

## Identification and Placement of English Learners

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Under federal law, schools must identify possible English Learners and screen eligible students for language assistance. When a student enrolls in a public or private school in Georgia, the Home Language Survey (HLS) needs be administered as part of the enrollment process. The Home Language Survey is a series of 3 questions to determine the student’s primary or home language. If the answer to any of the 3 questions is any other language other than “English”, the student must be screened for ESOL eligibility.

The Muscogee county school district has chosen to incorporate the questions from the Home Language Survey into the registration form to ensure that this step is completed in a timely manner.

The 3 questions are:

1. What language(s) did the student first learn to speak?
2. What language(s) does the student speak at home?
3. What language(s) does the student speak most often?

**Note:** If students have been identified as eligible for ESOL services prior to the beginning of the school year, Title III law requires parental notification within 30 days after the beginning of the school year. Once the school year is underway, the window for identification, screening and parental notification of eligibility is within two weeks of enrollment (No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 Title III Language Instruction for Limited English Proficient and Immigrant Students, Public law 107-110, January 8, 2002, Section 3302 Parental Notification). It is the expectation of GaDOE ESOL & Title III that students will be assessed as soon as logistically possible within the appropriate time frames.

- If a student transfers from another district within the United States or from a Department of Defense school and there are official records to support the student’s pre-determined eligibility and services within the past year, the school may accept the record and place the child accordingly in language assistance programs.
- If there is no record available or records cannot be obtained within the time frames described above, it will be necessary for the school to ensure that it meets the appropriate deadlines for identification and screening of transfer students.

Non-ESOL serving schools in MCSD must report possible EL students to the ESOL office immediately upon receiving/enrolling a student. Please contact the ESOL office at 706-748-2120 for assistance.

### Screening for Eligibility

Georgia is a member of the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) Consortium (please visit the WIDA website at [www.wida.us](http://www.wida.us) and / or refer to the WIDA Consortium section of this Resource Guide). All members of the WIDA Consortium utilize the same screeners to assess eligibility for language assistance services. WIDA offers LEAs the choice of two screeners: the WIDA-ACCESS Placement Test (W-APT) and the Measure of Developing English Language (MODEL).

The WIDA screening instruments are used by educators to measure the English language proficiency of students who have recently arrived in the U.S. or in a particular district. This screening tool is used to determine whether or not a child is eligible for English language instructional services. The W-APT is not intended for multiple administrations to screen or to assess status or progress of individual students.

Both screening instruments assess students' abilities in all four language domains (Listening, Speaking, Writing, and Reading), and evaluate Social and Instructional English as well as academic language corresponding to the subject areas of Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies.

The screening results provide scores for each language domain as well as combined composite scores, including a specified Composite Proficiency Level. When utilized in conjunction with the GADOE Eligibility Guidance, these scores will be used to determine eligibility for language assistance services.

### **Kindergarten W-APT**

The Kindergarten **W-APT** is utilized for students entering Kindergarten through the first semester of first grade. Administration procedures are as follows:

- Administer the Listening and Speaking portions of the Kindergarten W-APT and note the combined Listening and Speaking Raw Score.
- If the student's combined **Listening and Speaking Raw Score is 29** or higher, the student meets the minimum criteria for English language proficiency. However, districts have the flexibility to consider additional factors to support eligibility for language assistance services.
- If the combined **Listening and Speaking Raw Score is less than 19**, then the student automatically qualifies for language assistance services.
- If the combined **Listening and Speaking Raw Score is between 19 and 28**, continue the screening process and administer the Reading and Writing portions of the Kindergarten W-APT. Although the Test Administration Manual may indicate administration of the Reading and Writing portions only during the second semester of the school year, Georgia Department of Education ESOL & Title III guidance does not limit this administration to second semester only and advises screening students for Reading and Writing if their scores on Listening and Writing fall within the 19-28 range. The Reading and Writing scores will provide valuable supporting data that may be used to inform the final decision regarding a kindergarten student's eligibility.
- If the student's **Reading** score is **11** or higher **and** the **Writing** score is **12** or higher, then the student meets the minimum criteria for English language proficiency. However, districts have the flexibility to consider additional factors to support eligibility for language assistance services.
- It is important to note that no matter how literate K students may be in the domains of listening and speaking and although they may have reading and/or writing skills equal to those of their peers, no kindergarten student has had an opportunity to become truly literate in either the domains of reading or writing, and generally will benefit greatly from the support of language assistance services. Therefore, the LEA has the flexibility to consider additional factors to support eligibility of K students for language assistance services.

**Georgia Department of Education**  
**Eligibility Criteria for English Language Assistance using the**  
**Kindergarten W-APT Screener**

**Administer the Home Language Survey to Determine the Student's Home Language**

- What is the student's home language?
- What is the student's first language?
- What language is used most by the student?

If all three responses are "English,"  
then screening is not required.

If one or more responses indicate a language other  
than English, administer the **Listening and Speaking**  
portions of the Kindergarten W-APT.

If the combined **Listening and Speaking** Raw Score is **29** or higher, the student meets minimum criteria for English language proficiency. However, districts have the flexibility to consider additional factors to support eligibility for language

If the student's combined **Listening and Speaking** Raw Score is between **19 and 28**, continue with administration of the **Reading and Writing** Tests.

If the student's combined **Listening and Speaking** Raw Score is less than **19**, then the student requires language support services.

### **Administration of W-APT to Students in Grades 1-12**

The W-APT for students in grades 1-12 are divided into grade clusters; 1-2; 3-5; 6-8; and 9-12.

When the **W-APT** is administered to students from second semester of grade 1 through grade 12, the criteria for eligibility will follow these guidelines:

- **Grade level adjusted score of 5.0 or higher** on the W-APT: student does not qualify for language assistance services.
- **Grade level adjusted score of less than 5.0** on the W-APT: student requires language assistance services.

**Georgia Department of Education**  
**Grades 1-12**  
**Eligibility Criteria for Language Assistance Services**

Administer the Home Language Survey to Determine the Student's Home Language

- What language did the student first learn to speak?
- What language does the student speak at home?
- What language does the student speak most often?

If all three responses are "English," screening is not required.

If one or more responses indicate a language other than English, administer the W-APT.

If the student scores a **grade level adjusted score of 5.0 or higher** on the W-APT, the student is not eligible for language assistance services.

If the student's **grade level adjusted score is less than 5.0** on the W-APT, the student requires English language assistance services.

## Placement

Under Title III law, once a child has been identified as eligible for language assistance, the parent must be notified in an understandable and uniform format and to the extent practicable in the native language of the parent.

Parents have the right to refuse placement in the ESOL program by presenting the school with a written Parental Waiver; however, school districts are still held responsible for providing language support under Office of Civil Rights law. The district must find alternate means of providing the student with support for language development and proficiency outside of structured ESOL classes. Although the parents may have chosen to waive a formal language assistance program, the student has been identified and coded as an EL and will continue to be coded as such until the student reaches an English proficiency level that meets the state requirements for exiting the program. The student must be assessed via ACCESS on an annual basis until no longer eligible for services.

Eligible students must be placed and receive ESOL services immediately.