

## **Identifying and assisting English language learners**

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What are the steps a school should take when an English language learner, or ELL student, enrolls in their school? Who needs to be identified, and if a student is identified as needing ELL services, what is the process a school must use to assess language skills? These are just a few questions this step-by-step document outlines for school personnel seeking to best serve ELL students.

### **STEP 1. How do schools identify ELL students?**

Under federal law, all schools must identify all ELL students and screen eligible students for language assistance. School districts must administer a home language survey to parents and students. The four questions that must be part of the New Enrollment Card can be found at: <http://doe.sd.gov/oats/documents/ELAsrvqns.pdf>

Contact Yutzil Rodriguez at (605) 773-4698 or [Yutzil.Rodriguez@state.sd.us](mailto:Yutzil.Rodriguez@state.sd.us) for more information.

### **STEP 2. When must districts administer the W-APT assessment to students?**

If any questions from the home language survey (via the New Enrollment Card) are answered something “other than English,” districts must give the W-APT (WIDA-ACCESS Placement Test) to the student. At the **beginning** of the school year, identification, screening and parental notification of eligible students must be given **within 30 days of enrollment**. Once the school year is **underway**, the window for identification, screening and parental notification of eligibility is within **two weeks of enrollment**.

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### **STEP 3. Where would a school find the W-APT assessment, and how do we administer it?**

You will find the W-APT at: <http://www.wida.us/states/SD/index.aspx> or <http://www.wida.us/assessment/w-apt/index.aspx>. To gain access to this assessment, you must have a login/password. This information can only be given to district testing coordinators.

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### **STEP 4. What are the identifying criteria using the W-APT?**

- A. W-APT criteria to classify students in **grades 1-12** as ELL is a composite score lower than 5.0.
- B. Identification of ELLs for **Kindergarten W-APT Option #1**. The Kindergarten Listening and Speaking Test is an oral proficiency test intended for students in pre-K through 1st semester of grade 1. (It cannot be given earlier than May prior to entering kindergarten.)

**Criteria for Option 1:**

- ❖ If combined Listening and Speaking raw score is less than 29, the student will be deemed eligible for language assistance services and must be administered the annual ACCESS for ELLs® assessment.

- C. Identification of ELLs for **Kindergarten W-APT Option #2**. The Kindergarten Reading and Writing Tests are **diagnostic tests** intended for students in 2nd semester kindergarten through 1st semester of grade 1.

**Criteria for Option 2:**

- ❖ If combined Listening and Speaking raw score is less than 19, the student will be deemed eligible for language assistance services and must be administered the annual ACCESS for ELLs® assessment
- ❖ If combined Listening and Speaking raw score ranges from 19 to 28, the Reading and Writing portions need to be administered. If the Reading score is lower than an 11 and the Writing score is lower than a 12, the student is classified as ELL and must be administered the annual ACCESS for ELLs® assessment

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**STEP 5. Where is the language status of the student recorded?**

Once a student has been identified as an ELL student, you must go into Infinite Campus and mark the status of this student. The status of a student is located under: Student information> Program Participation>LEP. You must first select the Home Primary Language before you are able to enter LEP information. The Home Primary Language can be found on the student's demographics tab.

Contact Terri Jung at (605) 773-8197 or [terri.jung@state.sd.us](mailto:terri.jung@state.sd.us) for more information.

**STEP 6. If a student is identified and assessed as ELL, do schools need to create a Language Acquisition Plan?**

Yes, once a student has been identified, districts must create a Language Acquisition Plan for a student that is an English language learner. It is important to involve staff members that will be working closely with the student in developing this plan. Sample plans can be found at: <http://doe.sd.gov/oats/documents/ELLAcquPn.pdf>

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**STEP 7. Once a plan has been created, how do we assess a student's progress?**

Students in grades K-12 must be given the ACCESS (Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State) each February, if identified as ELL using the W-APT assessment. This large-scale test addresses the academic English language proficiency standards that help with instructing and evaluating the progress of English language learners.

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**STEP 8. When does a student exit from ELL status?**

In South Dakota, an ELL is considered proficient in English when he/she achieves a composite score of 4.7. The student must attain a score in the Reading domain of at least a 4.5 and a score on writing domain of at least 4.1.

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**STEP 9. Is a yearly evaluation of a student's Language Acquisition Plan required?**

Yes. Schools should update the student's LAP annually or when needed.

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**STEP 10. If schools still have questions about this process, who do we contact?**

For questions related to the W-APT or ACCESS assessments, please contact Yutzil Rodriguez at (605) 773-4698 or [Yutzil.Rodriguez@state.sd.us](mailto:Yutzil.Rodriguez@state.sd.us)

Other ELL questions or concerns can be directed to Shannon Malone at (605) 773-6508 or [Shannon.Malone@state.sd.us](mailto:Shannon.Malone@state.sd.us) or Jan Martin at (60) 773-3246 or [Jan.Martin@state.sd.us](mailto:Jan.Martin@state.sd.us)