

## The Home Language Survey (HLS) Frequently Asked Questions

Prior to reviewing this document, see Chapter 2 of the [IDOE EL Guidebook](#), which details the basic requirements for the Home Language Survey. This includes information such as the HLS Amendment process, how to store the HLS in the IILP system, how to include an HLS in an online enrollment process, and more. The FAQ below is a guidance that is to be used as a supplemental resource to the general guidance provided in the EL Guidebook:

**Q: Should my school corporation give out an HLS to every new student who enrolls in my school corporation?**

No. The HLS is a document that should only be filled out **once** in a student's Indiana educational career. If the student is enrolling in a US school or an Indiana school for the first time ever, then an HLS should be given to complete. If the student is enrolling in your school corporation from a school within Indiana, then the **original HLS** must be obtained and a new HLS **should not** be administered.

**Q: Our school corporation received a student from outside of Indiana. Should we give them a new HLS?**

Yes. Indiana does not accept an HLS from outside of Indiana. If a student moves to your corporation from outside of Indiana, a new HLS should be administered.

**Q: Our school corporation received a student from a different school within Indiana. Do we issue a new HLS?**

***You should not administer a new HLS.*** When a student enrolls in your school from a different school within Indiana, your school corporation must look in the student's cumulative folder to find the original HLS. If a language other than English was indicated, ensure that this is correctly assigned in the student's STN App Center and local Student Information System profiles. Next, determine the student's most recent English language proficiency and EL status – results of a WIDA placement test or WIDA ACCESS should be part of the cumulative folder. The student's instructional program should be based off of the most recent English proficiency assessment results.

**Q: We have a Pre-K program in our district, should we administer the HLS to Pre-K students?**

Yes. Pre-K programs should administer the HLS upon enrollment (provided the student has not previously been enrolled in another Indiana school), and the language assigned on the student's STN App Center profile should align with the responses on the HLS. It is important to maintain documentation of the HLS in the cumulative folder so that it travels with the student into kindergarten.

**Q: I administered the HLS to a Pre-K student, and there is a language other than English listed. Should we administer a placement test?**

No. Placement tests should not be administered to Pre-K students, as students cannot enter into EL status until kindergarten. The correct language should be assigned to the student in the STN App Center, and the student should be assessed with a placement test (Kindergarten W-APT) upon entering Kindergarten.

**Q: When filling out the HLS, a parent marked “English/Spanish” for one of the questions. What should we do?**

If multiple languages are given in response to one or more of the HLS questions, the non-English language included (in this case, Spanish) would be assigned to the student in the STN App center as well as the local Student Information System. If multiple non-English languages are represented, assign the first non-English language given, or consult with the parent to determine their preference.

**Q: A parent marked a language other than English on the HLS, but now would like to re-complete the survey so that it indicates all “English”- can the HLS be re-completed?**

No. The HLS is a legally binding document that should only ever be filled out once. A parent cannot go back and change the original answers that they indicated. It is important that a school corporation properly explain the purpose of the HLS in a language the parents understand in order to ensure that the parent is aware of what occurs when a language other than English is marked.

**Q. There is a student who is enrolling in school for the first time. Our corporation has administered the HLS and the parents have indicated a language other than English. What should we do next?**

If a language other than English has been indicated on the HLS, the Kindergarten W-APT or WIDA Screener should be administered to determine the student’s language proficiency. If a student scores below a 5.0 overall on the Kindergarten W-APT or WIDA Screener, they should be entered into an English language development program and given English learner status. See the [WIDA Program Manual](#) for more information on scoring the Kindergarten W-APT.

**Q: I have given the student the initial placement assessment and they scored as proficient (an overall score of 5.0 or above). Is there anything further that I need to do?**

No. If a student’s placement assessment indicates he or she is proficient based on Indiana’s entrance criteria, the student does not need to be placed in an English language development program. The parents should be notified of the results.



**Q: Our school corporation has a student who attended an Indiana school, moved out of state, and then returned to Indiana. What should we do?**

A student's cumulative folder follows a student wherever they go. The current school corporation should attempt to contact the previous school where the student attended outside of Indiana to obtain the cumulative folder. Once received, the school corporation should look for the original HLS that was given to the student **from the Indiana school corporation where the student originally attended**. The school corporation must abide by whatever is on the original HLS from the school that the student attended while in Indiana.

**Q: What if the cumulative folder was not transferred with the student when they moved to our corporation?**

If a receiving school does not have the original Indiana HLS for an incoming student, the receiving school must contact the previous school to request that the HLS be transferred. The receiving school should make at least three documented attempts to obtain the original HLS from the previous school or schools.

**Q: What if my school corporation has tried to contact the student's previous school to obtain the HLS, but they will not respond to repeated requests?**

If a school corporation has made at least three documented attempts to contact the student's previous school corporation, but is unable to obtain the HLS, as a last resort a new HLS may be administered. If you must administer a new HLS, proper documentation indicating dates and times that attempts were made to obtain the HLS should be placed in the student's cumulative folder.

**Q: If we have documentation of a student's WIDA ACCESS Assessment from their previous Indiana school (or from a previous WIDA state), should we still give them a placement assessment?**

No. If you have documentation from the previous school year indicating the student's WIDA ACCESS results, you do not have to administer the placement assessment. Instead, the school corporation should use the results of the student's WIDA ACCESS assessment to appropriately place the student into an English language development program.

**Q: Our paper HLS is currently in our registration packet - should it be there?**

The HLS **should not** be a standard part of your registration packet. Again, the HLS should only ever be administered once. Therefore, the HLS should not be available in the registration packet that a parent fills out when they enroll their child at your school corporation. The HLS should be given to the parent as a separate document that is thoroughly explained to them so they understand its purpose. Additionally, the HLS should only be given to those parents who: a) are enrolling their

student for the first time in an Indiana school or, b) the school corporation is unable to obtain the original HLS from the past school after at least three documented attempts to obtain it.

**Q: Our school corporation has given out a HLS every year and/or anytime a student has enrolled at our corporation. We now realize this is incorrect. How do we fix this problem?**

The distribution of a HLS to students every year and/or anytime a student enrolls at your corporation should be stopped immediately. Any personnel in your school corporation responsible for administering the HLS should be notified of the correct procedures for distributing a HLS. The original HLS should remain in the cumulative folder, and additional versions administered in error removed.

**Q: What is the school's responsibility when an English learner leaves our corporation?**

When an English learner transfers from your corporation to another corporation, it is your school corporation's responsibility to ensure that the following items are in the student's cumulative folder to be transferred:

- Home Language Survey
- Individual Learning Plan (ILP)
- A copy of the Annual Parent Notification Letter that indicates the student's score on Kindergarten W-APT or WIDA Screener and/or WIDA ACCESS and their placement in a English language development program
- Copy of a student's WIDA ACCESS student proficiency report
- Exiting/Monitoring documents for students in the two-year monitoring period (if applicable)
- Copy of a parent's refusal of services (if applicable).

**Q: Should the HLS be kept in a student's cumulative folder if the parent answered English to all three questions?**

Yes. The HLS must be kept in every student's cumulative folder. Under no circumstance should it be thrown away. The HLS has been adopted by the state of Indiana for determining any student that speaks a language(s) other than English. It is important that this document is retained as proof that a school corporation has identified any student that speaks a language other than English. Additionally, if a student transfers from one school corporation to another within Indiana, the receiving school corporation is required to use the original HLS to determine placement in a English language development program.