designed to elicit interaction between the interviewer and the student and facilitate a professional decision on the student's language skills (listening, speaking, and interaction). Interviewers must implement strategies to enable students with little or no experience interacting via a computer screen or phone to be comfortable during the remotely conducted interview process. Interviewers must tailor the interaction based on the apparent proficiency and age of the student.

1. Start at the low-level questions.
2. Stop at the level where a student has difficulty responding.
3. Ask a question or two from the previous level to end on a positive note.
4. Complete the listening, speaking, and interaction domain rubrics at the end of this document.

*Sample Low-Level Questions:*

- What is your name?
- How old are you?
- What do you like to do?

*Sample Moderate-Level Questions:*

- What do you like to do at school?
- What kind of food do you like?
- Tell me about your favorite (sports team, video game, toy, or hobby).
- What would you like to do when you graduate from high school/grow up?

*Sample High-Level Questions:*

- What is your favorite subject in school and why?
- Pretend you are trying to convince me why I should like your favorite (sports team, video game, toy, or hobby).
- Describe your favorite teacher/friend/family member and explain why this person is your "favorite."
- Describe a job that you think is useful for society and why.

Source: Massachusetts SBOE & Oklahoma SBOE

**Step 3:** Using student interview results, determine whether the student might need English language instruction and/or assistance, and then make a provisional placement decision.

Based on the interview information, LEAs must make a **provisional** decision about the most appropriate academic placement and language support the student may need. Generally, students who easily communicate at the “high-level questions” are most likely not to qualify for EL status when the screener is later administered.

LEAs should create a provisional decision form to complete and maintain along with the interview results and the original HLS as a record of the provisional identification process. Documentation can be maintained in a digital file until school reopens.

**Step 4:** Determine the most appropriate academic placement and language supports based on the student’s English language proficiency information and the LEA’s chosen method of delivery.

The LEA must choose the most appropriate method of ESOL service delivery during school closures and provide the student the opportunity to participate meaningfully and equally in the LEA’s distance learning program. **The language needs of ELs MUST be addressed in distance learning and virtual environments.** LEAs will want to ensure the content is accessible to ELs during virtual learning, that instructional packets sent home are accommodated for student’s level of language proficiency, and that the teachers manage language access expectations accordingly. Resources are provided on the [ESOL Language Program](#) website.

**NOTE:**

Regardless of whether a student is provisionally identified as an EL or not, the formal identification process must be completed once school resumes and person-to-person screening is possible. This includes students who were not provisionally identified. The LEA must ensure that all students who are given a provisional status assignment (provisional EL) are tracked by some means so that once school resumes, they can be screened according to the statewide standardized EL entrance procedures.

**Step 5:** Notify parents and/or legal guardians of the interview results and provisional placement decision.

Parent notification may be made by phone, email, or conventional mail services, per LEA discretion, and must be in a language parents understand. The notification must include the parent’s right to waive the ESOL services provided remotely. LEAs may adapt their current parent notification letters to accommodate the provisional nature of the services or may choose to create a new notification.

**Documentation:** LEAs must document the provisional procedures in the manner best suited to their system. Once schools resume, LEAs must ensure the formal screening procedures are implemented for all provisionally identified students.

**Data Collections Note:** LEAs will not need to code provisionally identified ELs in their Student Information System (SIS) because the state is not collecting this information. After schools reopen, and the formal screening procedures have been implemented, students will be coded per established GaDOE Data Collections guidance.

## EL Exit Procedures for EL Students in Grades 1-12 during School Closures

LEAs will continue to have two options for making EL exit decisions for EL students in grades 1-12. Each LEA must choose one option and implement it in a standardized manner across all schools in the LEA.

- **Option A – Clear ACCESS Proficiency Exit**  
Per SBOE 160-4-5-.02. section 4.(i), clear exit determinations are based only on the composite score of the state-adopted English proficiency measure. A student who scores a WIDA ACCESS 2.0 Overall Composite Proficiency Level (CPL) 5.0 or higher shall be considered English proficient and shall be exited from EL status and ESOL services, as well as from Title III, Part A services, when applicable.

**Note:** The statewide standardized Kindergarten EL Exit criteria remains the same. (See [Kindergarten EL Exit Flowchart](#) and Kindergarten EL Exit Criteria on pg. 30 of the [Resource Guide to Support School Districts' EL Language Programs.](#))

- **Option B – EL Reclassification Exit**  
Per SBOE 160-4-5-.02. section 4.(ii), students whose composite scores on the state-adopted English proficiency measure do not meet the score required for clear exit determination may be considered proficient following an LEA's reclassification review.

If LEAs choose a minimum EL exit criterion in the WIDA ACCESS Overall CPL 4.3-4.9 range, an EL Reclassification review must be conducted for each EL student whose ACCESS scores met the LEA's criterion or higher (up to and including WIDA CPL 4.9) to determine whether the EL student should be exited or not. Some LEAs choose to consider other language-focused data such as the ELA Georgia Milestones achievement level. However, given that these scores are not available as a 2<sup>nd</sup> exit criterion, LEAs may consider using any of the WIDA ACCESS composite or domain proficiency level scores.

LEAs will want to consider alternate methods to hold EL Reclassification review meetings at the end of the school year. In addition, LEAs may choose to hold EL Reclassification meetings at the beginning of the school year within 30 days of schools resuming regular operations.

**Note:**

Although LEAs have flexibility per SBOE Rule 160-4-5-.02 to choose Option B, it is critical during these days of interrupted schooling in English that EL Reclassification review teams have enough data to ensure the student is fully proficient in English and ready to access the

general curriculum without English language support services. LEAs will want to consider that students may not have been able to continue learning English during school closures and may not have maintained the level of English language proficiency they demonstrated on the WIDA ACCESS 2.0 test in February. Since standard assessments will not be available to validate or support the language proficiency level scores, the EL Reclassification review team will need to make an informed EL exit decision. Considering these extenuating circumstances, GaDOE is recommending that LEAs consider choosing Option A this school year – the ACCESS Overall CPL 5.0 clear exit criterion.

### EL Exit Procedures

1. In April or May, LEAs must establish their grades 1-12 EL exit criteria for the end of the 2019-2020 school year. (Option A or B)
2. In May, LEAs will notify the state of their chosen EL exit criteria and procedures by completing the *EL Exit Criteria Survey*. Survey results will be posted in the Appendix of the [Resource Guide to Support School Districts' EL Language Programs](#).
3. LEAs will review WIDA ACCESS score results in the WIDA AMS platform and in hard copy when they arrive.
4. LEAs will exit all EL students who have met the state's clear exit criterion of WIDA overall CPL  $\geq 5.0$ .
5. When choosing EL Exit Option B, LEAs will also determine which EL students have met their established grades 1-12 EL exit criterion and higher up to 4.9.
  - These LEAs will hold an EL Reclassification review meeting (in any alternate method of choice) for **each** EL student who has met the LEA's minimum (or greater) EL exit criterion and any other LEA required language-focused criteria.
  - *This option must be implemented in a standardized manner across the LEA, no exceptions.*
6. After July 1, 2020, the LEA must record these students' EL exit date as June 30 (or the last day of school), reclassify them from EL=Yes to EL=1 (1<sup>st</sup> year post-exit), and notify parents.
7. All student documentation will be maintained in online data management systems, and, after schools reopen, in student permanent records.
8. LEAs must monitor the academic progress of all exited students for two years to ensure the exit decision was not premature and that English language proficiency is not a barrier to success in school.

**Note:** If an exited student is struggling academically during the two year post-exit monitoring period, and it is believed the academic struggles may be due to a premature exit from language services, LEAs must follow the established MTSS/SST procedures explained on pp. 36-37 of the [Resource Guide to Support School Districts' EL Language Programs](#).

During periods of school closures, LEAs must adhere to all MTSS/SST guidance from the GaDOE Division of Special Education Services and Supports.

## Rubric for Provisional EL Entrance Procedures

### Interaction, Listening, and Speaking Language Use Inventory\*

Student:	Grade Level:
Evaluator's Name:	
Interview Date(s):	Provisional Decision:

	LOW	MODERATE	HIGH	Value
<b>Interaction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can engage in very short social exchanges and sustain the conversation with substantial support.</li> <li>Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar topics and activities, possibly using provided language frames or structures.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can function in most social situations.</li> <li>Can enter unprepared in conversation on topics that are familiar, of personal interest, or connected to everyday life.</li> <li>Can use provided language frames or structures as models for original expression.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can use language spontaneously, flexibly, and effectively for social and academic purposes.</li> <li>Can formulate ideas and opinions with precision and relate contributions skillfully to those of other speakers.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	
<b>Listening</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can understand the main point in simple messages in slow and clear standard speech.</li> <li>Can understand phrases and high frequency vocabulary related to familiar topics.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can understand the main points in slow and clear standard speech on familiar topics in discussions, presentations, and educational videos.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can understand extended speech even when it is not clearly structured and when relationships are only implied and not signaled explicitly.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	
<b>Speaking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can use a series of connected phrases and short, simple sentences to talk in simple terms about familiar topics.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can use a series of connected phrases and short, simple sentences to talk in simple terms about familiar and academic topics.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can present clear, expanded discourse about a familiar or academic topic using some content-specific vocabulary.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>	
<b>TOTAL</b>				

\*Source: Pennsylvania SBOE & Oklahoma SBOE