

English Language Proficiency (ELP) Assessments – Placement Assessments

Overview of ELP Placement Assessments

The WIDA Screener assesses the four language domains and reports proficiency levels for each, along with three composite scores: Oral Language, Literacy, and Overall. It is available in five grade-level clusters and may be administered one-to-one or in multi-grade level groups, except for the Kindergarten Screener, which must be administered individually. For Grades 1-3, the Writing domain is paper based only. Across all grades, Speaking and Writing responses must be scored locally in WIDA Assessment Management System (WIDA AMS).

The administration of the WIDA Screener is described in the WIDA Screener Test Administrator Manual (WIDA Screener TAM), which is the primary resource used to plan for placement assessments. This section provides state-specific guidance to supplement the WIDA Screener TAM.

Timeline of ELP Placement Assessments

Month	Task
July August September	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• July 1: WIDA Screener opens for the new school year.• TAs complete test administration training in the WIDA Secure Portal Training before administering an assessment.• Train office staff on the intake process for potentially eligible students.• Potentially eligible students must be screened within ten days of school attendance to determine eligibility for English Language Development (ELD) services.• Qualifying students must be entered into district Student Information Systems (SIS) and identified as Multilingual Learners (ML).• September: Family Notification Letters sent.
October November December January February March April	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Potentially eligible students must be screened within ten days of school attendance to determine eligibility for ELD services.• Qualifying students must be entered into district Student Information Systems (SIS) and identified as Multilingual Learners (ML).• Family Notification Letters sent for any initially qualified students.
May June	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• May 1: TK screening window opens through the end of the school year.• Order additional kindergarten materials through the WIDA store.• Return all WIDA Paper Screener materials to OSPI.• Continue screening, as needed.• June 30: Screening closes for the school year.



Student Eligibility for Placement Assessment

When a student first enrolls in a Washington school, part of the enrollment process requires identifying a student's primary language using a [Home Language Survey \(HLS\)](#). If the HLS indicates a language other than English on Questions 2 and 3, the student must be administered a placement assessment using the WIDA Screener. The results of the WIDA Screener will determine eligibility for ELD services. State law requires that schools screen potential ML students within ten school days of their first day of school attendance. The placement test cannot be waived or refused.

Placement Assessment Guidance

Student enrollment circumstance can also dictate screening decisions. This includes the domains that are administered and if the screener needs to be administered at all based on student assessment record.

Student Group and Placement Assessment Guidance

Student Group	Requirements
Incoming grade 1-12 students	<p>The type of screener administered is dependent on the student being assessed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>WIDA Online Screener</i>: Grades 1-12.• <i>WIDA Paper Screener</i>: Grades 1-12 requiring accommodations.• <i>WIDA Alternate Screener</i>: Grades K-12 with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and alternate assessment determination.
Transitional Kindergarten (TK) students	<p>The following procedure should be used to screen TK students for potential eligibility.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Home Language Survey</i>: Upon enrollment, require completion and submission of the HLS for all TK students and use the information from Questions 2 and 3 of the HLS to determine possible eligibility.• <i>Provisional Qualification</i>: Based on the HLS information, record all TK students who are possibly eligible based on the HLS as provisionally qualified MLs without a screener score, using their date of enrollment as their Initial Placement Test Date.• <i>Spring ELP Screening</i>: Beginning May 1, all potentially eligible TK students must be given the listening and speaking portions of the WIDA Kindergarten Screener prior to the end of their TK year. This is required to fulfill annual ELP assessment expectations and to determine eligibility for ELD services the following school year upon entering kindergarten. TK students will only take the listening and speaking domains.
Kindergarten students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Enrolled by December 31</i>: Administered the Listening and Speaking domains.• <i>Enrolled on or after January 1</i>: Administered all four language domains of Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening.

Continuing ML students in grades 1-12	If the student previously received ELD services in Washington and did not exit services, no ELP screener is necessary. The student continues to be eligible for ELD services.
Previously exited students returning to Washington from out of state or country	If a student who previously exited from ELD services returns to Washington after having lived outside the United States in a non-English speaking country for twelve or more months, the district can administer the WIDA Screener to determine if there has been a loss of ELP. The student can re-qualify for Transitional Bilingual Instructional Program (TBIP) services based on the new placement test results.
Incoming grades K-12 students previously enrolled or transferring from either another district	Check the Possible Eligible, Not Reported (PENR) report in the Comprehensive Education Data And Research System (CEDARS) application in the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction's (OSPI) Education Data System (EDS) to verify whether the previous HLS indicated a language other than English, even if the family indicates English on the new HLS. The receiving school should try to obtain the most recent ELP assessment data from the sending school. For transfer students in state, no re-screening is necessary. Place appropriately in program.
Incoming grades K-12 students transferring from another state	<p>Check the Possible Eligible, Not Reported (PENR) report in CEDARS to verify whether the previous HLS indicated a language other than English, even if the family indicates English on the new HLS. Washington accepts only WIDA ACCESS scores from other WIDA Consortium member states. WIDA Screener scores and other ELP assessments, including ELPA21, are not accepted. The receiving school should try to obtain the most recent ELP assessment data from the sending school. If ELP assessment results cannot be obtained within the required ten-day window, administer the appropriate WIDA Screener to determine eligibility for ELD services. If the ELP assessment results are obtained from the sending school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Met Exit Criteria:</i> If the student met Washington exit criteria, they are considered proficient and do not need further ELP testing regardless of the date of the assessment. • <i>Did Not Meet Exit Criteria:</i> If the student did not meet Washington's exit criteria, and the results are from the previous 12 months, use the results to identify the student as ML and place them in ELD services without administering a placement test. If the student did not meet Washington's exit criteria, and the results are more than 12 months old, administer the appropriate placement test.

ELP Placement Assessment Refusal

ELP placement assessments are not optional, and in accordance with federal law, refusal of the WIDA Screener is not allowed.

If a family refuses to allow their student to complete the screener, districts can meet with the family to:

- Review the ML Identification Process and review the responses on the HLS.
- Highlight the benefits of the ELD program and inform the family of their right to waive ELD services if their student is identified for services based on the ELP screener.

If the family still refuses to allow screening, document the district's communication with the family and the family's refusal to screen, and attach the documentation to the HLS in the student's cumulative folder. This will serve as evidence should the district be audited or go through Program Review. Districts can complete their local test refusal process, for the screener, but this process will neither waive nor excuse the federal requirement to screen a student for ELD services. A student's civil rights include access to ELD services if they are eligible. Not screening a student could potentially be a violation of their civil rights, so districts should be intentional about their refusal processes and documentation.

Furthermore, the student will remain on the PENR report if a language other than English is reported on questions 2 or 3 on the HLS. There is no way to code this in EDS as a screener refusal is not allowed.

Before ELP Placement Screening

There are a few tasks that must be managed prior to beginning ELP placement screening.

Placement Assessment Materials

While all WIDA Screener materials can be managed by districts, some materials are either provided by OSPI or funded by OSPI. Use the chart below to support planning for screener materials.

ELP Placement Materials

Screener	Materials Description
WIDA Screener Online	WIDA Screener Online is primarily delivered through DRC INSIGHT. Students in grades 1-3 handwrite their responses for the Writing domain.
WIDA Screener Grades 1-3 Writing Booklet	OSPI will send districts a stash of writing booklets for grades 1-3. The stash is intended to offset some of the cost of printing screener materials. However, it is likely that districts will need to print booklets from the WIDA Secure Portal once the stash is exhausted.
WIDA Screener for Kindergarten	WIDA Screener for Kindergarten is an on-demand, paper-based assessment. All materials, except for response booklets and score sheets, are reusable. All test materials can be ordered through the WIDA store or printed locally. Materials can be printed in color or black and white. Districts that choose to print Kindergarten Screener materials cannot be reimbursed for the printing expense. Materials ordered through the WIDA Store will be purchased by OSPI.

	<p>Only district-level staff can order materials for the WIDA Kindergarten Screener using the process below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Districts will place their order directly online through the WIDA Store. • Answer “No” to the tax-exempt question. Select “Purchase Order” as the payment method at checkout and submit the order. • Districts will receive an order confirmation email and must forward the order confirmation email to the OSPI ELP assessment inbox for approval at ELPAssessments@k12.wa.us. <p>The ELP assessment office reviews and approves orders within 24-48 hours and forwards approval to the WIDA Store. The WIDA Store will process the order and send the invoice to OSPI. Districts can expect the materials to arrive within 3-5 business days of OSPI approval of the order confirmation email and forward to the WIDA Store for shipment.</p>
WIDA Screener Paper	<p>WIDA Screener Paper includes some materials that can be downloaded and printed and some that must be ordered/purchased from the WIDA Store. OSPI is also able to mail materials for the WIDA Screener Paper when District Assessment Coordinators (DACs) submit a WIDA Screener Paper Request to OSPI. OSPI will process requests on a weekly basis and send them within a week of receiving the request. Additionally, districts can purchase materials directly from the WIDA Store; however, OSPI is unable to reimburse those purchases.</p>
WIDA Alternate Screener	<p>All materials necessary to administer the WIDA Alternate Screener are available to print on the WIDA Secure Portal. The WIDA Alternate Screener is entirely paper-based and there is no online component.</p>

Placement Assessment Accommodations

All students are expected to test online as appropriate and available. Additionally, there are certain scenarios in which accommodations on the ELP placement screeners are warranted. Use the chart below to support accommodations decisions for ELP placement assessments.

ELP Placement Assessments – Available Accommodations

Student Need	Accommodation
Students with a paper testing accommodation formally documented in their IEP or 504.	Administer the WIDA Screener Paper.
Students with significant cognitive disabilities, who have an active IEP that identifies them for alternate assessments.	Administer the WIDA Alternate Screener.
Blind and Visually Impaired Students	There is no WIDA Screener in Braille. Use one of the following two options to accommodate Blind and Visually Impaired students:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An End Domain Incomplete can be used to exempt inaccessible domains. • The student can be provisionally qualified for ELD services, then later administered the ELP annual assessment. Those results are then used to determine eligibility and provide ELD services.
Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students	<p>There is no WIDA Screener that accommodates Deaf and Hard of Hearing students. Use one of the following two options to accommodate Deaf and Hard of Hearing students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An End Domain Incomplete can be used to exempt inaccessible domains. <p>Use American Sign Language (ASL) to support communication during screening.</p>

Translating Directions For ELP Placement Assessments

For the WIDA Screener assessments, it is permissible to translate directions into a student's native language. These translated directions are locally developed and must be provided by users who have completed the WIDA Secure Portal trainings for screeners. Directions on practice test items may be translated, rephrased, and explained; however, test item prompts and responses must never be translated for a student, as this would impact the validity of the assessment.

End Domain Incomplete Directions for ELP Placement Assessments

All students participating in ELP placement screening must be given an opportunity to test in each domain. This includes students with disabilities who may not be able to access the domains even with accommodations. If the administration of the ELP placement screening is unsuccessful and a student is unable to access the domain, a domain can be concluded through a process called End Domain Incomplete.

This decision is made at the local level and does not require OSPI approval. A score report will still be produced even with an End Domain Incomplete, and this report can be used to determine qualification for ELD services.

To complete this process, Test Administrators (TAs) must follow these directions:

- TAs must respond to at least one scorable item if the student cannot respond, as the writing and speaking domains will need an attempt of a non-practice item prior to ending incomplete.
- In WIDA AMS, select "Test Management" and, under the student's name, select the three vertical dots and choose "End Domain." This will conclude the domain.

During ELP Placement Screening

TAs must actively monitor placement assessments during test administration to maintain test security and manage technical difficulties.

Placement Assessment Test Security

All materials associated with the ELP placement screener must be kept secure. This includes materials sent by OSPI, ordered from WIDA's test vendor, Data Recognition Corporation (DRC), or printed from the WIDA Secure Portal.

Additionally, when the materials are no longer needed, they must be securely destroyed according to district retention policy or returned in the case of paper screener materials. Only students participating in testing may be in the testing location. It is not appropriate to allow a student to complete any portion of a test in a secluded area of the testing room or in a separate room that is not being monitored by the TA.

Electronic devices such as cellphones, smart watches, or Bluetooth headphones that can connect to a personal device are not allowed in the testing room. Unapproved personal devices must be turned off and collected by the TA. If it is discovered that a student has access to an unapproved device while secure test materials are present, the TA must immediately report the incident to the DAC.

Managing Technical Issues During ELP Placement Assessments

There are two types of ELP placement test incidents that require OSPI to resolve: domain regeneration and unlocking scoring. To resolve these issues, the DAC must submit a report in ARMS for OPSI review and processing.

The ARMS report should include the following information:

- Describe the circumstances leading to the request.
- Identify the State Student Identification (SSID) of the student involved.
- Identify the domain(s) to be regenerated or the domain(s) to be unlocked for scoring.

Domain Regeneration

Domain Regeneration occurs when a domain needs to be reset due to an error. This is rare but can occur under certain conditions, typically a misplaced test ticket or a technology issue. To initiate a Domain Regeneration:

- The DAC submits a Test Incident Form in the Assessment Reporting Management System (ARMS) on EDS.
- OSPI reviews and responds within 24-48 hours.
- If approved, OSPI regenerates the domain(s) in WIDA AMS.

Unlock Scoring Request

The Unlock Scoring issue can occur when a technical issue requires unlocked scoring. This is rare and will not be approved unless the issue was a technical one. To initiate an Unlock Scoring request:

- The DAC submits a Test Incident Form in ARMS on EDS.
- OSPI reviews and responds within 24-48 hours.
- If approved, OSPI contacts DRC to unlock the requested domain and includes the DAC in the communication.

After ELP Placement Screening

There are several key tasks to complete once ELP placement assessments are completed. These include determining eligibility and reporting scores, including managing family notification and managing cumulative student files.

Eligibility Criteria for ELP Placement Assessments

Eligibility criteria is based on the established minimum domain score and the minimum overall composite score. A student who does not meet the eligibility criteria is considered proficient upon enrollment and does not enter ELD services. A student who meets the eligibility criteria is formally classified as ML and enters the school's TBIP program.

These cut scores are dependent on the student's grade level during screening. The only exception to the minimum domain score and the minimum overall composite score eligibility criteria is the WIDA Alternate Screener, because it does not provide domain scores.

Qualifying for ELD services includes the following requirements:

- The parents must be notified of TBIP placement within 30 calendar days of the beginning of the school year, or within two weeks if the student enrolls later in the school year.
- The student must be provided with federally-mandated ELD services and instruction and the student must be provided with accessible grade-level content instruction.
- The student must be assessed annually using the appropriate ELP assessment until meeting the specific exit criteria for reclassification. The student must receive ELD services until that exit criteria is met.

Eligibility Criteria for ELP Placement Assessments

Grade Level	Minimum Domain Score	Minimum Composite Score
TK (Beginning May 1) Kindergarten (through December 31)	5 (Listening and Speaking domains only)	5 (Oral Language Proficiency only)

Grade Level	Minimum Domain Score	Minimum Composite Score
Kindergarten (beginning January 1) Grade 1	4 (all domains)	4.5 (Overall Composite Score)
Grades 2-12	4 (all domains)	5 (Overall Composite Score)
WIDA Alternate Screener: Grades K-12	Not Applicable	5 (Overall Composite Score)

Family Notification Requirements

Family notification has a specific role within the ML identification process. While family permission is not required to administer an ELP placement screener except during specific circumstances related to [Title III Services for Native American Students](#), family notification must occur if a student qualifies for ELD services based on ELP placement screening results.

OSPI's Multilingual Learner Education (MLE) program provides the following resources to support family notification:

- [Chapter 1: Identification of Eligible MLs](#): Guidelines for notification and contents of student cumulative files, including the original HLS and score report in English
- [Multilingual Family Communication Templates](#): Family communication templates, including notification letters.

Districts are required to retain the original copy of the WIDA Screener score sheet and file the score sheet in the student's cumulative file. Screener scores are retained as a part of a student's assessment history. District retention schedules determine the retention of other test materials. If districts do choose to retain them, they are considered secure materials and must be stored as such following district policy.

Declining ELD Services

Families have the right to decline services or opt their eligible student into ELD services at any time, in accordance with state law codified in [WAC 392-160-015](#).

Refusal of services by a family must be documented, signed, and retained locally in the student's cumulative file. Districts may use the [Waiver of English Language Development Program](#) form to document a family's refusal of ELD services. While families may decline services, the following conditions must still be met:

- The student must still be assessed annually with the appropriate ELP assessment until meeting the exit criteria.
- Schools must continue to meet annual family notification requirements.
- Schools must continue to meet the ML's academic and language needs.