

Home Language Survey Guidance

All families who enroll their child in a Washington State school must complete a Home Language Survey. Refer to the Washington State Multilingual Learner Policies and Practices Guide for specific guidance on this requirement and process.

How to Administer the Survey

The Home Language Survey (HLS) is used to identify a student's primary language and determine if the student is eligible to take an English language proficiency screener. The HLS is the first step in identifying potential Multilingual/English Learners and captures important information on families' language needs and students' prior language and school experiences.

- Reasonable efforts should be made to help the family understand the purpose of the survey and how to complete it. If needed, provide language support to families who may not be able to read or understand the survey.
- Skilled interpreters with knowledge of the district's TBIP program should be made available for families who need language assistance to complete the survey. This includes those who have limited literacy, need sign language interpretation, and/or need braille.
- Districts that use online registration forms for student enrollment may need to provide families access to translated electronic or hard copies of the enrollment forms in the district's most common languages and/or follow up to ensure that families understood and answered these questions accurately.
- Keep the dated survey or printout of responses in the student's cumulative file.

How to Process the Home Language Survey Responses

Right to Translation and Interpretation Services	Question 1 (CEDARS Element B43) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Question 1 of the Home Language Survey provides districts with the information needed to satisfy the reporting requirements related to RCW 28A.183 - Language Access Program.• For students with more than two guardians, districts should collect information for each guardian to ensure effective two-way communication between school staff and families.• Information regarding translation and interpretation services must be updated annually. Therefore, districts must develop a protocol for families to review and update their translation and interpretation preferences on an annual basis.
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<p>Eligibility for Language Development Support</p>	<p>Question 2 (CEDARS Element B17)</p> <p>Question 3 (CEDARS Element B18)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the response to either question 2 or 3 is a language other than English, refer the student for testing with the state-approved language proficiency placement test. • If the family indicates the child first spoke or understood English and another language simultaneously or currently uses both English and another language, administer the state-approved language proficiency placement test. The language other than English is reported in CEDARS. • If the response to questions 2 and 3 is English only, the student is considered proficient and does not need to be screened. <p>Question 4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a language other than English is indicated in question 4 or in question 1 above, but the student's first and primary language is identified as English, follow up with parents/guardians to ensure that the questions were answered accurately. <p>Question 5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responses to Question 5 can help in determining if a student has been previously identified as a multilingual English learner in Washington or another state. Districts should look up the student in the LEP Application in the EDS system to determine whether the student has already been identified in Washington. If the student has been previously identified, a language proficiency placement test is not needed, and the student should be placed directly into the TBIP program. • For new students, the state-approved language proficiency screener must be administered within 10 school days of the student's first day of attendance. • In-state transfer students may complete a new home language survey as part of the district's enrollment packet. If there is a discrepancy between the new home language survey and the HLS completed at the sending district, program eligibility determination should be made based on the home language survey that indicates a language other than English.
<p>Prior Education</p>	<p>Question 6 (CEDARS Element B10)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This question is not intended to identify students' immigration status, but it may trigger supplemental federal funding for recent immigrants. <p>Question 7 (CEDARS Element B34)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This question provides important information regarding a student's educational assets and experience and may inform program placement. • Please note that this question asks for the number of months, not years, that a student received education outside of the U.S. Families may be confused by this question and need clarification to capture this accurately. <p>Question 8 (CEDARS Element B32)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This information is also used to identify districts with an influx of recent immigrants for supplemental federal funding.