



Standardized Entrance and Exit Procedures for Iowa's English Learners

Fall 2025



Department of Education

State of Iowa
Department of Education
Grimes State Office Building
400 E. 14th Street
Des Moines, IA 50319-0146

Administration

McKenzie Snow, Director

Division of PK-12 Learning

Tina Wahlert, Division Administrator

Bureau of School Improvement

Corey Seymour, Bureau Chief

Terri Schuster, English Learner Assessment Consultant

Bureau of ESEA Programs

Jillian Dotson, Bureau Chief

Rachel Pettigrew, Consultant for Title III and Title I, Part C

It is the policy of the Iowa Department of Education not to discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, sexual orientation, national origin, sex, disability, religion, age, political party affiliation, or actual or potential parental, family or marital status in its programs, activities, or employment practices as required by the Iowa Code sections 216.9 and 256.10(2), Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. § 2000d2000e), the Equal Pay Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. § 206, et seq.), Title IX (Educational Amendments, 20 U.S.C. §§ 1681 – 1688), Section 504 (Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. § 794), and the Americans with Disabilities Act (42 U.S.C. § 12101, et seq.). If you have questions or complaints related to compliance with this policy by the Iowa Department of Education, please contact the legal counsel for the Iowa Department of Education, Grimes State Office Building, 400 E. 14th Street, Des Moines, IA 50319-0146, telephone number: 515-281-5295, or the Director of the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, Cesar E. Chavez Memorial Building, 1244 Speer Boulevard, Suite 310, Denver, CO 80204-3582, telephone number: 303-844-5695, TDD number: 800-877-8339, email: OCR.Denver@ed.gov

Contents

Introduction	4
Effective Date and Development of Statewide Procedures.....	4
Standardized Statewide Entrance and Exit Procedures.....	4
Identifying and Assessing Potential English Learners	5
Home Language Survey.....	5
HLS Administration and Timing.....	5
<i>FAQs about the Home Language Survey</i>	6
English Language Proficiency Screening	7
Students Enrolling in a U.S. School for the First Time.....	7
Students Moving within the State of Iowa	8
Students Moving to Iowa from Another State	7
<i>FAQs about English Language Proficiency Screening</i>	8
Erroneously Identified Students.....	9
<i>FAQs about Erroneously Identified Students</i>	9
Parent Notification	10
Communicating Initial or Ongoing Program Placement	10
<i>FAQs about Parent Notification: Factsheet</i>	10
English Learner Program Placement	10
Opting Out (Waiving) EL Services	11
<i>FAQs about Opting Out (Waiving) EL Services</i>	11
Monitoring English Learners	11
<i>FAQs about Monitoring English Learners</i>	12
Reclassification (Exiting) of English Learners	12
<i>FAQ about Reclassification (Exiting) of English Learners</i>	12
Monitoring Former English Learners	13
<i>FAQs about Monitoring Former English Learners</i>	13
Re-Entry into the EL Program	14
<i>FAQs about Re-Entry into the EL Program</i>	14
Conclusion and Contact Information	14
References and Resources	15

Introduction

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA),¹ requires each state to develop statewide entrance and exit procedures to ensure consistent identification and reclassification of English learners (ELs) among local education agencies (LEAs) in the state. These procedures include monitoring of former English learners (FELs) for academic success following exit from language instruction education programs (LIEPs) referred to hereafter as EL programs.

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 LEAs, all area education agencies (AEAs), and other EL professionals. The purpose of this document is to ensure that standardized procedures are implemented consistently across Iowa for the identification of ELs and exit of ELs from EL services. All LEAs are expected to implement each step, as each step is important to the entire standardized protocol.

Standardized Statewide Entrance and Exit Procedures

The ESEA 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)).

Iowa's standardized statewide entrance and exit procedures correspond to both federal legislation and state policy in regard to the identification, support, and reclassification of ELs. In addition, frequently asked questions (FAQs) have been included to help 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 LEAs 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*.
- Title I, Part A and Title III, Part A of the ESEA (2015) and related non-regulatory guidance.
- Iowa Administrative Code 281, Chapter 60: Programs for Students Who are English Learners.

According to Chapter One of the U.S. Department of Education's English Learner Toolkit, identifying and assessing all potential ELs is one of the most critical "affirmative steps" and "appropriate actions" that LEAs must take to ensure eligible ELs receive language assistance services in a timely manner. Under section 3113(b)(2) of the ESEA, eligible students must be placed in EL programs as soon as possible and within 30 days of enrollment.

In Iowa, identifying students for language services is a two-part process. First, 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). Then, if a language other than English is indicated, the student is screened by taking an English language proficiency assessment. The required assessment in Iowa is the English Language Proficiency Assessment for the 21st Century (ELPA21) Dynamic Screener.

The results of the ELPA21 Dynamic Screener determine if the student qualifies for EL services.

¹ Here forward, "ESEA" should be taken to mean "ESEA, as amended by the ESSA."

Identifying and Assessing Potential ELs

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 281—60.2\(1\)](#), LEAs must administer the HLS to all students at the time of enrollment. The HLS is designed to gather information about students' 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, LEAs 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*).

LEAs 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 follow:

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?

While the three questions identify potential ELs and determine eligibility for language screening, the broader form should be considered as it contains other data elements the LEA needs to collect. Additional information to collect includes the language(s) in which parents prefer to receive school information and whether students meet the definition of immigrant. LEAs must determine if students are designated as "immigrant" for funding purposes. The term "immigrant children and youth" refers to individuals who are ages 3 through 21; were not born in any State; and have not been attending one or more schools in any one or more States for more than 3 full academic years. (ESEA § 3201(5)). Public schools may not deny access to an education to any child based on immigration status. It is a violation of federal law for LEAs to prohibit or discourage children from enrolling in public schools because the children or their parents or guardians are not U.S. citizens or do not have immigration documentation.

HLS 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, the Iowa HLS must be administered. If a student transfers within Iowa, the original HLS is to be used. The incoming LEA should request the HLS along with the student's entire cumulative file.

LEAs 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. LEAs 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 school 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 LEA should screen if there is reasonable indication that the student has been missed and is a potential EL. The LEA 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 LEA?

The student should not be rescreened if they were previously screened in another Iowa LEA 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 LEA 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 LEA should rely on the initial HLS.

7. Should LEAs 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 Administrative Code section 279.60](#).

Transitional kindergarten programs are required to use the K-12 HLS as found on the [Transact website](#).

8. Should LEAs 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 ELs, 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 LEAs serve preschool students with Title III, Part A funds.

10. Do homeschool students qualify for EL services?

If homeschooled students are screened and qualify for services, they may enter into shared enrollment at the LEA for EL 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 ELs are provided services. It can send students to the LEA to meet this requirement or provide services for students at its own expense. Please consult the [Serving Nonpublic School English Learners Guidance](#) as well as [Iowa Administrative Code 281—60.4](#).

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 EL services.

English Language Proficiency Screening

[Iowa Administrative Code 281—60.2\(1\)](#) requires LEAs 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.

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 to Iowa from another state
- Students moving within the state of Iowa

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 to Iowa from Another State

When students move to Iowa from another state that administers the ELPA21, test scores from the previous state may be used to determine eligibility. Students arriving to Iowa from states with a different English proficiency test must be screened with the ELPA21 Screener. For more guidance on transfer students, please consult the [Identification of English Learners: Approved Assessment Procedures for Transfer Students](#).

Students Moving within the State of Iowa

If ELPA21 Dynamic Screener results already exist, they should be used to determine EL eligibility. When a student moves among Iowa schools, the ELPA21 screener should not be re-administered. Subsequent LEA(s) identify the student as an EL based on the ELPA21 results from the prior LEA(s).

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 may 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?**
LEAs are obligated to complete the identification process within the 30-day time period. If the LEA 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 LEA about the student's EL history and is able to ascertain if the student scored proficient on the previous state's ELPA21 summative assessment?**
The LEA 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 LEA 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. When students enroll in school in Iowa with proficient scores on ELPA21 summative assessments that were taken in other states, must the LEAs 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 code the

student officially 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 [Iowa Administrative Code 280.4](#).

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 § 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 HLS, administration of an EL screening assessment without providing for appropriate accommodations for a student with disabilities, or other reasons.

On these rare occasions, if a student is erroneously identified as an EL, it is the role of the LEA to determine if a mistake was made. If the LEA 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 LEA has evidence that the student is not an EL, then the LEA’s EL administrator should contact the Department 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 EL designation 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 ELPA21 summative. Even if a parent declines services, it does not relieve the LEA’s responsibility to ensure the student’s language and academic needs are met.

2. May the LEA 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 LEA 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 Department will be necessary to override an error that may appear on the student record system.

Parent Notification

Communicating Initial and Ongoing EL Program Placement

LEAs must provide parents of ELs with a notice within thirty days of an EL student's identification and initial or ongoing placement in an EL program (ESEA § 1112(e)(3)). LEAs must, to the extent practicable, translate such notices into a language that the parent can understand. It is best practice to provide parent notifications in both the home language and in English. If written translations are not practicable, LEAs must offer free verbal interpretation of the written information for parents of ELs. The English Learner Program Placement notification must be sent initially and annually to parents whose students are eligible for EL services. This fillable parent notice is available in 29 languages on the [Transact website](#).

In light of the obligations to notify parents about EL identification and placement, LEAs need to assess English proficiency of all potential ELs and designate students as ELs who have ELPA21 results of *emerging* or *progressing* as soon as practicable before the thirty-day deadline to notify parents.

FAQs about Parent Notification: Factsheet

U. S. Department of Education Civil Rights Division, and U.S. Department of Justice. *Factsheet: Information for Limited English Proficient (LEP) Parents and Guardians and for Schools and School Districts That Communicate with Them*, 2015, <http://www.ed.gov/sites/ed/files/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/dcl-factsheet-el-students-201501.pdf>.

EL Program Placement

While types of EL programs may differ in practice, all must be designed to provide English language services and support for ELs at all levels of language proficiency in age-appropriate content learning ([Iowa Administrative Code 281—60.2\(3\)](#)).

Services and programs for ELs must be educationally sound in theory and effective in practice. LIEPs 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. LEAs 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, ELs 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, LEAs must provide appropriate special education services to ELs with disabilities. LEAs must ensure that ELs 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 ELs, and the LEA remains obligated to take the “affirmative steps” required by Title VI and take “appropriate action” required by the EEOA to provide these ELs access to its educational programs (20 U.S.C. § 1703(f)).

Opting Out of (Waiving) EL Services

The law allows parents the right to opt their children out of EL programs or particular EL services (i.e., waive 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. LEAs 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 LEA must inform the parents in a language they understand and offer EL services.

The Request for Change in Program Participation notification on the [Transact website](#) should be sent upon parent request and in a timely manner after the parent has requested their child not participate in one or more programs, or be transferred to another program. The Explanation of Consequences for not Participating in English Learner Programs should accompany this initially and be sent annually to parents as long as the student is eligible for EL services as determined by the results of the ELPA21.

FAQs about Opting Out of (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 the LEA encourage or recommend that parents waive services? (e.g. alternative programs, special ed, scheduling conflicts, etc.)

LEAs may not in any way steer students away from participating in services. All ELs must be encouraged to participate in EL programming. The LEA 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 LEA 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 LEA should keep documentation of the conversation and parent signatures should be kept on file.

Monitoring ELs

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

LEA 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 ELs 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 are being met (e.g. frequency and intensity of support). It is also equally important to ensure that each student is getting the appropriate level of support in academic areas. *Lau v. Nichols* requires ELs to be provided access to the curriculum with support when appropriate. ELs benefit from the same high level of rigor offered to non-ELs in content areas.

FAQs about Monitoring ELs

- 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 behind (further) 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?**
LEAs 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. This is typically referred to as a newcomer program.

Reclassifying (Exiting) Proficient Students

Iowa no longer uses academic test scores as part of EL exit criteria. As indicated by the Office for Civil Rights, students should be in EL programming and services due to language needs and not due to 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 the curriculum. If deficits in content areas exist, the LEA is responsible for remedying those deficits swiftly.

LEAs must wait until ELPA21 test scores are available before exiting ELs from EL programs. 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 ELs and are to be exited from EL status. Proficient students must be reclassified/exited on the state record system between July 1 - September 30.

The [Transact website](#) provides a Program Exit Letter that can be used to inform parents that their child has gained sufficient English proficiency in reading, writing, speaking, and listening and no longer qualifies for EL services.

FAQ about Reclassifying (Exiting) Proficient Students

- 1. Can ELs remain in the EL program even if they test proficient on ELPA21? For example, if they are not proficient in ISASP or FAST, or are unsuccessful in general education classes, can they still participate in EL 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 address any academic deficits swiftly.

Monitoring Former ELs

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

Once reported as reclassified/exited, students exiting from EL status must be monitored for at least two years to ensure that they are successful. LEAs 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 LEAs' numbers and percentages of FELs meeting state academic standards for four years.

While LEAs are required to monitor the performance of FELs in core academic subjects, no specific protocol or form is required. LEAs 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. Please note that FELs do not take the annual ELPA21 assessment.

FAQs about Monitoring Former ELs

1. What if the LEA finds that FELs often struggle with grade level content and have many deficits upon reclassification?

This indicates that FELs may not have been getting enough academic and content support as part of their EL services. The EL program(s) should be evaluated for effectiveness, and the LEA should make changes to ensure that ELs and FELs are getting proper academic support.

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

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

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

The State does not collect this information. It should be documented at the LEA 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 LEAs need to monitor FELs for 2 years or 4 years?

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

6. What should be monitored?

The LEA must monitor student success and academic progress to be sure that any academic deficiencies continue to be addressed after FELs exit from EL programs and services. A monitoring protocol may include academic assessments (both state and local), parity of participation in LEA 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 FELs regarding academic progress, as LEAs do for all students. However, there is no requirement that the LEA must notify parents of the specific monitoring progress of FELs.

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

The State requires students to be monitored by the attending the LEA for two years when students move across LEAs in Iowa. Recently exited students from another ELPA21 state should be monitored informally and do not need to be identified as FEL on the student record system.

Re-Entry into EL Programs after Exiting

Occasionally there are circumstances in which re-entry into EL programming is warranted. In accordance with the Office for Civil Rights, these circumstances should be due to a persistent language barrier and not due to academic deficits. If academic deficits persist after students become English proficient, the LEA is responsible for providing support to FELs as they do for any other student who needs assistance with academic content. If a student continues to have a language barrier after exiting from EL programs, the student assistance team may recommend the FEL to be rescreened on the ELPA21 Dynamic Screener. Based on the results, the FEL may be redesignated to EL status and re-enter EL programming. However, if the FEL is rescreened and scores proficient, it is not permitted to be redesignated to EL status. Other support through general education should be considered.

FAQs about Re-Entry into EL Programs after Exiting

1. What if FELs exit the EL program, return to their native country, return to the U.S. within a few years, and then are struggling in their classes?

If the student assistance team has determined that struggles are likely due to a language barrier, FELs may be rescreened to determine English proficiency. If they do not score proficient, they should be re-entered into the EL program and provided services.

2. Can we consider re-entry for FELs if they have excessive absences, behavior issues, or are falling behind?

These are not reasons for re-entry. These issues should be handled as they are handled when students who were never ELs 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 these Standardized Entrance and Exit Procedures for Iowa's English Learners. If you have any questions about testing procedures or about providing services to ELs, visit the Department's [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

Iowa Administrative Code 281.60. *Programs for Students Who Are English Learners*, 2023, <http://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/iac/chapter/281.60.pdf>.

National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition (NCLEA). *English Learner Toolkit*, 2015, ncela.ed.gov/educator-support/toolkits/english-learner-toolkit.

- Chapter 1. Identifying All English Learner Students
- Chapter 2. Providing English Learners with a Language Assistance Program
- Chapter 3. Staffing and Supporting an EL Program
- Chapter 4. Meaningful Access to Core Curricular, Extra Curricular Programs
- Chapter 5. Creating an Inclusive Environment and Avoiding Unnecessary Segregation
- Chapter 6. Addressing English Learners with Disabilities
- Chapter 7. Serving English Learners who Opt-Out of EL Programs
- Chapter 8. Monitoring and Exiting English Learners from EL Services and Programs
- Chapter 9. Evaluating the Effectiveness of a District's EL Programs
- Chapter 10. Ensuring Meaningful Communication with Limited English Proficient Parents

National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition (NCLEA). *Newcomer Toolkit*, 2016, ncela.ed.gov/educator-support/toolkits/newcomer-toolkit.

- Chapter 1. Who Are Newcomers?
- Chapter 2. Welcoming Newcomers to a Safe, Inclusive and Thriving School Environment
- Chapter 3. Supporting Newcomers' Social, Emotional, and Mental Health Needs
- Chapter 4. Providing High-Quality Instruction for Newcomers
- Chapter 5. Establishing Partnerships with Families

National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition (NCLEA). *EL Family Toolkit*, 2023, ncela.ed.gov/educator-support/toolkits/family-toolkit.

- Chapter 1. Enrolling Your Child in School
- Chapter 2. Attending School in the United States
- Chapter 3. Other Educational Programs and Services for Your Child
- Chapter 4. Finding Extracurricular Activities for Your Child
- Chapter 5. The Health and Safety of Your Child at School
- Chapter 6. Helping Your Child Be Successful in School

U. S. Department of Education Civil Rights Division, and U.S. Department of Justice. *Factsheet: Information for Limited English Proficient (LEP) Parents and Guardians and for Schools and School Districts That Communicate with Them*, 2015, <http://www.ed.gov/sites/ed/files/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/dcl-factsheet-el-students-201501.pdf>.

U. S. Department of Education. *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)*, 2016, www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/essatitleiiienglishlearners92016.pdf.

U. S. Department of Education. *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)*, 2016, www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/elandiitleiiiaddendum1219.pdf.