



# **Standardized Entrance and Exit Procedures for Iowa's English Learners**

November 2023

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*Iowa Department of Education guidance should be viewed as advisory unless it's specifically authorized by state statute, according to Iowa Code section 256.9A as enacted by Senate File 475. This does not apply to administrative rules, declaratory orders, or materials required by federal law or courts.*

# Introduction

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)<sup>1</sup> requires each state to develop statewide entrance and exit procedures to ensure consistent identification and reclassification of English learners (ELs) among districts in the state. These procedures include monitoring of former English learners (FELs) for academic success following exit from language development services.

## Effective Date and Development of Statewide Procedures

Iowa's uniform procedures were effective upon the implementation of the statewide ESSA plan.

The Iowa Department of Education (Department) developed standardized procedures in collaboration with representatives from several school districts, all area education agencies, and other EL professionals. The purpose of this document is to ensure standardized procedures for the identification of ELs and exit of ELs from EL services are implemented consistently across the state of Iowa. Iowa districts are expected to implement each step, as each step is important to the entire standardized protocol.

## Standardized Statewide Entrance and Exit Procedures

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires each state education agency (SEA) that receives a Title III, Part A grant to create and implement "standardized, statewide entrance and exit procedures" for ELs and ensure all potential ELs are assessed for such status within 30 days of enrolling in a school in the state (ESEA § 3113(b)(2)).

This guidance document articulates Iowa's standardized statewide entrance and exit procedures, which correspond to both federal legislation and state policy in regard to the identification, support, and reclassification of ELs. In addition, it includes answers to frequently asked questions (FAQs) aimed to help to clarify Iowa's procedures.

This document was developed and informed by the following:

- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974 (EEOA), which requires that all states and districts ensure that ELs can participate meaningfully and equally in educational programs and services.
- Case law: *Lau v Nichols*, *Castaneda v Pickard*, and *Plyler v Doe*.
- Office for Civil Rights and the Department of Justice: Dear Colleague Letter of Jan. 2015.
- Title I, Part A and Title III, Part A of the ESSA (2015) and related non-regulatory guidance.
- Iowa Administrative Code (IAC) chapter 281—60.3 subrule (1).

According to Chapter One of the U.S. Department of Education's EL toolkit, identifying and assessing all potential ELs is one of the most critical "affirmative steps" and "appropriate action[s]" that districts, must take to ensure eligible English learners receive language assistance services in a timely manner. Per federal law, eligible students must be placed in language instruction programs as soon as possible and within 30 days of enrollment.

- In Iowa, identifying students for language services is a two-part process. All students enrolling in an Iowa school for the first time are to be given a language use survey, which is also known as the Home Language Survey (HLS). If a language other than English is indicated, the student is

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<sup>1</sup> The ESSA amended and reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in 2015. Here forward, "ESSA" should be taken to mean "ESEA, as amended by the ESSA."

screened by taking an English test. The required assessment in Iowa is the English Language Proficiency Assessment for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (ELPA21) Dynamic Screener. The results of the screener determine if the student qualifies for services. Administrative Code (IAC) chapter 281—60.3 subrule (1).

## Identifying and Assessing Potential English Learners

### Administering the Home Language Survey

The completion of the HLS is the first step in identifying potential ELs. In accordance with federal law and as required by Iowa Administrative Code Subrule 281—60.3(1), districts must administer an HLS to all students at the time of enrollment. The HLS is designed to gather information about a student's language background and identify students whose primary language or home language is a language other than English. This is the first step in the process of identifying potential ELs who qualify for language instruction programming. To obtain accurate information, districts should reassure parents that the HLS is used solely to identify students for educational services and not for determining legal status or for immigration purposes (*Plyler v Doe*). To ensure effective administration of the HLS, as well as compliance with the state requirements, districts may consider using this [checklist](#) (see page 2) as a resource.

Districts must use the Iowa HLS found on the [Transact website](#), which is a form that includes *three required language use questions*. The required HLS questions are:

1. What is the primary language used in the home regardless of the language spoken by the student?
2. What is the language most often spoken by the student?
3. What is the language that the student first acquired?

Districts must also determine “immigrant” status for funding purposes. The term “immigrant children and youth” refers to individuals who are: ages three through 21 and were not born in any state or United States territory (ESEA § 3201(5)). The contents of this form may also be used for online enrollment and registration.

While the three questions determine screening eligibility, the broader form should be considered as it contains other data elements the district needs to collect. Additional information to collect includes immigrant status and which languages parents prefer to receive information.

### Survey Administration and Timing

This form should be administered by someone with background knowledge of the purpose of the form and has the ability to analyze answers and ask appropriate follow up questions to determine whether or not a student is a potential EL. Please note, only one HLS should be administered upon initial enrollment and not each year. If a student comes from another state, an Iowa HLS must be administered. If a student transfers within Iowa, the original HLS is to be used. The incoming district should request the HLS along with the student's entire cumulative file.

Districts access the HLS and its 12 translations through the [Transact website](#). Translated forms are available in Arabic, Bosnian, Burmese, Chinese (simplified), French, Karen, Marshallese, Nepali, Somali, Spanish, Swahili, and Vietnamese. Districts should provide families the English version with the translated form and ensure interpreters are available for parents needing additional assistance in understanding the information request. The HLS must be appropriately filed with other permanent student enrollment documentation.

## **FAQs about the Home Language Survey**

### **1. Is it permissible to have district office staff administer the HLS?**

It is permissible; however, they should participate in training so they have a full understanding of the procedures. The HLS is a crucial step in the identification of potential ELs. If it is necessary to have office staff administer the HLS, they should be well trained to do so.

### **2. What if a student is initially missed, but later there is evidence indicating the student is a potential EL?**

The district should screen if there is reasonable indication that the student has been missed and is a potential EL. The district is responsible for using additional information (e.g., observations, conversations, late arrival of records) to determine whether or not the screener should be administered.

### **3. If a parent indicates a language other than English on only one of the three required questions, should the student be screened?**

Barring a legitimate error in a parent's response, if the answer to any of the three questions is a language other than English, the student must be screened.

### **4. When there are conflicting home language surveys, which one should be considered?**

The initial HLS should be used. The original HLS should travel with the cumulative file.

### **5. Should a student be rescreened on the ELPA21 if they move into a new district?**

The student should not be rescreened if they were previously screened in another Iowa district or nonpublic school.

### **6. How often do parents need to complete the HLS? Is this the same for online registration?**

The HLS must be completed *only once* upon initial enrollment into the school. The district has the responsibility to ensure that parents are not completing one each year; this includes online registration. In the case that an additional HLS is filled out in error and does not match, the district should rely on the initial HLS.

### **7. Should districts administer the HLS to preschool and transitional kindergarten students?**

Preschool programs require the administration of an HLS. Preschool programs may use the K-12 HLS or the one in TS GOLD. Iowa recommends the use of the TS GOLD survey since the parallel GOLD assessment is required under Iowa Code section 279.60. Transitional kindergarten programs are required to use the K-12 HLS as found on the [Transact website](#).

### **8. Should districts screen or assess preschool students?**

Preschool students do not take the screener or the annual summative English language proficiency assessment. Transitional kindergartners are funded as kindergartners and are required to take the screener. If identified as EL, they are also required to take the annual summative assessment.

### **9. Do preschool students qualify for EL services?**

Preschool students do not generate Title III, Part A funds, but the funds may be used to support preschool programs. While it is allowable, it is not required that districts serve preschool students with Title III, Part A funds.

## 10. Do homeschool students qualify for EL?

If homeschooled students are screened and qualify for services, they may enter into shared enrollment at their home district for services which would be available at the school site.

## 11. Are accredited nonpublic schools required to serve their ELs?

The nonpublic school has a responsibility to ensure its English learners are provided services. It can send students to the public district to meet this requirement or provide services for students at its own expense. Please consult the [Serving Nonpublic School English Learners Guidance](#).

## 12. Do foreign exchange students qualify for EL services?

Foreign exchange students are subject to the state's entrance and exit procedures. If the screener results indicate students are not proficient in English, the students will qualify for language services.

## Reference and Resource

United States Department of Education. (2015). English Learner Toolkit: *Chapter 1: Tools and Resources for Identifying All English Learners*. Office of English Language Acquisition. <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/chap1.pdf>

## English Language Proficiency Screening

Iowa Administrative Code requires districts to assess students “identified as prominently using a language other than English in the home”. The assessment must evaluate the student's English proficiency in the areas of speaking, listening, reading, and writing (281—IAC 60.3(1)).

If the HLS indicates a language other than English, the ELPA21 Dynamic Screener is the approved instrument to be administered to potential ELs enrolling in Iowa schools. The purpose of the screener is to determine whether a student is eligible for EL services.

In the case of kindergarteners, the ELPA21 Future Kindergarten Dynamic Screener is to be used for spring enrollees who will enter in the fall term and for kindergartners enrolling in August through the end of the fall term. Beginning in mid-January, current year enrolling kindergartners are screened using the ELPA21 Kindergarten Dynamic Screener.

The process for identifying potential ELs typically falls into one of three types of situations. Each situation requires different considerations for screening.

- Students enrolling in a U.S. school for the first time (typically kindergartners and students arriving from another country)
- Students moving within the state of Iowa
- Students moving to Iowa from another state

## Students Enrolling in a U.S. School for the First Time

All kindergarten students, including transitional kindergarten (TK) students and students newly arrived from another country are given the ELPA21 Dynamic Screener upon enrollment to determine eligibility for language development services if a language other than English was indicated on the HLS.

## **Students Moving within the State of Iowa**

If ELPA21 Dynamic Screener results exist, results should be used to determine EL eligibility. When a student moves between Iowa schools, the district does not need to re-administer the screener. The incoming district identifies the student as an EL based on the previous district's ELPA21 Dynamic Screener results.

## **Students Moving to Iowa from Another State**

If a student moves to Iowa from a state that administers the ELPA21, test scores from the previous state may be used to determine eligibility. Students enrolling from a state that used a different English proficiency test will need to be screened with the ELPA21 Dynamic Screener. For more guidance on screening transfer students, please consult [Identification of English Learners: Approved Assessment Procedures for Transfer Students](#).

## **FAQs about English Language Proficiency Screening**

### **1. What if a student's ELPA21 summative score of proficient is not recent?**

The proficient determination should be accepted barring some unusual circumstances.

### **2. What if the student scored proficient on the summative ELPA21 assessment but moved out of the country for an extended time and is now returning to an Iowa school?**

This should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. If the student has not had the opportunity to practice English for an extended period of time, screening can always be an option. Students who are out of the country for weeks or a couple of months may not see a change in their skills, however, students who have been out of the country for a time period that stretches into years may need to be reevaluated.

### **3. What if the proficient score is from the Alt ELPA21, which is the alternate English language proficiency assessment for ELs with the most significant cognitive disabilities?**

A proficient determination from the Alt ELPA21 should be accepted as evidence of the student's proficiency.

### **4. What if obtaining student records becomes difficult and has the potential to extend past the 30-day limit for identification?**

Districts are obligated to complete the identification process within the 30-day time period. If a district cannot obtain evidence of proficiency within that time frame, the student must be administered the ELPA21 Dynamic Screener.

### **5. What if a student comes with a proficient English language proficiency (ELP) summative score from a different test such as WIDA from a non ELPA21 state?**

Iowa can no longer accept scores from other state's ELP assessments that are not ELPA21. If a student has not taken an ELPA21 assessment either in Iowa or in another state that gives the ELPA21, the student must be screened on the ELPA21 Dynamic Screener.



## **6. What if the school receives information by phone from the previous district about the student’s EL history and is able to ascertain the student scored proficient on the previous state’s ELPA21 summative assessment?**

The district must make every effort to complete the identification process within the 30-day timeline, as federally required. It is important to document the necessary information the previous school is able to provide by phone or other means. The district should proceed based on the phone call evidence with the caveat that if evidence to the contrary arrives, steps will be taken to modify the initial decision. Always keep in mind student privacy concerns when communicating by email.

## **7. If students enroll in an Iowa school with a proficient score taken on an ELPA21 summative in another state, must the district monitor them?**

In these situations, the time since the assessments were administered may vary widely. The students should be monitored informally to ensure they are successful in content classes and are not struggling due to language acquisition challenges. It is not necessary to officially code the student as monitored in the student information system.

## **8. Can the ELPA21 screener be used as a formative assessment?**

This is not permissible as the test was developed only for the purpose of identifying ELs and having multiple scores will create issues with funding levels for state weighted funds.

## **Erroneously Identified Students**

An erroneously identified EL is a student who was identified as an EL but should not have been because the student does not meet the definition of “English learner” in ESEA section 8101(20). The erroneous identification may have occurred as part of the initial identification process, e.g., due to a parent’s inaccurate completion of the home language survey, administration of an EL screening assessment without providing for appropriate accommodations for a student with disabilities, or other reasons.

On these rare occasions, when a student is erroneously identified, it is the role of the district to determine if a mistake was made. If a district has evidence that the student is an EL, the student remains an EL and should be supported as such. If a mistake has been made and the district has evidence that the student is not an EL, then the district’s EL administrator should contact the state to rectify the error. In all cases, careful documentation should be made regardless of the decision. It should be noted that a parent's objection to the designation of “English learner” is not grounds for considering erroneous identification.

## **FAQs about Erroneously Identified Students**

### **1. What if a parent objects to the EL identification and does not agree that the student is an EL?**

A parent’s objection to the EL identification does not mean that the designation of EL should be removed. If the parent wishes to waive services, every effort should be made to communicate with the parent about the benefits of services. While parents may decline services, the student remains an EL student until s/he performs proficiently on the summative ELPA21 assessment. Even if a parent declines services it does not relieve the district’s responsibility to ensure the EL student’s language and academic needs are met.

## 2. May a district remove a student’s EL designation if that student was erroneously identified as an EL, even if the student does not score proficient on the annual ELP assessment?

If the student is not an EL and was erroneously identified as such, the district can remove the EL designation. The circumstances for doing so should be carefully documented and placed in the student’s cumulative file. Approval from the state Title III consultant will be necessary to override an error that may appear on the student record system.

## Parent Notification

### Communicating EL Identification and Eligibility for EL Programming

Districts must provide parents of ELs a notice of EL services eligibility within thirty days of an EL student’s identification and placement in a language instruction educational program (ESEA § 1112(e)(3)). Districts must, to the extent practicable, translate such notices into a language that the parent can understand. The notice is available in 29 languages on the [Transact website](#). It is best practice to provide the notice in both the home language and English. If written translations are not practicable, districts must offer EL parents free oral interpretation of the written information. In light of these obligations and the duty to timely identify all English learners, districts will need to assess potential English learners’ English proficiency and identify non-proficient students as EL as soon as practicable and should be well before the thirty-day notice deadline. The parent notice is to be sent annually as long as the student is eligible for services.

#### Reference and resource:

United States Department of Education. (2015). English Learner Toolkit: [Chapter 10 Ensuring Meaningful Communication with Limited English Proficient Parents](#). Office of English Language Acquisition. <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/chap10.pdf>

## Placement in a Language Instruction Education Program

While types of EL programs may differ in practice, all must be designed to provide English language services and support ELs in content learning. EL services and programs must be educationally sound in theory and effective in practice. EL programs must be designed to enable ELs to attain both English proficiency and parity of participation in the standard instructional program within a reasonable length of time. Districts must offer EL services and programs until ELs are proficient in English and can participate meaningfully in educational programs without EL support. To be able to participate equally and meaningfully in instructional programs, English learners have to acquire English proficiency and recoup any deficits that they may incur in other areas of the curriculum as a result of spending extra time on English language development, (Castañeda, 648 F.2d at 1011). Additionally, districts must provide appropriate special education services to ELs with disabilities. Districts must ensure that English learners who have or are suspected of having a disability under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 are located, identified, and evaluated in a timely manner and that the language needs of students who need these related services are considered in evaluations and delivery of services (20 U.S.C. §§ 1400-1419; 34 C.F.R. pt. 300; 29 U.S.C. § 794; 34 C.F.R. pt. 104).

If parents opt their children out of an EL program or specific EL services, the children retain their status as English learners, and the district remains obligated to take the “affirmative steps” required by Title VI and take “appropriate action” required by the EEOA to provide these English learners access to its educational programs, OCR Guidance; 20 U.S.C. § 1703(f).

## References and resources:

United States Department of Education. (2015). English Learner Toolkit:

*Chapter 2 [Providing English Learners with a Language Assistance Program](https://ncela.ed.gov/files/english_learner_toolkit/2-OELA_2017_language_assist_508C.pdf)*. Office of English Language Acquisition. [https://ncela.ed.gov/files/english\\_learner\\_toolkit/2-OELA\\_2017\\_language\\_assist\\_508C.pdf](https://ncela.ed.gov/files/english_learner_toolkit/2-OELA_2017_language_assist_508C.pdf)

*Chapter 3 [Staffing and Supporting an EL Program](https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/chap3.pdf)*. Office of English Language Acquisition. <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/chap3.pdf>

*Chapter 4 [Meaningful Access to Core Curricular, Extra Curricular Programs](https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/chap4.pdf)*. Office of English Language Acquisition. <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/chap4.pdf>

*Chapter 5 [Creating an Inclusive Environment and Avoiding Unnecessary Segregation](https://ncela.ed.gov/files/english_learner_toolkit/5-OELA_2017_inclusion_rev_508C.pdf)*. Office of English Language Acquisition. [https://ncela.ed.gov/files/english\\_learner\\_toolkit/5-OELA\\_2017\\_inclusion\\_rev\\_508C.pdf](https://ncela.ed.gov/files/english_learner_toolkit/5-OELA_2017_inclusion_rev_508C.pdf)

## Opting Out (Waiving) EL Services

The law allows parents the right to opt their children out of EL programs (i.e., waive services) or particular EL services. This decision must be voluntary and based on a full understanding of the EL child’s rights, the range of services available to the child, and the benefits of such services to the child. If a parent decides to opt his or her child out of EL programs or particular EL services, that child still retains his or her status as an EL. Districts must continue to monitor the English language proficiency (ELP) and academic progress of students who opt out of EL programs and services. If a student does not demonstrate progress in learning English or maintain appropriate academic levels, the district must inform the parents in a language they understand and offer EL services. This must occur annually.

### FAQs about Opting Out (Waiving) EL Services

#### 1. Can the parent request the student only receive some services (e.g. only in class support, etc.)?

A parent may choose to enroll the student in portions of the EL program.

#### 2. Can a district encourage or recommend that parents waive services? (e.g. alternative programs, special ed, scheduling conflicts, etc.)

Districts may not in any way steer students away from participating in services. All English learners must be encouraged to participate in EL programming. The district must ensure that parents are informed about services available and cannot encourage parents to pare down or waive programming for any reason.

### 3. Do parents need to waive services annually?

The district must communicate with parents annually to ensure that they understand the benefits of EL programming as well as the possible detriment of waiving EL services for their child. If parents waive services, the district should keep documentation of the conversation and parent signatures should be kept on file.

#### Reference and resource:

United States Department of Education. (2015). English Learner Toolkit: *Chapter 7 [Serving English Learners who Opt-Out of EL Programs](https://ncela.ed.gov/files/english_learner_toolkit/7-OELA_2017_optout_508C.pdf)*. Office of English Language Acquisition.  
[https://ncela.ed.gov/files/english\\_learner\\_toolkit/7-OELA\\_2017\\_optout\\_508C.pdf](https://ncela.ed.gov/files/english_learner_toolkit/7-OELA_2017_optout_508C.pdf)

## Monitoring English Learners

The term *monitoring* can be confusing as it is used in many contexts. In this context, it is referring to keeping track of students' annual progress in learning English which is required while the students are participating in the language instruction education program. English learners, including those who have opted out of EL programs and services, are to be included in the district's monitoring process. Monitoring must occur at least annually for progress in achieving English language proficiency (ELP) and acquiring content knowledge.

District monitoring of ELs should include progress toward established benchmarks for expected growth in ELP and grade-level content areas as well as assisting students who are not making timely progress towards those goals. Considerations for language support and academic support must be made.

All English learners must take the annual ELPA21 summative assessment or Alt ELPA21 (for ELs who are alternate test takers). There are no exceptions to this requirement. Until a student scores proficient on the annual ELPA21, the student must continue to receive EL services. It is prudent at this time to review the student's individual progress to ensure that the student's language needs (frequency and intensity of support) are being met. It is also equally important to ensure that each student is getting the appropriate level of support in academic areas. *Lau v. Nichols* requires English learners be provided access to the curriculum with support when appropriate. ELs benefit from the same high level of rigor offered to non-English learners in content areas.

United States Department of Education. (2015). English Learner Toolkit: *Chapter 8 [Monitoring and Exiting English Learners from EL Programs and Services](https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/chap8.pdf)*. Office of English Language Acquisition.  
<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/chap8.pdf>

## FAQs about Monitoring English Learners

### 1. Should a student be enrolled in grade level coursework even if they have limited English skills?

Students must have access to content curriculum and be given adequate support in content classes so they do not fall (further) behind in content learning while they are learning English.

## **2. If a newcomer with limited formal education comes with very low skills and knowledge in content learning, should s/he be included in grade level courses?**

School districts may use a curriculum that temporarily emphasizes English language acquisition over other subjects, provided that any interim academic deficit in other subjects are remedied within a reasonable length of time, (DOJ/OCR Dear Colleague Letter, Jan. 2015, page 19). This is typically referred to as a newcomer program.

## **Reclassification (i.e., Exiting) of English Learners**

Iowa no longer uses academic test scores as part of EL exit criteria. As indicated by the Office of Civil Rights, students should be in EL services and programming because of language needs and not because of academic or content deficits; therefore, upon receiving a proficient score on the ELPA21 summative assessment, the student has demonstrated the language skills necessary to access curriculum. If deficits in content areas exist, the district is responsible for remedying those deficits swiftly.

Districts must wait until ELPA21 test scores are available before exiting ELs from services. When students score 4s and/or 5s on all domain subtests of the ELPA21 (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), they will receive a determination of proficient. Proficient students are no longer considered English learners and are to be exited from the special status. Proficient students must be reclassified on the state record system between the posting of the summative assessment (ELPA21) results and September 30 in order that reclassified students are reported properly.

## **FAQs about Reclassification (i.e., Exiting) of English Learners**

### **1. Can ELs remain in the EL program even if they test proficient on ELPA21? For example, if they are not proficient in ISASP, FAST, or unsuccessful in general education classes, can they still participate in services?**

Once students have scored proficient in English as measured by the ELPA21 summative assessment, they are to be exited and reclassified as former ELs. These students are no longer considered ELs and should be supported in the same manner as all learners are supported when they need it. This support may be provided by student assistance teams, MTSS teams, etc. Further, every effort should be made to swiftly address any academic deficits.

## **Monitoring Former English Learners**

In this part, the word *monitor* is referring to the federal monitoring period which is required after a student has been reclassified to a former EL (FEL) and is considered to be proficient in English.

Once reported as reclassified/exited, students exiting from EL status must be monitored for at least two years to ensure that they are successful. Districts must ensure proper tier one support, remedy any academic deficits, and ensure FELs are meaningfully participating in the standard program of instruction as comparable to their never-EL peers. Please note, while the State requires formal monitoring of FELs for *two years*, the ESSA requires the State to report all districts' numbers and percentages of FELs meeting state academic standards for *four years*.

While districts are required to monitor former EL student performance in core academic subjects, no specific protocol or form is required. Districts should establish their own rigorous, evidence-based practices for their monitoring protocols that include benchmarks for expected growth in acquiring academic content knowledge and take appropriate steps to assist students who are not adequately progressing toward those goals. It is important to note that FELs do not take the annual ELPA21 assessment.

Districts may want to consider using the resources in this [toolkit](#) when planning a monitoring protocol.

## FAQs about Monitoring Former English Learners

### 1. What if a district finds that its English learners often struggle with grade level content and have many deficits upon reclassification?

This indicates that students may not have been getting enough academic and content support as part of their EL services. The program should be evaluated for its effectiveness and the district should see that changes are made to ensure that ELs are getting proper academic support.

### 2. Is there a specific monitoring form required by the State?

FELs must be formally monitored at the district level. There is not a specific form that the State requires. The district is free to use a monitoring form that works best for them as long as they perform regular monitoring of the student's academic performance and achievement.

### 3. Do districts have to report who is doing the monitoring?

The State does not collect this information. It should be documented at the district level.

### 4. Who is responsible for monitoring FELs?

FELs are no longer ELs and do not take the ELPA21; therefore, it is the responsibility of content educators to monitor progress since student progress is measured by content assessments. The EL team may provide technical assistance with this process when appropriate.

### 5. Do districts need to monitor former English learners for 2 years or 4 years?

Each district is *required* to do formal monitoring for *two years*, however, the State provides content testing data to the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) on FELs' progress at the district level for *4 years*. It is strongly recommended that districts periodically monitor the progress of students in years 3 and 4 to ensure FELs are participating in district programs at the same rate as their never-EL peers and are successful in their coursework.

### 6. What should be monitored?

The district must monitor student success and academic progress to be sure that any academic deficiencies continue to be addressed after the student exits EL services. A monitoring protocol may include academic assessments (both state and local), parity of participation in district programs and activities such as gifted programs, special education, and other school sponsored activities, and reviewing graduation rates of ELs and FELs.

### 7. Should parents be notified annually of results of monitoring?

It is good practice to notify parents of the academic progress the FEL, as districts do for all students. However, there is no requirement that the district notify parents of the specific monitoring progress of the FEL.

## **8. If a recently exited student has not completed monitoring and moves away from the district, is the new district required to monitor?**

The state requires students to be monitored by the attending district for two years when students move between Iowa districts. Recently exited students from another ELPA21 state should be monitored informally and not be identified on the student record system.

### **Reference and resource:**

United States Department of Education. (2015). English Learner Toolkit: *Chapter 8 [Monitoring and Exiting English Learners from EL Programs and Services](https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/chap8.pdf)*. Office of English Language Acquisition. <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/chap8.pdf>

## **Re-Entry into the EL Program**

Occasionally there are circumstances in which re-entry into EL programming is warranted. In accordance with the Office of Civil Rights, these circumstances should be due to a persistent language barrier and not due to academic deficits. If academic deficits persist after a student becomes English proficient, the district is responsible for providing support for students as they do for any other student who needs assistance with academic content. If the student continues to have a language barrier, the student assistance team may recommend the student be rescreened on the ELPA21 Dynamic Screener. Based on the results, the student may re-enter the EL status and program. If the student scores proficient, they must not be designated as an English learner. Other supports through general education should be considered.

## **FAQs about Re-Entry into the EL Program**

### **1. What if a student exited the program, returns to their native country, returns to the U.S. within a few years but is struggling in their classes?**

If the student assistance team has determined the student's struggles are likely due to a language barrier, the student may be rescreened to determine English proficiency. If the student does not score proficient, s/he should be reentered into the EL program and provided services.

### **2. Can we consider re-entry for an exited EL student if they have excessive absences, behavior issues, or are falling behind?**

These are not reasons for reentry. These issues should be handled as they are handled when students who were never EL exhibit the same issues (e.g., problem solving through the student assistance team, MTSS team, or other student support interventions).

## **Conclusion and Contact Information**

Thank you for adherence to Iowa's standardized entrance and exit procedures for English learners. If you have any questions about testing procedures or about providing services to ELs, visit the [English Learners](#) or [ELPA21](#) web pages for more information. Consultant contact information is listed on the program pages. They can assist you with any questions.

## References and Resources

Additional support for each step outlined in the Standardized Entrance and Exit Procedures for Iowa's ELs can be found below.

U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights and the U.S. Department of Justice Dear Colleague Letter, 2015

<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-el-201501.pdf>.

U. S. Department of Education. Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA). (2015). English Learner Toolkit: <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/index.html>

*Chapter 1 [Tools and Resources for Identifying All English Learners](https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/chap1.pdf)*. Office of English Language Acquisition. <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/chap1.pdf>

*Chapter 2 [Providing English Learners with a Language Assistance Program](https://ncela.ed.gov/files/english_learner_toolkit/2-OELA_2017_language_assist_508C.pdf)*. Office of English Language Acquisition. [https://ncela.ed.gov/files/english\\_learner\\_toolkit/2-OELA\\_2017\\_language\\_assist\\_508C.pdf](https://ncela.ed.gov/files/english_learner_toolkit/2-OELA_2017_language_assist_508C.pdf)

*Chapter 3 [Staffing and Supporting an EL Program](https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/chap3.pdf)*. Office of English Language Acquisition. <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/chap3.pdf>

*Chapter 4 [Meaningful Access to Core Curricular, Extra Curricular Programs](https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/chap4.pdf)*. Office of English Language Acquisition. <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/chap4.pdf>

*Chapter 5 [Creating an Inclusive Environment and Avoiding Unnecessary Segregation](https://ncela.ed.gov/files/english_learner_toolkit/5-OELA_2017_inclusion_rev_508C.pdf)*. Office of English Language Acquisition. [https://ncela.ed.gov/files/english\\_learner\\_toolkit/5-OELA\\_2017\\_inclusion\\_rev\\_508C.pdf](https://ncela.ed.gov/files/english_learner_toolkit/5-OELA_2017_inclusion_rev_508C.pdf)

*Chapter 6 [Addressing English Learners with Disabilities](https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/chap6.pdf)*. Office of English Language Acquisition. <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/chap6.pdf>

*Chapter 7 [Serving English Learners who Opt-Out of EL Programs](https://ncela.ed.gov/files/english_learner_toolkit/7-OELA_2017_optout_508C.pdf)*. Office of English Language Acquisition. [https://ncela.ed.gov/files/english\\_learner\\_toolkit/7-OELA\\_2017\\_optout\\_508C.pdf](https://ncela.ed.gov/files/english_learner_toolkit/7-OELA_2017_optout_508C.pdf)

*Chapter 8 [Monitoring and Exiting English Learners from EL Programs and Services](https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/chap8.pdf)*. Office of English Language Acquisition. <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/chap8.pdf>

*Chapter 9 [Evaluating the Effectiveness of a Districts EL Program](https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/chap9.pdf)*. Office of English Language Acquisition. <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/chap9.pdf>

*Chapter 10 [Ensuring Meaningful Communication with Limited English Proficient Parents](https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/chap10.pdf)*. Office of English Language Acquisition. <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/chap10.pdf>

U. S. Department of Education. Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA). (2016). Newcomer Tool Kit. <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/newcomers-toolkit/ncomertoolkit.pdf>

U. S. Department of Education. (2016) Non-Regulatory Guidance: English Learners and Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/essatitleiiienglishlearners92016.pdf>



U. S. Department of Education. (2016) Addendum to September 23, 2016 Non-Regulatory Guidance: English learners and Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as Amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

<https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/elandiitleiiiaddendum1219.pdf>