Identifying English Learners in Ohio

School districts and community schools have a responsibility to identify English learners so they can provide instruction designed to help them use the English language and learn subject matter content. This document describes the two-step process for identifying English learners in Ohio. These guidelines are effective beginning with the 2018-2019 school year.

Schools must complete this process and notify parents or guardians of the student's identification as an English learner within 30 days of enrollment at the beginning of the school year or within two weeks of enrollment during the school year.

Step 1: Giving the Language Usage Survey

Districts and community schools use the Language Usage Survey to identify students' language experiences and educational backgrounds, as well as the communication preferences of parents and guardians.

☐ Review this document, including Appendices A, B and C, before administering the language usage survey and English language proficiency screener.

☐ Designate an adequate number of personnel to administer the language usage survey to meet the needs of new students enrolling in your district or school. Adequate training and the selection of appropriate staff are key to ensuring the validity of the language usage survey and the overall success of the identification.

☐ Train the personnel administering and reviewing the language usage survey in these procedures and guidance.

☐ Give the language usage survey the Ohio Department of Education provides (Appendix A) to all new students enrolling in grades preK-12. When students transfer from other districts or schools, refer to existing records to determine English learner status.

☐ Use parental communication preferences and home language(s) indicated on the survey to determine language-assistance needs for parents and guardians.

☐ Provide translation, interpretation and English language supports to ensure meaningful communication during the registration process.

☐ Review and validate the language usage survey. Trained school employees, preferably those with a TESOL[1] license or endorsement, validate each language usage survey (Appendix A) with the annotations below.

Language Usage Survey Annotations	
Communication Preference Question 1	• If a language other than English is listed, ensure parents and guardians understand the purpose and use of the survey. • Provide translation and interpretation as needed. Ohio's language usage survey is available in multiple languages on the Department's website.
Language Background Questions 2-4	• Question 2 seeks information about the student's native language, the language first used by the student at the onset of speech. • Question 3 seeks information about the student's home language, the main language used at home by the student. • Question 4 seeks information about the language(s) used in the student's home. • Responses of a language other than English to Questions 2-4 prompt an assessment of English language proficiency. Further conversation with the family may help the school better understand the student's linguistic environment and need for screening. See Appendix B for a list of suggested supplemental questions.
Prior Education Questions 5-7	• Questions 5-7 seek information about the student's prior education. This information can help schools identify students with limited or interrupted formal education and determine eligibility for Title III immigrant child status. • Supplemental questions in Appendix B can help schools understand the extent to which a student's education has been limited or interrupted so that appropriate services and supports can be provided. • Districts and community schools with significant increases of immigrant youth may be eligible for additional Title III funding. Immigrant children include those individuals who are ages 3 through 21, who were not born in the United States and who have not been attending one or more schools in any one or more states for more than three full academic years.
Additional Information	• Parents and guardians may provide additional information they feel is relevant. • Review the response for how it may affect the English learner identification and student supports.

☐ Submit information from the language usage survey in the appropriate Educational Management Information System (EMIS) elements, such as home language, native language and immigrant status.

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[1] Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) licensure and endorsement information is available here.

☐ Keep each student's language usage survey results in his/her cumulative folders. Transfer these records if students relocate to other districts or schools per school and district policy.

Step 2: Assessing English Language Proficiency

After identifying potential English learners with the language usage survey, schools assess these students' English language proficiency using the Ohio English Language Proficiency Screener (OELPS). The OELPS is the state-provided, standardized tool for determining whether students qualify as English learners eligible to participate in the school's language instruction educational program.

The OELPS aligns with Ohio's English Language Proficiency Standards and is available in online and paper formats for students in grades K-12. Districts are responsible for administering, scoring and interpreting the OELPS. The Department provides resources and assistance to schools on how to administer and score the OELPS. To access OELPS manuals and administer the test, go to the Ohio English Learner Test Portal.

To identify English learners in preschool, districts and community schools should select and use a commercial screening. The OELPS should not be used with learners before Kindergarten enrollment. Appendix C provides information about several commercial language proficiency screeners.

Next Steps

Notify parents of English learner identification and services. If a student is identified as an English learner, the district or school must notify parent(s) or guardian(s) explaining the child's classification as an English learner and the available services. Information about the Letters to Parents of Students Identified as English Learners is available in English and Spanish on the Department's website.

Implement language assistance services. After a district or school has identified English learners with the language usage survey and English language proficiency screener, it must determine and implement the language instruction educational program the student will receive. Guidelines and information about programmatic options for English learners are available on Department's website.

Annually assess all English learners. State and federal law require an annual assessment of K-12 students identified as English learners to measure their English language proficiency. In Ohio, this is the Ohio English Language Proficiency Assessment (OELPA). Visit the OELPA website for more information.

Resources

Federal Guidance

The U.S. Department of Education provides resources to help state educational agencies and schools understand their obligations to English learners and families with limited English proficiency:

1. Dear Colleague Letter
   The U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights and the Department of Justice produced guidance outlining legal obligations for English learners.

2. English Learner Tool Kit Updated with ESSA references
   A 10-chapter companion guide to support the above letter, the *English Learner Toolkit* helps state and local education agencies fulfill their legal obligations to English learners.

3. Information for Limited English Proficient Parents and Guardians and for Schools and School Districts that Communicate with Them
   This fact sheet answers common questions about the rights of parents and guardians who do not speak, listen, read or write English proficiently because it is not their primary language.

4. Newcomer Tool Kit
   This resource helps U.S. educators; elementary and secondary teachers, principals and other school staff who work directly with immigrant students—including asylees and refugees—and their families.

State Resources

The Ohio Department of Education dedicates staff and resources to assist schools with the education of English learners.

1. Lau Resource Center for English Learners
   This page includes information about serving English learners in Ohio schools, including instructional approaches, Ohio's English language proficiency standards and other guidance.

   Donna Villareal donna.villareal@education.ohio.gov
   Lau Resource Center lau@education.ohio.gov
   (614) 466-4109 local or (888) 644-6732 toll free

2. Ohio English Language Proficiency Assessment
   This page provides information about the annual English language proficiency assessment that all Ohio districts and community schools must give their English learners.

   David Brauer david.brauer@education.ohio.gov
   Paula Mahaley paula.mahaley@education.ohio.gov
   Kurt Taube kurt.taube@education.ohio.gov
   (614) 466-1317 local or (877) 644-6338

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Appendix A: Language Usage Survey

Parents and Guardians: Please only complete this page of the survey. The back of this form will be completed by the school. A completed language usage survey is required for all students upon enrollment in Ohio schools. This information will tell school staff if they need to check your child's proficiency in English. Answers to these questions ensure your child receives the education services to succeed in school. The information is not used to identify immigration status.

Student Name: *(First Name and Last Name)*	**Student Date of Birth:** *(mm/dd/yyyy)*

Communication Preferences Indicate your language preference so we can provide an interpreter or translated documents at no cost when you need them. All parents have the right to information about their child's education in a language they understand.	1. In what language(s) would your family prefer to communicate with the school? _____
Language Background Information about your child's language background helps us identify students who qualify for support to develop the language skills necessary for success in school. Testing may be necessary to determine if language supports are needed.	2. What language did your child learn first? _____ 3. What language does your child use the most at home? _____ 4. What languages are used in your home? _____
Prior Education Responses about your child's birth country and previous education give us information about the knowledge and skills your child is bringing to school and may enable the school to receive additional funding to support your child.	5. In what country was your child born? _____ 6. Has your child ever received formal education outside of the United States? ☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, how many years/months? _____ If yes, what was the language of instruction? _____ 7. Has your child attended school in the United States? ☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, when did your child first attend a school in the United States? _____ / _____ / _____ Month Day Year
Additional Information Please share additional information to help us understand your child's language experiences and educational background.	

Parent/Guardian First Name: _____   Parent/Guardian Last Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____   Today's Date: *(mm/dd/yyyy)* _____

Thank you for providing the information above. Contact your school or district office if you have questions about this form or about services available at your child's school. Translated information about schools' civil rights obligations to English learner students and limited English proficient parents can be found here: https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/ellresources.html

COMPLETED BY SCHOOL EMPLOYEE

1. **Check.** Confirm the following statements related to the administration of Ohio's language usage survey:

   ☐ The district or school presented the language usage survey, to the extent practicable, in a language and form that the parent or guardian understood.

   ☐ The district or school informed the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the form's purpose. The language usage survey only is used to understand students' linguistic experiences and educational background.

   ☐ The district or school reports information from the language usage survey in the appropriate Educational Management Information System (EMIS) records.

   ☐ For students enrolling from other U.S. schools and districts, school officials request previous language survey data and refer to the information when identifying English learners.

   ☐ Results of the language usage survey are kept with the student's cumulative records and follow the student if he/she transfers to another district or school.

2. **Note.** Record additional information to assist the review of the language usage survey.

3. **Record.** Indicate responses from the language usage survey in the table below. Refer to the Language Usage Survey Annotations on page 2 for item-specific guidance.

Student's native language See Language Usage Survey Question 2. Report for <u>all</u> students in EMIS.	_____
Student's home language See Language Usage Survey Question 3. Report <u>only</u> for English learners in EMIS.	_____
Potential English learner See Language Usage Survey Questions 2-4.	☐ Yes. Assess the student's English proficiency. ☐ No. Do not assess the student's English proficiency.
Immigrant student status See Language Usage Survey Questions 5-7. Report for <u>all</u> students in EMIS.	☐ Yes, the student is an immigrant child. ☐ No, the student is not an immigrant child.

4. **Validate.** Complete the information below.

   _____   _____
   Signature of validating school employee   Date (mm/dd/yyyy)

   _____   _____
   Printed name of validating school employee   Name of school or school district

Appendix B: Supplemental Questions

Supplemental Questions. Schools may better understand the student's linguistic experience and educational background with questions related to these areas that impact instruction:

Child's Native/Heritage/First Language
- How well does your child understand and use his/her native language?
- Is your child literate in his/her first language?
- Is your child literate in languages other than English? If so, which languages?
- In what language does your child read?
- In what language does your child write?
- Do you consider English the main language your child speaks?
- Does your child "mix" languages? Describe.

Home Language
- What language(s) do adults use with each other in the home?
- What language do you use most frequently with your child?
- What other language(s) do you use with your child?
- What other language(s) does your child understand or use?

Prior Education
- Has your child ever been identified by a school as an English learner?
- Where has your child attended schools?
- How long has your child been in U.S. schools?
- In what languages has your child received instruction?
- Do you have student records from your child's previous education?
- What grades has your child completed in the U.S.?
- What grades has your child completed outside the U.S.?
- Did your child attend school before kindergarten?
- Does your student have an individualized education program (IEP) or 504 plan?

Student with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education
- Has your child attended school consistently?
- What was your child's last year of schooling outside the U.S.?
- What is your child's home country?
- At what age did your child leave his/her home country?
- Do you have student records from your child's previous education?
- Before coming to the U.S., was your child separated from other family members?
- Has your child ever lived in a refugee camp?

Appendix C: List of Commercial Language Proficiency Screeners

This list includes several commercial language proficiency screeners for informational purposes. This information is provided to offer examples of assessments that schools may find helpful and use at their discretion. The Ohio Department of Education does not control or guarantee the accuracy, relevance, timeliness or completeness of this information. Further, the inclusion of links to items does not reflect their importance nor an intention to endorse products. School personnel should review the validity, reliability and appropriateness of any test instruments they use to determine English learner identification and placement in a language instruction educational program.

IDEA Proficiency Tests (IPT)
Grade levels: PreK-12
Language domains: Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing
Language: English, Spanish
Contact: Ballard & Tighe Publishers; 800.321.4332

LAS Links
Grade levels: PreK-12
Language domains: Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing
Languages: English, Spanish
Contact: Data Recognition Corporation (DRC); 800.268.2000; Education Services; 763.268.3000

Stanford English Language Proficiency Test (SELP 2)
Grade levels: K-12
Language domains: Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing
Language: English
Contact: Pearson Education, Inc.; 800.848.9500

Test of English Language Learning (TELL)
Grade levels: K-12
Language domains: Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing
Language: English
Contact: Pearson Education, Inc.; 800.848.950

Woodcock-Muñoz Language Survey – Third Edition (WMLS III)
Grade levels: Ages 3:0 - 22:11
Language domains: Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing
Language: English, Spanish
Contact: Nelson and Houghton Mifflin Harcourt; 800.268.2222