

English Language Learner Proposed Guidance for Universal Screener

NOTE: This guidance document is in **DRAFT FORM** and is pending approval of Indiana State Board of Education Regulations

Students who have been formally identified as English Learners (ELs) are those with an overall composite proficiency level of 1.0-4.9 on their most recent administration of WIDA ACCESS, WIDA Screener, or Kindergarten WIDA ACCESS Placement Test (W-APT). Because English Learners have not yet developed proficiency in English, their performance on the universal screener for dyslexia may be significantly lower than their native-English speaking grade-level peers.

Students who have an overall composite WIDA proficiency level between 1.0-1.9 may be exempted from the universal screener at the discretion of the authorized reading specialist with training in dyslexia, the EL teacher or program administrator, and the classroom teacher. Schools may choose to give these students the universal screener if they feel additional data and knowledge will be gained from administering the universal screener and if the school feels the scores may be used as a reference when comparing student progress to other students at similar English proficiency levels. Note that schools should still assess all English Learners with any formative assessments given to all students, even if exempted from the specific requirements of the universal screener for dyslexia.

Students who have an overall composite WIDA proficiency level between 2.0-4.9 will be given the universal screener. In cases where an English Learner is identified as “at risk” or “at some risk” based on school corporation universal screening procedures, school corporations and charter schools shall establish a Level 1 screening process for English Learners that gathers information from the authorized reading specialist with training in dyslexia, the EL teacher or program administrator, and the classroom teacher to determine whether moving forward with a Level 2 screener is appropriate for the child.

If family members or staff familiar with the student’s academic progress and language development express a concern that the student’s difficulties in reading are not primarily rooted in the students’ English language development, the school should move forward with additional screening processes. For example, a Level 2 screener should be considered if an English Learner has shown very little to no growth in the reading and/or writing domains on WIDA ACCESS 2.0 over at least two consecutive administrations of the assessment and if the student is found to be performing significantly lower in reading when compared to other non-English speaking peers of similar age and English proficiency (when utilizing a triangulation of data).

If the team of educators determines that additional useful information will be gained by completing the Level 1 or Level 2 screening process for an English Learner, the school corporation must determine the most appropriate language of assessment for the child in compliance with federal civil rights obligations and ensure that the student’s English proficiency is taken into consideration in all subsequent determinations. Although this screening process is not considered an evaluation for special education, considerations for language development and academic learning needs should be followed in compliance with expectations for native language

evaluation, as outlined here: <https://www.doe.in.gov/sites/default/files/elme/els-and-evaluation-special-education-jan-2014.pdf>

Federal law requires that schools communicate with families in a language and mode they understand, regardless of their child's proficiency in English. All communication related to dyslexia screening must be provided to parents in a manner they can understand, whether through written translation or interpretation.

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