

## **IN-Class: English Learner Considerations**

English learner and culturally and linguistically diverse students and families are especially vulnerable populations amid COVID-19 concerns. Due to varying levels of language and cultural barriers, receiving and understanding a high volume of important information surrounding public health and education can be particularly difficult. Academically, schools must continue to adapt in order to assure needed EL student services and supports remain consistent throughout shifting instructional contexts. Because of these challenges, intentional, collaborative planning amongst educators is needed to ensure equitable access and that EL students and their families' needs are being met.

All ESSA requirements pertaining to English learner students - identification, parent notification, providing services, formal two-year monitoring, assessment, etc. - remain intact and must continue to be implemented. The following are important considerations for schools needing to both meet those requirements as well as effectively engage EL students and families.

### **Maintaining English Language Development Services and Equitable Access to Grade-level Content**

- English language development (ELD) services must continue for all English learner students. Note that the structure and schedule of services may look different from what the school typically offers, especially if remote learning is being instituted. In spite of possible shifts in program model or scheduling, the ELD requirements per *Lau vs. Nichols* must continue to be met.
- Equitable access to grade level instruction should be a focal point for schools. Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) must continue to be written to reflect how EL students are gaining that access to core content instruction and assessment. General classroom instructional and assessment accommodations may need to be altered or implemented differently in alternative learning environments (i.e. a hard copy bilingual dictionary in the classroom vs. software in remote learning). The ILP is effective as the basis for collaboration between classroom teachers and EL staff throughout the school year, as instructional contexts evolve.

### **Family Engagement and Two-Way Communication**

- Communication with parents in a method and language they understand has long been a requirement for schools. In a time when the critical information is being released from schools and officials regularly, it is of the utmost importance that communication with English learner families is done so effectively. This will often require translation and interpretation support, and schools must coordinate to ensure this is done so consistently.
- Beyond general school-to-parent communication, two-way communication lines should be established. Provide families with various channels to contact school with questions or concerns. Once channels are established, build consistency with the method, how often, when communication with families occurs. In

a two-way partnership, important information regarding available community resources, COVID-19 prevention, how to support students at home, needs, and more can be shared on an ongoing basis.

- The need for implementation of technology and additional instructional support during remote learning will likely to continue in some capacity for the upcoming school year. When introducing new technology, hardware, software, at home-curriculum, etc., make every effort to ensure that students and families have an understanding of their purpose and how to utilize it. Language support might be needed in navigating new technologies or programs (i.e. understanding ins and outs of a student learning platform).

### **Student Enrollment and the Home Language Survey**

- Students enrolling for the first time in Indiana schools should continue to receive the Home Language Survey (HLS). With events such as kindergarten round-ups needing to take new formats, the option to administer the Home Language Survey digitally is available. However please make note of the following digital HLS requirements from the [IDOE EL Guidebook](#):

*“As many school districts move to online registration and record keeping, the Home Language Survey may be administered online instead of using a paper format. The Indiana HLS may only be administered once in a student’s academic career, and so should not be included in the general online registration packet. However, electronic registration may allow for the registrant to indicate that the student is enrolling for the first time in an Indiana school, and then trigger the HLS for completion. Even if administered online, the HLS must be signed by the parent or guardian (electronic signature is sufficient). Additionally, the HLS must be accessible in case of IDOE on-site monitoring or student record transfer.*

*In the case of student transfer, the sending school should send the original Indiana HLS to the receiving school. 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.”*

- In the case of a digital completion of the Home Language Survey, especially if done off-site, direct outreach to explain its purpose is necessary; this can occur during the establishment of two-way communication channels and an initial welcoming.

### **WIDA Screener & Kindergarten WAPT Administration**

- The identification process of English learner students will remain the same for the 2020-2021 school year - this includes the administration of the Kindergarten W-APT and WIDA Screener assessments. For more information on requirements for placement assessments, see the [IDOE WIDA Assessment Guidance](#).
- Annual Parent Notification letters must continue to be sent within the first 30 calendar days from the start of the school year for all newly-identified and returning English learner students.

## **Additional Resources**

For additional guidance and resources surrounding English learner students and programming, visit IDOE's [English Learner web page](#).