

MONTANA

OFFICE OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION ENGLISH LEARNER GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOL DISTRICTS

December 2019

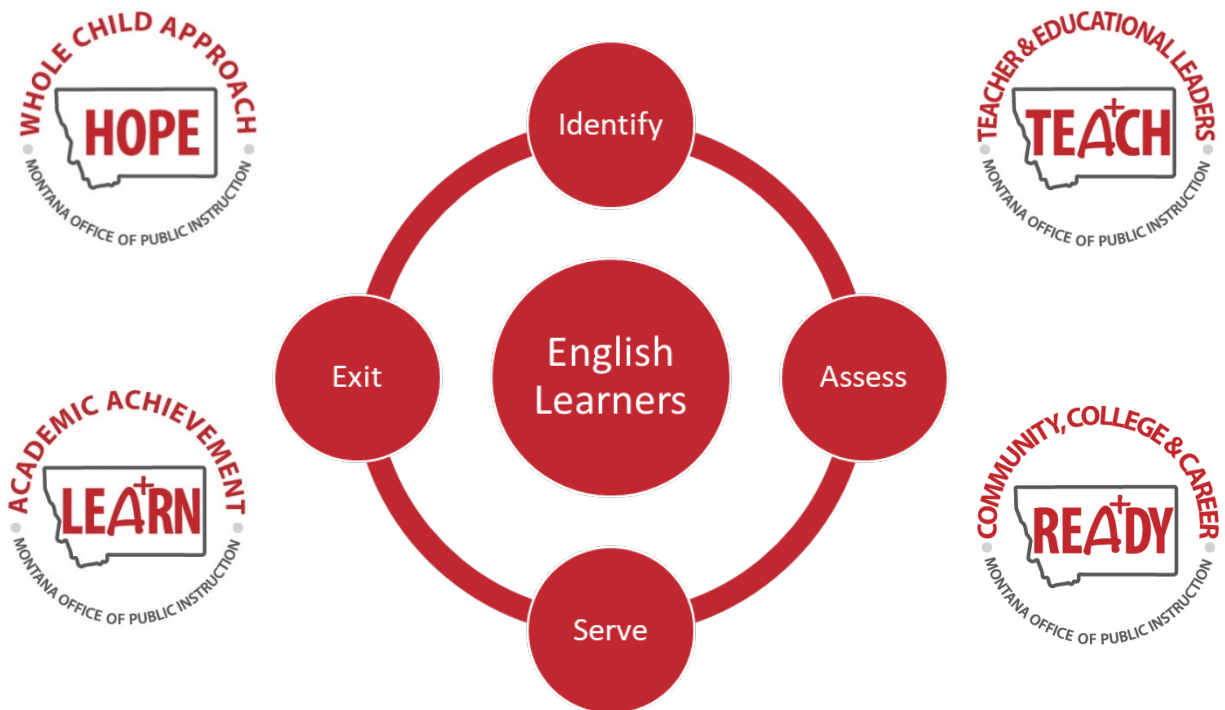


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ACRONYM GLOSSARY

Table 1. List of Common Acronyms, Terms, and Definitions

Acronym	Term	Definition
AIM	Achievement in Montana	The OPI's student information system.
ACCESS for ELLs	Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners	Montana's English Language Proficiency assessment for English Learners that is given annually from Kindergarten through 12th grade.
BICS	Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills	Language skills needed to interact in social situations.
CALLA	Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach	A method that was specifically created for students that spoke and wrote with limited English.
CALP	Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency	The abstract language needed to be successful in all content areas.
EL/ELL	English Learner/English Language Learners	See the federal definition on page 7.
ELD	English Language Development	Standards that guide teachers in instruction that will assist ELs in gaining proficiency in English.
ELP	English Language Proficiency	An assessment required by federal and state law to measure an EL's ability to use the English language for communication and academic work.
ESL	English as a Second Language	The use of English by speakers with different native languages.
ESSA	Every Student Succeeds Act	The US law passed in December 2015 that governs the United States K–12 public education policy. The law replaced No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB).
HLS	Home Language Survey	A questionnaire given to parents/guardians that helps schools and LEAs identify which students are potential ELs.
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act	A four-part piece of American legislation that ensures students with a disability are provided with Free Appropriate Public Education that is tailored to their individual needs.

IEP	Individualized Education Plan	A document that is developed by a team for a student that needs special education services.
LEA	Local Education Authority	Commonly used to describe a school district.
LOC	Language Observation Checklist	A checklist that teachers can use to observe a student's academic ELP.
MSAA	Multi-State Alternative Assessment	Alternative Assessment to Smarter Balanced for students with significant cognitive disabilities.
OCR	Office of Civil Rights	The U.S. Department of Education entity that ensures equal access to education for all students.
OPI	Office of Public Instruction	Montana's state education agency.
PD	Professional Development	Specialized training intended to help educators improve their professional knowledge, competence, and skills.
SwSCD	Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities	Refers to a small number of students who are (1) within one or more of the existing categories of disability under the IDEA (e.g., autism, multiple disabilities, traumatic brain injury, mental retardation); and (2) whose cognitive impairments may prevent them from attaining grade-level achievement standards, even with systematic instruction.
TI	Title I	Federal funding for LEAs with high numbers of disadvantaged students.
TIII	Title III	Federal funding for LEAs to help ensure that ELs attain ELP and meet state academic standards.
WIDA	World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment	The educational consortium that develops and provides proven tools and supports for ELs and educators.

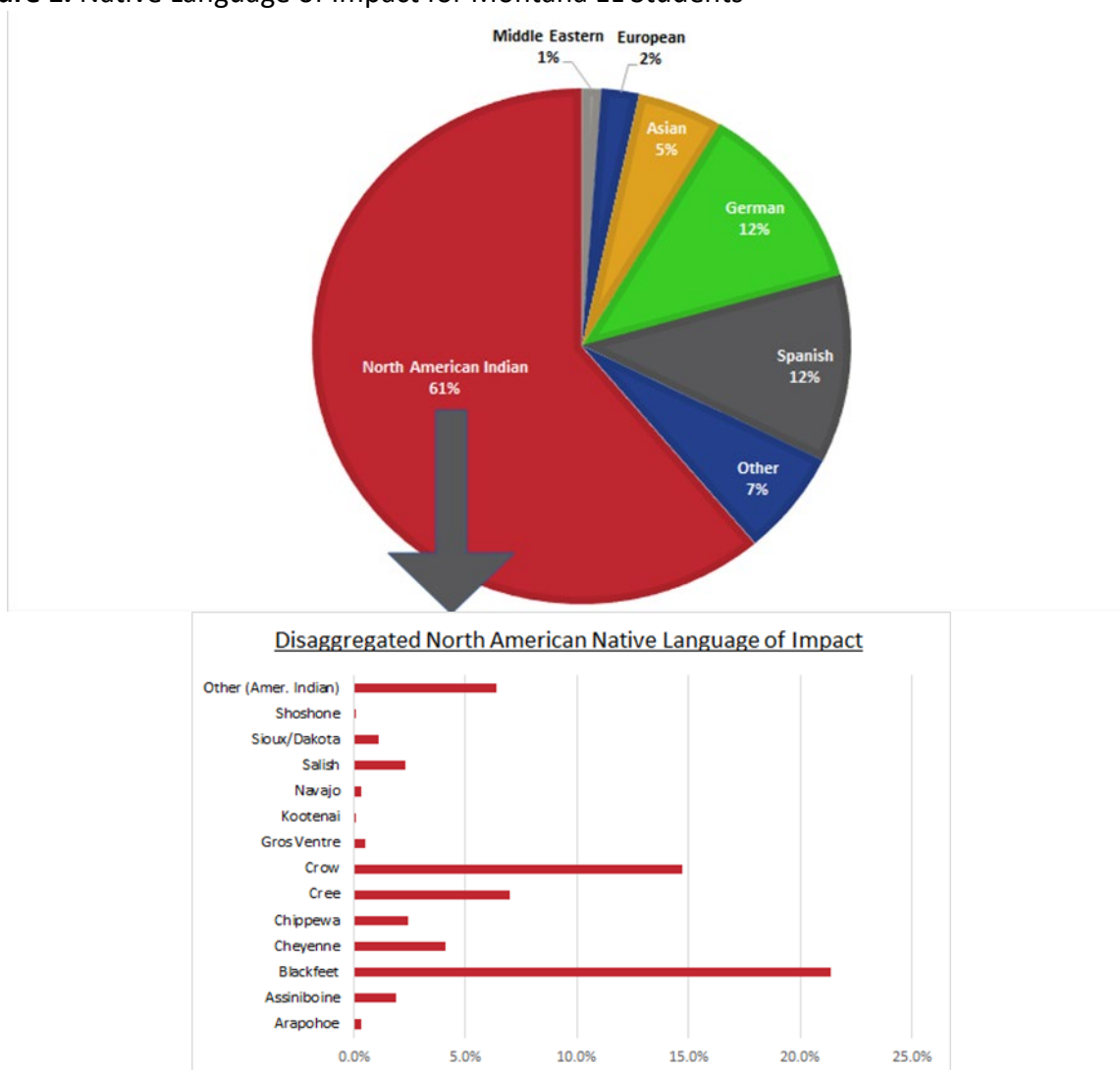
INTRODUCTION

This manual is designed to provide guidance to school districts, teachers and families of English language learning students and to provide policies for serving these students in Montana schools.

English Learner (EL) students are those students whose English proficiency or lack thereof, affects success in academic achievement.

Much of what is recommended here pertains to all children in the school: a positive, whole-school environment that welcomes the student, his or her family and culture, provides appropriate learning experiences, and conveys high expectations that will open the door to quality education.

Figure 1. Native Language of Impact for Montana EL Students



It is difficult to define ELs as a group, other than to say that they are students who currently lack the academic English language proficiency to be successful in school. ELs speak dialects of English as well as languages other than English. They come from every socioeconomic class in American society. They may or may not be literate in their home primary language (the specific language normally used by the student or normally used by the parents of the student) or have received any formal schooling upon enrollment in a Montana district. ELs may be born in the United States or internationally and could be impacted by a language other than English that influences the student's English language development.

ELs in Montana include:

- American Indian children who are impacted by the heritage language of their family and/or community such as Crow or Blackfeet.
- Hutterite children who learn German as their first language.
- American-born children of immigrants who learn their native language in the home from their parents or guardians.
- Children who come to the United States with their parents or alone (as immigrants, as children of international professors and students at the university level, as migrant workers, as international exchange students and as refugees).
- Children who are adopted internationally by American parents.

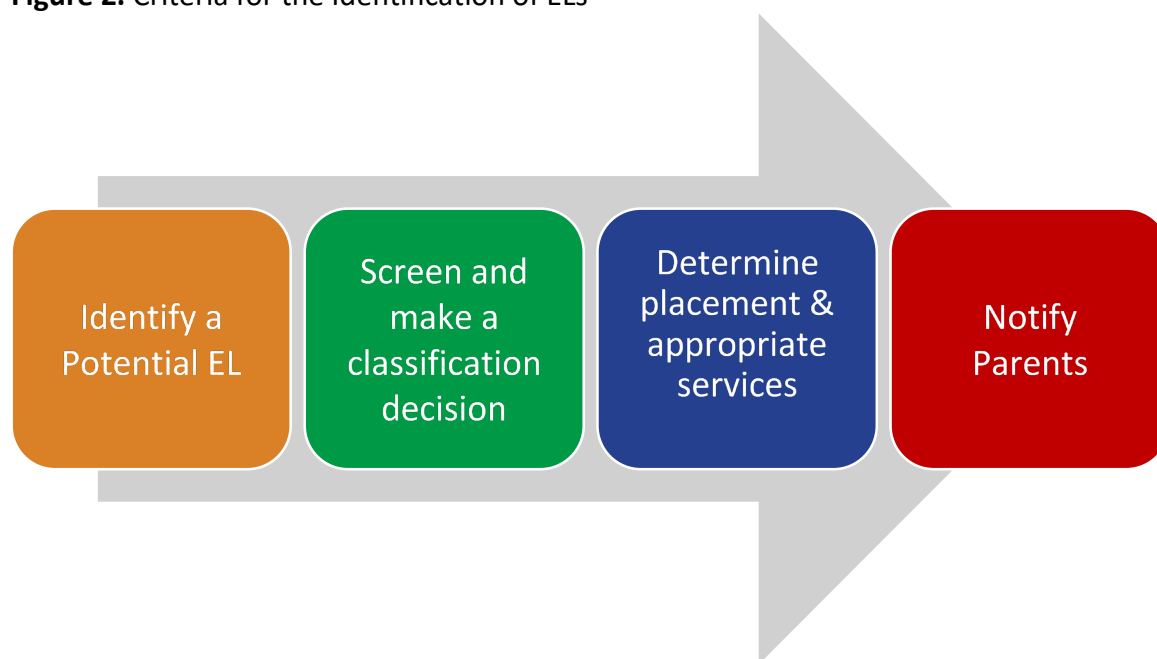
Montana observes the following federal definition of English learner: the term "English learner," when used with respect to an individual, means an individual –

- (A) who is aged 3 through 21
- (B) who is enrolled or preparing to enroll in an elementary or secondary school; AND
- (C) (i) who was not born in the United States or whose native language is a language other than English; or
 - (ii) who is a Native American or Alaska Native, or a native of the outlying areas; and who comes from an environment where a language other than English has had a significant impact on the individual's level of English language proficiency; or
 - (iii) who is migratory, whose native language is a language other than English, and who comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant AND
- (D) Whose difficulties in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language may be sufficient to deny the individual
 - (i) the ability to meet the challenging State academic standards
 - (ii) the ability to successfully achieve in classrooms where the language of instruction is English; or
 - (iii) the opportunity to participate fully in society.¹ (ESEA Section 8101(20))

¹ International exchange students, for the purposes of ESSA accountability, are not identified as limited English proficient in AIM, but still may need language accommodations.

CRITERIA FOR IDENTIFICATION OF ENGLISH LEARNERS

Figure 2. Criteria for the Identification of ELs



These guidelines are the result of discussions with representatives of school districts in Montana with significant populations of ELs. School districts need to have a process for identifying ELs in their schools that is clearly understood by all administrative, instructional and counseling staff. As of spring 2001, statewide assessment results must be disaggregated on the basis of limited English proficiency and other categories. Both for this purpose and in order to provide appropriate accommodations, consistent and proper identification of ELs is essential.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Under federal law, all districts are required to identify students who are eligible for language assistance, provide a sound program of instruction, assess their English proficiency annually, and notify parents of their placements and progress.

The federal authority requiring districts to address the needs of English Language Learners comes from Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which prohibits discrimination based on race, color, or national origin. In *Lau v. Nichols* (1974), the U.S. Supreme Court affirmed the Department of Education memorandum of May 25, 1970, which directed school districts to take steps to help limited-English proficient students overcome language barriers and to ensure that they can participate meaningfully in the district's educational programs. (Office for Civil Rights, 2005)

Figure 3. Non-Negotiables for School Districts



The Office for Civil Rights designates that the following procedures should be used by school districts to ensure that their programs are serving ELs effectively (U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, 2000). **Districts should:**

- identify students who need assistance
- develop a program which, in the view of experts in the field, has a reasonable chance for success
- ensure that necessary staff, curricular materials, and facilities are in place and used properly
- develop appropriate evaluation standards, including program exit criteria, for measuring the progress of students
- assess the success of the program and modify it where needed

Additionally, federal law affords children a legal right to education regardless of their immigration status. Eligibility for school enrollment in Montana is based on residency in the district, not national origin. Children who do not speak English cannot be required to present documents that are not required by any other student in the course of enrolling in school. As schools are not agents of immigration, it is not incumbent upon them to determine a student's immigration status. For further information, please refer to the following [Memoranda on Schools' Obligations toward National Origin Minority Students who are Limited English Proficient](#).

ESSA CONNECTION

ELP accountability for ELs has been moved from Title III to Title I. Title I requires LEAs to conduct outreach including regular meetings for parents of ELs.

Consistent with the Office for Civil Rights, students are entitled to:

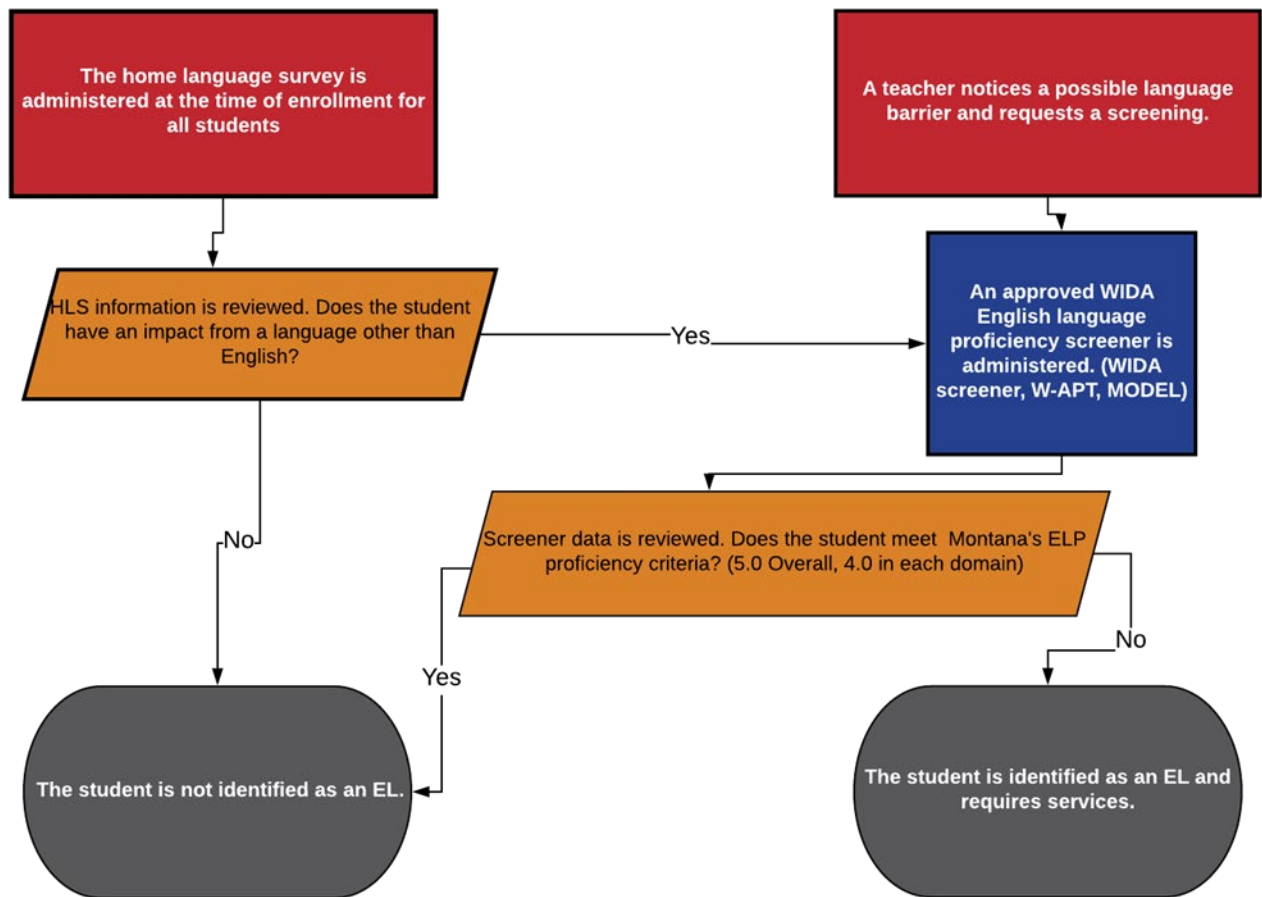
- be placed in a classroom appropriate to their age and grade level
- receive English language instruction regardless of the number of ELs in the school and for as long as it is needed
- be given tests, free of cultural bias, and to be tested in their primary language, if possible, for assessment purposes or special education evaluation
- be placed in special education classrooms only if there is a disability and not because of English language proficiency
- attend regular classes in art, music, and physical education as well as extracurricular activities, vocational training, and gifted and talented programs

- full participation in mainstream classrooms when the student is proficient in English

IDENTIFICATION

Under federal law, all districts are required to identify students who are eligible for language assistance.

Figure 4. HLS Identification Process



PRE-SCREENING

The first step in the identification process is to gather data on languages spoken at home, for all students, at the time of enrollment. This data is gathered using Montana's approved Home Language Survey (HLS) ([Appendix A](#)).

If the HLS² indicates that a language other than English is spoken in the home, to or by, the student, the student must be screened for possible identification as an English learner using one of the approved WIDA screeners. If the HLS indicates that only English is spoken in the home, but the teacher has an indication that the student's academic language development may have been impacted by another language, it is recommended that the teacher look at the student's overall academic performance and administer a Language Observation Checklist (See [Appendix B](#)). If the Language Observation Checklist indicates that a student is not proficient, compared to English-speaking students of the same age or grade level, in reading, writing, or oral language, then the student should be referred for formal identification assessment using the approved WIDA screeners.

In communities where there is a language of impact (the language other than English that influences the student's English language development) community-wide, care should be taken to assess the English language proficiency (foundational skills in reading and writing, listening, and speaking) of Kindergarten students upon enrollment in school.

PRE-SCREENING STUDENTS WITH SIGNIFICANT COGNITIVE DISABILITIES

Special care should be taken in the screening of students with significant cognitive disabilities who are potential ELs. English learners with significant cognitive disabilities are individuals who have one or more disabilities that significantly impact their intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior as documented on an Individual Education Plan (IEP) and are progressing toward English language proficiency in speaking, reading, writing, and understanding. Educators who are responsible for identification of ELs should work closely with the special education teachers of these students. It is recommended that in addition to the HLS, the special education teacher of the student gather additional information about the student's communication skills in the first language to aid in the identification process. The OPI is available to assist districts in creating an individualized EL identification process for students who may be difficult to screen with the standard screening tools because of communication issues.

ADMINISTERING THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY (ELP) SCREENER

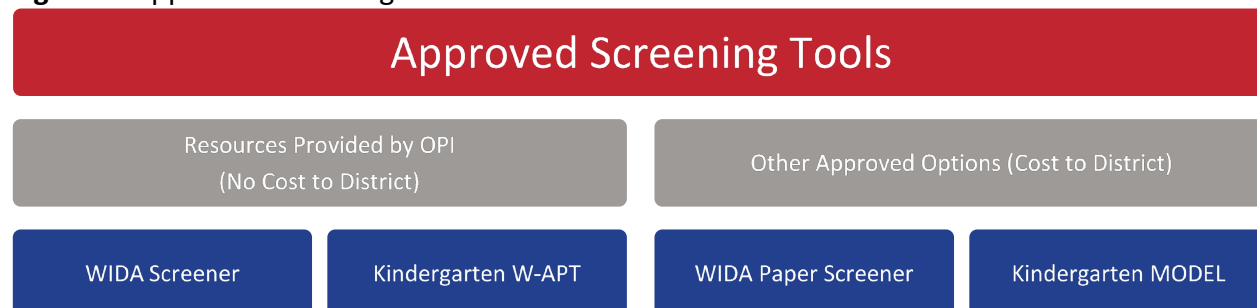
All potential English learners must be screened for placement using an ELP assessment so that identification decisions can be based on objective criteria. The WIDA screeners are available to all districts at no cost. The table below outlines the EL screening tools that are available in Montana. A WIDA screener is required to identify English

In order to be considered proficient in English, students must, at a minimum, attain a proficiency level of 4.0 in each individual domain (speaking, listening, reading, and writing) along with a minimum proficiency level of 5.0 on the overall composite score on the WIDA assessments.

² Keep in mind that having another language spoken in the home is not an automatic identification of a student as an EL. (see Appendix A).

learners because of the test’s alignment with the WIDA English Language Development Standards, WIDA Proficiency Level Definitions, and Montana’s English language proficiency criteria.

Figure 5. Approved Screening Tools



Students who fall below the minimum scores as defined by Montana's definition of proficiency are eligible for EL services. Table 2 details Montana’s proficiency criteria. The Kindergarten W-APT results in a raw score rather than proficiency level scores. In the first semester of Kindergarten the reading and writing domains are not administered because students at this level have not had sufficient instruction in those areas to use reading and writing domain scores to make EL identification decisions. Criteria for 2nd semester Kindergarten and 1st semester are provided as well. Students in the 1st semester of 1st grade are administered the Kindergarten W-APT. This assessment is more appropriate for 1st semester 1st grade ELs because they have not had sufficient instruction in 1st grade content at the beginning of the year.

Table 2. Montana’s Proficiency Criteria

Kindergarten First Semester	Kindergarten 2 nd Semester
Test Name: Kindergarten W-APT Domains Administered: Speaking and Listening Proficiency Criteria: 29 or higher (total raw score of the 2 domains) is considered proficient (K W-APT); 5.0 on Speaking and Listening (K MODEL)	Test Name: Kindergarten W-APT, Kindergarten MODEL Domains Administered: Speaking, Listening, Reading, Writing Proficiency Criteria: 29 or higher (total raw score of the listening and speaking domains) Reading domain 14 or higher Writing domain 17 or higher For K MODEL, 5.0 on Speaking and Listening
Grade 1 First Semester	Grade 2-12 Second Semester
Test Name: Kindergarten W-APT, Kindergarten MODEL	Test Administered: WIDA Screener, WIDA MODEL

Domains Administered: Speaking, Listening, Reading, Writing Proficiency Criteria: 29 or higher (total raw score of the listening and speaking domains) Reading domain 14 or higher Writing domain 17 or higher For K MODEL, 5.0 overall composite proficiency level score	Domains Administered: 5.0 proficiency level or higher on the overall composite score Proficiency Criteria: 4.0 proficiency level or higher on each domain (listening, speaking, reading, writing)
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SCREENING TOOLS FOR STUDENTS WITH SIGNIFICANT COGNITIVE DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities:

- Students with mild or moderate disabilities fall under the same criteria as those without disabilities.
- For students with severe cognitive disabilities, the IEP team will consult with an EL specialist to decide on the EL status or program.

ALTERNATE CRITERIA FOR STUDENTS WITH SIGNIFICANT COGNITIVE DISABILITIES

The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) requires that “The state has established goals for the performance of children with disabilities in the state that are consistent, to the maximum extent appropriate, with other goals and standards for children established by the state.” IDEA further requires that all students be included in the state’s accountability systems.

For students, who because of their disability cannot participate in the state’s general assessment, the state education agency (i.e., Montana Office of Public Instruction) is required to construct and implement guidelines for their participation in an alternate test. Montana meets this requirement through the alternate assessments, the results of which will be included in the state accountability system on a yearly basis.

This Eligibility Criteria Worksheet form (Appendix I) is intended to assist IEP teams in determining whether the student should participate in the general or alternate assessments and to address documentation requirements under IDEA. The IEP team must decide which MontCAS assessments (general or alternate) the student will participate in. When completed, this form must be attached to the student’s IEP.

The criteria in the form is as follows:

- Does the student have an active IEP and receive services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)? Do the student’s demonstrated cognitive abilities and adaptive behavior require substantial adjustments to the general curriculum?
- Do the student’s learning objectives and expected outcomes focus on functional application of skills, as illustrated in the student’s IEP’s annual goals and short-term objectives?

- Does the student require direct and extensive instructions to acquire, maintain, generalize and transfer new skills?
- Does the student participate in statewide alternate assessments based on alternate achievement standards?

If you answer “NO” to any of the above questions, the student must participate in the general assessment. If all answers are “YES,” the student is eligible to take the alternate assessment and is considered to be a student with a significant cognitive disability.

The decision to determine a student’s eligibility to participate in an alternate assessment may not be based on:

- Excessive or extended absence
- Disability category
- Social, cultural or economic difference
- The amount of time receiving special education services and/or
- Academic achievement significantly lower than his or her same age peers

Consider the following for an ELs eligibility to take the Alternate ELP test:

- If a special education student is in grades 3–8 or grade 11, or in an ungraded program, and is of the chronological age of a grade 3–8 or grade 11 student, the student’s special education teacher must review the student’s current IEP to ensure that the IEP appropriately documents the student’s participation in the general or alternate assessment.
- In addition, students who are designated as English Learner and also meet the criteria to participate in an alternate assessment are required to participate in ELP test for as long as they are designated as EL in grades K–12. This means that IEP teams need to take extra care to consider statewide assessment participation for students who meet the criteria in all grades and document participation in the Alternate ACCESS for ELLs in the IEP.
- If the student’s IEP does not include all the required assessment documentation for the alternates and/or it is felt that the student may participate in the assessments in a different manner than was previously determined (i.e., instead of an alternate, the student can participate in the general assessment with or without accommodations), the IEP team must reconvene to address how the student will participate. It is permissible to hold this IEP meeting through a teleconference call with IEP team participants.
- Students who are eligible for the MontCAS alternate assessments must participate in all of them and in all content areas offered.

If you have a student who is eligible to take the alternate assessments, mark the Alternate Assessment checkbox under the Statewide Assessments editor in your AIM system. For students who are eligible to take the alternate assessments and are designated as Limited

English Proficient (LEP), please indicate LEP in AIM and also mark the Alternate Assessment checkbox. Questions can be directed to the OPI Assessment Help Desk at 1.844.867.2569 or email at OPIAssessmentHelpDesk@mt.gov.

SUPPORTING IDENTIFICATION DECISIONS WITH ADDITIONAL ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT DATA

In addition to using a WIDA screening tool, districts are encouraged to support the identification of ELs with data from statewide, district, and classroom content assessments which may include.

Writing assessments

- Reading comprehension assessments
- Observation scales
- Oral interview
- Running records
- Developmental reading assessments
- Checklist of reading proficiency carried out in conjunction with district reading program

Students who are identified as English learners must take the annual ELP assessment (ACCESS for ELLs). Students who score at or above Montana's definition of proficiency are not identified as EL and are not required to be assessed further.

ACCESSING WIDA SCREENER TEST MATERIALS

The WIDA screeners are available in paper and online formats. The Kindergarten WIDA ACCESS Placement Test (W–APT) is a paper-based test that is administered on a one to one basis. The WIDA screener for grades 1–12 is available as an online test (using the same platform as the ACCESS for ELLs annual progress monitoring test) and as a paper test. Test forms and administration manuals (PDF files) are available to all WIDA Consortium member states at no additional cost and are reproducible. Please contact your system test coordinator to gain access to screening materials and test administration trainings. Questions about accessing screening materials or the WIDA website can be directed to the OPI Assessment Division.

UPDATING STUDENT EL INFORMATION IN AIM

Once it is determined that a student will be identified as an English learner they must be flagged as EL in AIM. The EL tool is used to determine the students currently identified as EL by a local school district. The OPI uses this data to calculate student participation in state and federal programs and the annual English language proficiency assessment. The [EL Tool Guide](#) provides step by step directions for entering EL program participation in AIM.

SCREENING ENGLISH LEARNERS WITH SIGNIFICANT COGNITIVE DISABILITIES

For students with significant cognitive disabilities (students who would qualify to take an alternate content assessment), districts should contact the Montana Office of Public Instruction. OPI will discuss the individual student needs and recommend appropriate screening strategies.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT EL IDENTIFICATION

(Adapted from the Guidelines for EL Identification, Assessment & Data Reporting, Alaska Department of Education)

Which districts are required to identify ELs?

All districts must identify those students who are EL. Federal laws and regulations require that all students meeting the definition who are not proficient in the English language must be identified and served.

If an EL transfers from a Montana district or other WIDA consortium state school district, the student's EL status, ACCESS for ELLs assessment results and other records related to his/her EL status follows the student to the new district.

When must an EL be identified?

An EL must be identified as soon as possible, preferably before the start of the school year, but no later than 30 days after the start of the year. A student who enrolls after the start of the school year should be identified within 30 days of enrollment. If an EL transfers from another district, EL records must transfer from the former district with the student. The student does not need to be re-identified by the new district. Students may not be placed into a pending identification status; their EL status determination must be made within the required time frames.

How is a student identified as an EL?

Schools should make every effort to find out about the child's background by requesting prior school records and talking with the parents and student, which may require an interpreter. It is important to find out if the student is literate in his/her native language and if he/she has attended school prior to registration. Districts must develop a district screening process, identify educators in the district who will be responsible for completing screener test administration training and administer the screener. Districts must identify potential ELs, diagnose them to determine their level of English language proficiency, and formally identify those students as EL who do not meet Montana's definition of proficiency. A student must meet the definition of an EL (Appendix C) in order to be identified as an EL.

**→ Once a student has been identified as EL,
update AIM with the student's current status. ←**

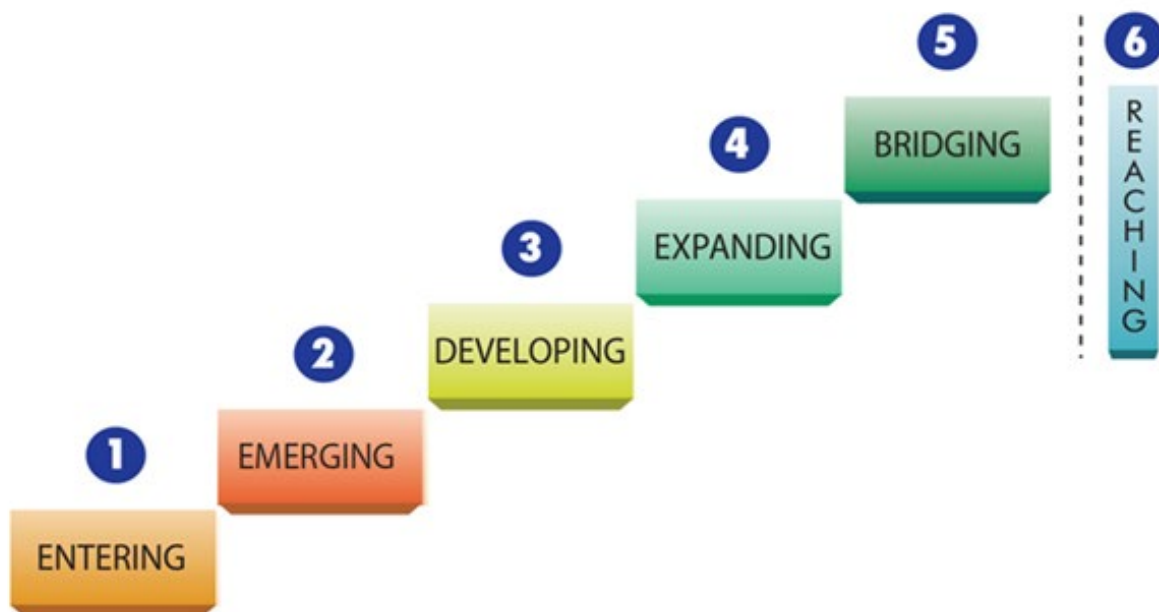
What will the WIDA screeners tell me about the student?

The results of the WIDA screeners will indicate the level of the student's proficiency in each domain (listening, speaking, reading and writing) and will guide the appropriate program placement and level of service needed. These scores also serve as a starting point for differentiation and scaffolding in content instruction.

What are the English Language Proficiency levels?

The WIDA standards and assessments include six proficiency levels. EL status is restricted to levels 1–5. According to WIDA, a student reaching level 6 shows no language characteristics that would distinguish him or her as needing special English language services. Such a student would be capable enough in all language domains: speaking, listening, writing and reading, to be able to benefit fully from mainstream classroom instruction. (See Appendix D for WIDA's Performance Definitions describing what students can do at each proficiency level. They can also be found at the [WIDA Montana State](https://www.wida-state.com/About-WIDA/Performance-Definitions) page.

Figure 6. Levels of English Language Proficiency



PROGRAM AND PLACEMENT OPTIONS

Under federal law, school districts must provide a program of instruction to English Language Learners in their schools.

"Where inability to speak and understand the English language excludes national origin-minority group children from effective participation in the educational program offered by a school district, the district must take affirmative steps to rectify the language deficiency in order to open its instructional program to these students."

From the Office of Civil Rights May 25, 1970 Memorandum

<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/ellresources.html>

School districts must provide an instructional program which will support the second language development necessary for language minority students to participate in learning (Equal Opportunity Act, 1974). Providing students who are not proficient in English the same instructional program as English-speaking students is not allowing them equal educational opportunity. Children should be placed in regular classrooms with students of their own age.

Judging students' language proficiency solely on their oral and social language can be problematic when they are not able to meet the academic language and literacy demands of mainstream classrooms. Cummins (1979) defines Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS) as the conversational ability that language learners develop in 1-3 years where contextual and non-verbal signals play important roles in comprehension. BICS can be thought of as "playground English." Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP), on the other hand, is "a complex network of language and cognitive skills and knowledge required across all content areas for eventual successful academic performance at secondary and university levels of instruction" (Cummins, 1979).

Although students may be able to communicate socially and therefore, may give the impression of fluency to teachers and administrators, the development of academic language proficiency is a process that takes anywhere from 5–7 years depending on the support provided and individual student characteristics.

Academic language is often complex and nuanced and includes the technical vocabulary and language structures of the content areas such as "osmosis" in science or the language needed to compare and contrast in English Language Arts. English language proficiency includes: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. (See Appendix D further description of Language Proficiency and the Stages of Second Language Acquisition)

While hiring a full-time ESL teacher or offering a dual language immersion program may not be feasible in many Montana districts, school districts are responsible for providing language development services to ELs. In cases where there is one student, or the numbers are small, the program of instruction may not be provided by a full-time ESL instructor, but rather designed and provided by the mainstream and support instructional staff. The Mid-Continent Regional Educational Laboratory published "[English Language Learner Resource Guide: A Guide for Rural Districts with a Low Incidence of ELs](#)" in 2004, which suggests building leadership capacity, building instructional staff capacity, and building capacity for parent and family involvement. The Office of Public Instruction offers the following programmatic recommendations and considerations for rural districts with low incidence EL populations as well:

*"There is no equality of treatment merely by providing students with the same facilities, textbooks, teachers, and curriculum; for students who do not understand English are effectively foreclosed from any meaningful education."
Lau v. Nichols (1974)*

- Design professional development to build the capacity of all teaching staff who will work with ELs.
- Provide support through additional staff and appropriate materials for the most language-rich content areas posing the most difficulties for Level 1–3 students (English Language Arts or Social Studies).
- Provide targeted and appropriate professional development for instructional staff, e.g. Title I teachers, reading specialists and other teachers to provide academic language instruction to ELs.

Whether your district decides to implement a professional development program for all teachers who work with English Language Learning students or if you adopt one of the more formalized programs (described later in this section, it is essential to remember that the basic program of instruction for ELL students is the responsibility of the district. Supplemental services can be provided by Title I and Title III federal programs. See [Appendix H](#) for a sample Personalized Educational Plan for ELs.

PROGRAM PLACEMENT AND OPTIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH SIGNIFICANT COGNITIVE DISABILITIES

It is not enough to assume that an EL student with a significant cognitive disability will have their EL needs served by the special education teacher in a program of instruction that meets their needs as a student with a disability. Just like any EL, our students with the most involved needs must have a specific program of instruction to address their English language learner needs. This is separate and distinct from their other services. It is, however, a best practice to consider and include English language learner objectives in the IEP. In districts where an EL specialist is available the EL specialist should be included in the IEP team to provide guidance

and expertise in establishing EL goals, planning a program of instruction, and implementing that instruction when appropriate.

STEPS TO ADAPT A LESSON PLAN FOR AN ALTERNATE STANDARDS BASED LESSON PLAN.

1. Identify the academic language in the lesson.
2. Create language objectives that are grounded in the content objectives.
3. Identify how you will assess language objectives and how you will differentiate the assessments for different levels of SwSCDs.
4. Identify supports that address the language needs of your ELs that will allow them to participate in the lesson.

LANGUAGE ACQUISITION & BEST PRACTICES FOR TEACHING ELS

Acquiring another language is a natural process that best occurs in an environment free of anxiety where the focus is on communication. Below are some best practices to assist ELLs with language acquisition (See Appendix E and F for further Suggested Interventions, Accommodations and Teaching Strategies for ELs):

Expose students to a rich and varied academic language

- As much as possible, include linguistically-diverse students in all classroom activities.
- Provide sensory (visuals, realia, etc.), graphic (timelines, graphic organizers), and interactive (pairs, groups, multimedia) supports in every lesson.
- At all language proficiency levels, develop content knowledge alongside language abilities.
- Modify and adapt assignments, paraphrase textbook passages, and include supplementary materials where needed to make content accessible.
- Model classroom and lesson expectations, and provide clear instructions.
- In all subject areas, teach hands-on, activity-oriented, and visual thematic units to facilitate learning, particularly through small group or cooperative learning.
- Pair language-minority students with English-speaking students as class companions, bus, playground and/or cafeteria helpers.
- In all classes, use pictures, realia, movement, and gestures. At the elementary level, songs, rhymes, children's literature, including wordless books and ones that have high correspondence to the pictures, are helpful.
- Particularly if a student is literate, provide for them every encouragement to continue to speak, read, and write in the native language.
- In essence, differentiated instruction for ELLs, as for other students with particular learning needs, reflects best practice.

Art, music and physical education classes provide concrete, experiential instruction and interaction with English-speaking students that greatly benefit the language-minority student and are often good classes for initial inclusion.

As these students should have access to the curriculum, they also should have access to counseling, extracurricular activities, and supplemental programs such as Title I and Title III, gifted education, etc. Advocacy for these students by the administration is critical in ensuring this.

Teachers and tutors who work with ELs can receive technical assistance from the Office of Public Instruction in ways of serving these students in the regular classroom and in support programs. The support of an interpreter during the first few days of school to assist with pertinent information, such as scheduling, lunch routine, etc. may be appropriate. It is not necessary and may not be desirable to have an interpreter at the student's side all day.

Research shows that students who have a strong background in language and literacy in their first language acquire academic language proficiency in a second language more easily than students without academic language or literacy skills in their first language. For this reason, ELL students benefit from opportunities to learn academic content in their native language as well. As part of the

The process of learning a second language is enhanced by continued development of language skills in the first language.

school's overall effort to promote cultural pluralism and confidence in the student's ability to learn, the student's knowledge of another language and culture should be honored. In keeping with this premise, the school should not make recommendations to the student's parents, families, or guardians to use only English with her/him in the home setting, as the use of the native language at home does not debilitate the student's ability to learn English and efforts by parents or guardians who are not themselves proficient in English may diminish the quality of family communication and interactions.

Table 3. A Brief Description of Language Proficiency (based on the work of Jim Cummins) (California State Department of Education Office of Bilingual Bicultural Education 1991, 251)

<p>BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills)</p> <p>Social language (BICS) takes approximately 1-3 years to develop.</p> <p>Students develop BICS by observing non-verbal behavior, reactions, and contextual clues which are present in conversation (gestures, facial expressions, pictures, etc.) They acquire language in a development process that generates increasingly more complex structure.</p> <p>Students with BICS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use English phrases and some colloquial language chunks (Hey, how's it going?) • Carry on intelligible conversations about using high frequency words and topics (e.g., TV, classroom activities, friends, family) • Struggle to perform well on standardized tests of academic skills such as MontCas. • Pass simple, "BICS-oriented" language proficiency tests
--

CALP (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency)
Classroom Language
CALP takes between 5-7 years to develop

Students develop CALP with explicit instruction of the academic language of schooling (technical vocabulary, language structures, and discourse patterns specific to academic content areas).

Students with CALP

- Are able to perform well on standardized tests of academic skills such as the MontCAS Smarter Balanced Assessment
- Are able to succeed in context-reduced, cognitively demanding classroom activities involving writing, reading, spelling, test-taking.
- Communicate orally and in writing with English proficient peers.

COMMONLY-USED LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION PROGRAMS

The Office for Civil Rights does not mandate any particular program of instruction for ELs, just that the program be based on sound educational theory³. In districts with few ELs, at a minimum, school teachers and administrators must provide necessary alternative language services to students in need of such services and seek any assistance necessary to comply with this requirement. Districts with little experience serving the needs of ELs are encouraged to take advantage of professional development. Schools with a relatively large number of ELs would be expected to have in place a more formal program. The following are some language acquisition programs that may be considered:

³ Detailed information on creating and evaluating programs for ELLs is available at on the OCR website here: <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/ell/developing.html>.

Figure 7. Types of Common Language Instruction Programs

Sheltered English, Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE), Content-based English as a Second Language (ESL), Sheltered Instruction Observational Protocol (SIOP)

The goal is proficiency in English while learning content in an all-English setting

- Students from various linguistic and cultural backgrounds can be in the same class as well as native English-speaking students
- Instruction is adapted to students' proficiency level and supplemented by scaffolding

Structured English Immersion (SEI)

The goal is fluency in English, with only EL students in the class

- English is the main content area with academic content playing a supporting, but not subordinate role
- Teachers use sheltered instructional techniques

Language Development (ELD or ESL Pull-out)

The goal is fluency in English

- Students leave their mainstream classroom to spend part of the day receiving EL instruction, often focused on grammar, vocabulary, and communication skills, not academic content
- There is typically no support for students' native languages

ESL Push-in

The goal is fluency in English

- Students are served in a mainstream classroom, receiving instruction in English with some native language support if needed
- The ESL teacher or an instructional aide provides clarification, translation if needed, and uses ESL strategies

Two-way Immersion or Two-way Bilingual

The goal is to develop strong skills and proficiency in both the native language (L1) and English (L2)

- Can include English-speaking students and students from another language background
- Instruction is in both languages, typically starting with a smaller proportion of instruction in English, and gradually moving to half of the instruction in each language

Heritage Language or Indigenous Language Program

The goal is proficiency in two languages.

- Content taught in both languages, with teachers fluent in both languages
- Differences between the two programs: heritage language programs typically target students who are not fluent English speakers or who have weak first language literacy skills; indigenous language programs support native languages in which students may have weak receptive and limited productive skills

For more information on reviewed English language development programs please visit WIDA and review their Protocol for Review of Instructional Materials for ELLs (PRIME) which correlates the WIDA English Language Proficiency (ELP) Standards to instructional materials. [What Works Clearinghouse](#) is another resource to review researched-based instructional materials. To review K-12 instructional materials go to [Prime V2](#).

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT PROVIDING PROGRAM SERVICES

(Adapted from the Office for Civil Rights Questions and Answers on the Rights of Limited English Proficient Students)

What standards are available to guide instruction for ELs?

Montana has adopted the [WIDA English Language Development \(ELD\) Standards](#), whose purpose is to guide teachers in instruction that will assist ELs in gaining proficiency in English. Along with the WIDA ELD Standards, WIDA has developed a set of examples named [CAN DO Descriptors](#) which describe what an EL student can do at each level of proficiency and for each domain of speaking, reading, writing and listening. These Descriptors are commonly used to plan differentiated lessons or observe student progress.

How can I learn more about using ACCESS for ELLs and W-APT data from the results reports to guide program and instructional decisions for the ELLs in my school?

There are several professional development opportunities for Montana's educators and administrators to address utilizing the data from the WIDA assessments to make program and instructional choices. The [WIDA Resource Library](#) on the WIDA website has webinars created for Montana's Educators in the Videos/Webinars section. ACCESS for ELLs Score Interpretation 2015, provides an introduction to the various score reports and their uses. Other recorded webinars include trainings on academic language, WIDA standards, performance definitions, CAN DO descriptors, ACCESS for ELLs, and W-APT. The OPI also provides face to face trainings and online webinars. For more information about professional development opportunities please call/email the Montana OPI Assessment Division.

What if parents do not want their child to have services to address their English needs?

Parents can opt to not have their children enrolled in an ELL program. When a parent declines participation, the district retains a responsibility to ensure that the student has an equal opportunity to have his or her English language and academic needs met. Districts can meet this obligation in a variety of ways (e.g. adequate training to classroom teachers on second language acquisition; monitoring the educational progress of the student, etc.). Please have the parents decline EL services in writing and keep that document in the cumulative folder.

ESSA CONNECTION

Title III of the ESEA, as amended by ESSA, requires LEAs to disaggregate EL data by the number and percentage of ELs with disabilities, in reporting on:

- 1) The number and percentage of ELs making progress towards ELP; and***
- 2) The number and percentage of former ELs meeting State academic standards for 4 years after exit. [ESEA Section 3121(a)] (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2016).***

ACCESSIBILITY

Decisions about supports for ELs for the classroom and for assessments are made on an individual basis. EL teams should consider the student's proficiency skills in English (ACCESS for ELLs and WIDA Screener Scores), the student's native language proficiency, and the student's instructional history. The table below provides an example of a template to gather information about a student that can be used to help determine EL supports for instruction and assessment.

Table 4. Example Data Gathering Tool

Data to be gathered:	Example
Student Name, Overall Performance Level of Student	Name: Justin, PL 3.0
Where was the student born?	Born: in US
What is the primary home language or language of impact?	Home language: English and Blackfoot
What are the student's language skills in the home language/language of impact?	Home Language skills: Justin attended a language immersion preschool and has informal speaking and listening skills in Blackfeet. Justin speaks a combination of English and Blackfeet at home with his parents who are participating in Blackfeet language classes
When was the child first enrolled in US schools?	Enrolled in US schools: in Kindergarten
What is the student's educational background?	Educational background: 2 years in immersions pre-school, enrolled in Kindergarten.
What is the student's background with English?	Lifelong exposure outside of school and in the academic setting the 1.5 years
Screener Scores/ACCESS for ELLs Test Scores: Listening Level: Speaking Level: Reading Level: Writing Level:	WIDA Screener Scores: Listening: Speaking: Reading: Writing:

There are two categories of general supports for English learners, the first are native language supports, the second are English supports. Native language accommodations are those supports that are provided to ELs that involve use of the student's first language. These types of supports are most effective for students whose primary form of communication is the first language. English accommodations are those things that are provided that do not involve use of first language resources or translations. Native language supports are only effective when the student has had instruction in the content that is being assessed or taught in their first language. In most cases the supports that are provided to ELs in the classroom should be the same as those provided for statewide assessments. In some cases, a support that is allowable in the classroom is not appropriate for use on statewide assessments. For instance, a student

would not use a word for word dictionary on the ACCESS for ELLs test because the test is an assessment of a student's English language skills. It is important for educators to become familiar with the accessibility/accommodation manual for each statewide assessment. These manuals provide guidance on allowable supports for ELs and detail the standardized procedures for administering the test with EL supports. Test administrators who will work with EL assessment must receive test administration, test security, and test accessibility training prior to administration of statewide assessments specific to ELs to ensure valid and reliable measurement of our ELs.

PROVIDING ACCOMMODATIONS TO ELS WITH DISABILITIES

Montana has in place procedures to ensure the inclusion of all accredited and public elementary and secondary school students with disabilities in the State's assessment system.

Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the determination of which students are English language learners with disabilities and the type of accommodations they receive should be made by the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) team and, if necessary, a 504 Plan should be developed that includes the student's parents or guardians, teachers, school counselors, and others. Some of these identified students may not be able to take one or more of the four domains (Speaking, Listening, Reading, and Writing) of the ACCESS for ELLs assessment due to their disabilities.

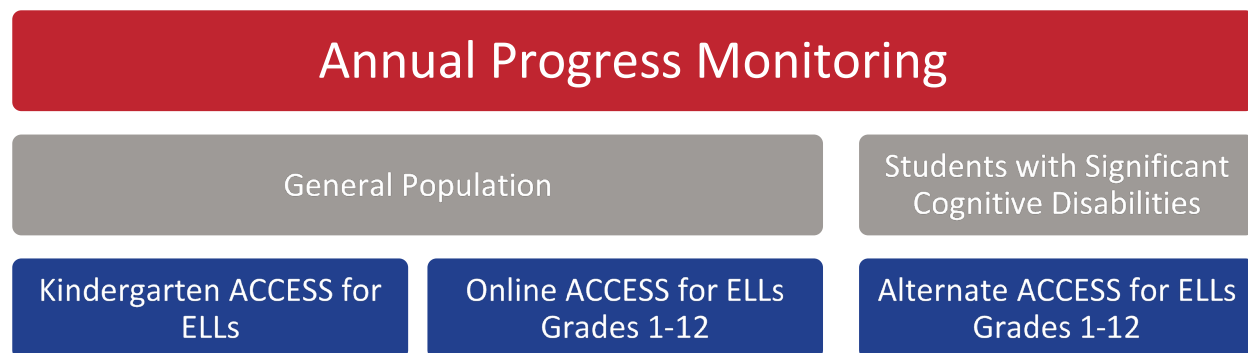
MONTCAS ACCESSIBILITY AND ACCOMMODATIONS

For more information please go to [Guidelines and/or Manuals](#).

ASSESSMENT

Under federal law, all districts are required to assess the English proficiency of English language learners annually.

Figure 8. English Language Proficiency Progress Monitoring



COLLECTION REQUIREMENTS

Districts must enter and maintain accurate data for ELs in the Achievement in Montana Student Information System/Infinite Campus (AIM) database.

The AIM data elements are:

1. Home language
2. Language of impact (the language other than English that influences the student's English language development)
3. EL identification (within 30 days)
4. Date identified as EL
5. Date identified as proficient
6. 2 years of monitoring after exiting EL status

ESSA CONNECTION

Under Title III of the ESEA, as amended by ESSA [Section 3121(a)(5)], LEAs must report on the number and percentage of former ELs meeting state standards for four years. (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2016).

According to the [AIM Data Collections Schedule](#), EL data must be entered into AIM by the October count date in order for students to be registered to participate in the assessment. Students who are identified on the October count date as EL must be tested. Preparation for the online ACCESS assessments can be conducted using the [WIDA Montana State](#) page.

REQUIRED TRAINING FOR TEST ADMINISTRATORS

Test administrators are required to be certified annually to administer the ACCESS for ELLs and the W-APT. Training for district personnel is available online through the [WIDA Secure Portal](#). In order to complete the certification process test administrators must score a minimum of 80% on each of the ACCESS for ELLs training quizzes (Group, Speaking, Kindergarten, and Alternate ACCESS for ELLs) for the assessment components that they will administer. The OPI also provides live webinar and in-person trainings, however, when face-to-face trainings are completed in lieu of the online training, test administrators must still complete the required quizzes online. The WIDA website trainings are password protected. Test administrators can contact their system test coordinator to obtain a personal password. For questions about WIDA accounts please contact the Montana OPI Assessment Division.

ACCESS for ELLs ASSESSMENT

In addition to an initial assessment for identification and program placement, all identified ELs must be assessed annually for English language proficiency in the four domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. This includes all ELs who receive special education services no matter what their disability or level of service. All students, including students with IEPs, identified at the time of statewide testing as Limited English Proficient (EL) must be accounted for when the assessment results are reported to the Department of Education (ED). The Montana statewide assessment for ELs is the ACCESS for ELLs 2.0[®]. The Alternate ACCESS for ELLs[®] is available for ELs who have the most significant cognitive disabilities. The testing

window is six weeks long and runs from early December through January. More information is available on the [WIDA Montana State](#) page.

DATA BASED DECISION MAKING FOR ELS

The speaking portion of the grades 1-12 ACCESS for ELs and all kindergarten domains are rated by test administrators during the test administration. WIDA scores all the other portions.

Printed copies of the following results reports are mailed to schools the first week of April.

These reports include each of the following:

Table 5. Score Report Types and Intended Audiences

ACCESS Score Report	Audience or Stakeholder	Types of information
Parent / Guardian Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students • Parents / Guardians • Teachers • School Teams 	Individual student's Overall Score and levels of English language proficiency for language domains (Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing) and Comprehension
Teacher Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers • Administrators 	Individual student's scale scores and proficiency levels for each language domain, Oral Language, Literacy, Comprehension, and Overall Score; raw scores for Comprehension Tasks, Speaking, and Writing Tasks by English language proficiency standard
Student Roster Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers • Program Coordinators / Directors • Administrators 	Scale scores and proficiency levels for each language domain, Oral Language, Literacy, Comprehension, and the Overall Score by school, grade, student, tier, and grade level cluster
School Frequency Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program Coordinators / Directors • Administrators 	Number of students and percent of total tested for each language domain, Oral Language, Literacy, Comprehension, and Overall Score by proficiency levels for grade levels within a school
District Frequency Report (In Montana, District refers to a School System.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program Coordinators / Directors • Administrators • School Boards 	Number of students and percent of total tested for each language domain, Oral Language, Literacy, Comprehension, and Overall Score by proficiency levels for grade levels within a school system.

It is recommended that a copy of the teacher report be kept in the student's cumulative file. The Parent/Guardian report should be sent home to the student's parent/guardian and can be discussed with the student for goal-setting and progress checks.

Each district's student data file is available on the [WIDA AMS/DRC](#) portal. Districts may also request access to Parent/Guardian report translations. This free service provides districts with the opportunity to produce a student's Parent/Guardian Report in any of the available languages. Contact the DRC Customer Service at 800-747-4868 with district information to request access.

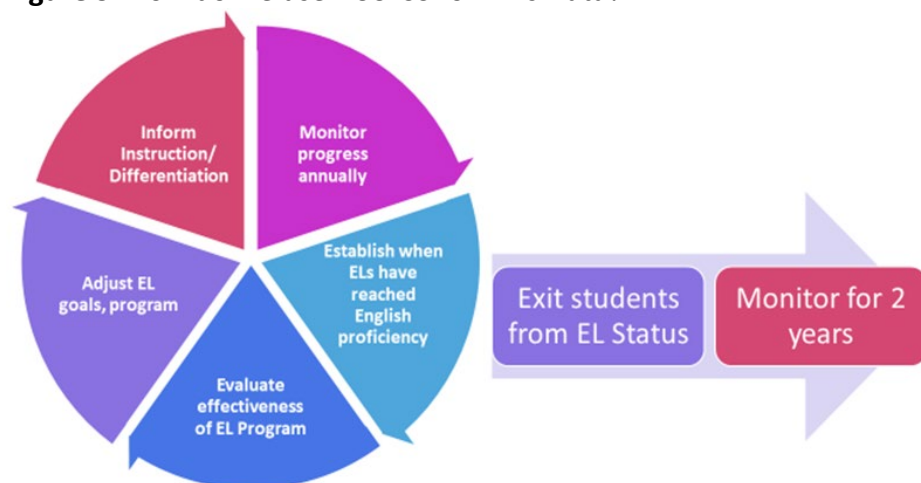
REPORTING INTERPRETIVE GUIDES ACCESS FOR ELLS

The interpretive guides for score reports can be found in [ACCESS for ELLs Interpretive Guide for Score Reports](#).

USING DATA

We use data from the ACCESS for ELLs as a part of a feedback loop. When results reports are delivered, the scores are used to monitor progress by showing how much a student has grown or when the student meets Montana's proficiency criteria and is ready to exit. Districts also use the data to evaluate the effectiveness of the EL program that is in place to serve the needs of their students. Based on the data, a district may continue to use the same program or may need to make a change if a student is not progressing. Districts can also use assessment data to track progress towards the previous year's goals and to set new goals for the next annum. Finally, EL data is used by educators to determine the instructional supports and differentiation in content lessons based on the student proficiency levels in each domain.

Figure 9. How do we use ACCESS for ELLs Data?



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT ASSESSMENT

(Adapted from the Guidelines for EL Identification, Assessment & Data Reporting, Alaska Department of Education)

What other state assessments must an EL take?

All ELs must be tested on the MontCAS academic content assessments in grades 3-8 and 11 for English language arts and mathematics and in grades 4, 8 and 10 for science. ELs in their first

year of attendance at a U.S. school may take the ACCESS for ELLs test in place of the English language arts assessment. The student must still take the math and science tests for their grade level but may do so with accommodations.

What accommodations may be made for ELs?

All students identified as Limited English Proficient must participate in statewide academic content assessments. ELs must be provided reasonable EL accommodations on state academic assessments, to the extent practical. Examples of frequently used accommodations for ELs include read aloud, scheduled extended time, and use of a word-to-word dictionary (no definitions). Students with IEPs are allowed their usual accommodations. State approved accommodations information for testing ELs is available in the [WIDA Accessibility and Accommodations Supplement](#).

What if I think an EL may have a learning disability?

Caution should be used when identifying ELs as learning disabled. ELs are sometimes misidentified as students with disabilities because of their inability to speak and understand English. If national-origin minority students are not proficient in speaking, reading, writing, listening, testing them in English may not demonstrate their ability or achievement skills. Steps must be taken so that ELs are not assigned to special education classes because of their lack of English language proficiency.

What about ELs with diagnosed disabilities?

ELs with disabilities may use appropriate accommodations when taking the ACCESS for ELLs and other statewide assessments or may participate in the Alt-ACCESS for ELLs depending on their IEP. The IEP or 504 team should select appropriate accommodations based on the student's needs and must provide documentation and the rationale for the accommodations on the IEP or 504 Plan. Because of the close link between assessment and instruction, the IEP or 504 Plan must describe how the accommodations for assessment are included in the student's classroom instruction and assessment. Always refer to the test administrator's manual prior to testing; some accommodations may render a test invalid.

PROFICIENCY CRITERIA AND EXIT PROCESS

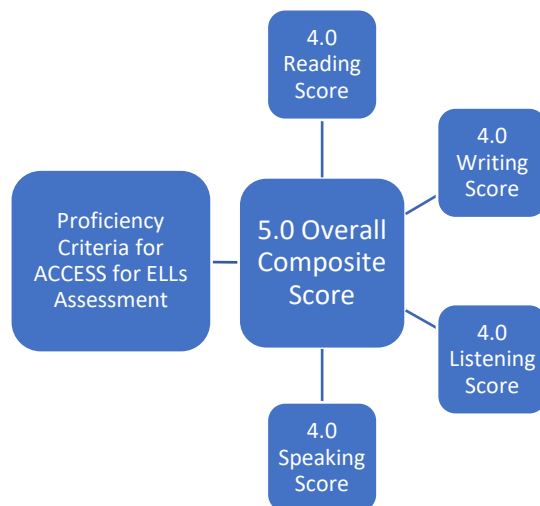
In general, English Language Learners are no longer classified as EL once they have attained the language skills necessary to learn in age and grade appropriate settings in all areas of language development without the use of adapted or modified English materials.

Montana's definition of proficiency is based on input from school and district staff members that serve ELs across the state, a review of practices in other states, and input from psychometricians. Montana observes the following definition of proficiency.

MONTANA'S DEFINITION OF PROFICIENCY

Montana's definition of proficient takes into account the three main criteria of the federal definition of Limited English Proficiency: English Language Proficiency (see Figure 10), academic achievement, and language skills that support full participation in society.

Figure 10. Montana's Criteria for English Language Proficiency



PROFICIENCY CRITERIA FOR EL'S WITH SIGNIFICANT COGNITIVE DISABILITIES

Exit decisions for ELs with significant cognitive disabilities should be made by the IEP team using data from the Alternate ACCESS for ELLs, results from the MSAA test (when available) and input from an EL specialist.

EXIT PROCESS

STEP 1: Has the student achieved English language proficiency according to Montana's definition of Proficiency? Consider English language proficiency data from the ACCESS for ELLs assessment. Data from the ACCESS for ELs English language proficiency assessment are found on the teacher or student roster score reports that are delivered to districts in early spring and are stored in students' cumulative folders as well as on the DRC Secure Portal.

STEP 2: Is the student meeting academic achievement expectations for their grade level? Consider additional measures of reading, writing, and language development. Acceptable sources of data can include:

- The reading Science scores (Did the student score proficient or above?)
- Classroom or school assessments of reading comprehension and writing (Is the student

ESSA CONNECTION

While the ESEA, as amended by ESSA, does not give a definition of a "long-term" English learner," Section 3121(a)(6) mandates a report every two years of the number and percentage of "ELs who have not yet attained English language proficiency within five years." SEAs and LEAs may consider these

meeting grade level expectations in the area of reading comprehension?)

- Input from general education and content teachers

students as long term ELs after this time (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2016, p.38).

STEP 3: Is the student's English proficiency sufficient to ensure full participation in society? Consider evidence of receptive and productive language uses to accomplish social and occupational goals within and beyond school (Linguanti and Cook 2013). Types of data to consider:

- Language impact on social pragmatics
- Impact of language on successful use of interpersonal skills to achieve social and occupational goals.
- Impact of language on behavior

STEP 4: Exit. If the student meets the criteria for proficiency in both English language proficiency, academic achievement, and full participation in society within and beyond school; then they may be exited and re-designated as formerly EL in AIM. Parents should be informed of the decision to exit the student from EL status. The student will continue to be monitored for the following two years after re-designation.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT PROFICIENCY CRITERIA AND EXIT PROCESS

What support should be provided to an EL after he/she is considered proficient?

A student continues to acquire English long after testing proficient on the ACCESS for ELLs. Targeted content area language support may be necessary to support the student's continued success in the mainstream classroom. Performance measures in all content areas should also be considered. In AIM, once a student's Program Exit Date is input, it will show the student as Formerly EL for the two following years while s/he is in monitoring status.

When should exit decisions be made?

Exit decisions should be made within 60 days of receiving the results reports from the ACCESS for ELLs assessments. If it is determined that a student will be re-designated as former EL, the re-designation in AIM must occur by June 30th each year.

Who should make exit decisions?

Ideally, exit decisions are made by a team that may consist of ESL/Bilingual teachers, administration, test coordinators, and the general or content area teachers of the student. Once a student demonstrates proficiency using Montana's exit criteria, they must be exited in the data system (Infinite Campus, Power School, etc.) and then monitored for 2 years to make sure they are continuing to demonstrate English proficiency.

PARENTAL NOTIFICATION

Under federal law, all districts are required to notify parents of the instructional placements of all EL students in their schools.

Parents must be notified within 30 days of the start of the school year that their student has been identified as EL. If a student enrolls after the start of the school year, the notification must be within two weeks after placement in an EL program.

The notification must include:

- (1) the reasons for the identification of their child as an EL and in need of placement in a language instruction educational program;
- (2) the child's level of English proficiency, how such level was assessed, and the status of the child's academic achievement;
- (3) the method of instruction used in the program in which their child is, or will be, participating, and the methods of instruction used in other available programs, including how such programs differ in content, instruction goals, and use of English and a native language in instruction;
- (4) how the program in which their child is, or will be participating will meet the educational strengths and needs of the child;
- (5) how such program will specifically help their child learn English, and meet age appropriate academic achievement standards for grade promotion and graduation;
- (6) the specific exit requirements for such program, the expected rate of transition from such program into classrooms that are not tailored for EL students, and the expected rate of graduation from secondary school for such program if funds under this title are used for students in secondary schools;
- (7) in the case of a child with a disability, how such program meets the objectives of the individualized education program of the child; and

- (8) information pertaining to parental rights that includes written guidance —
- (A) detailing —
 - (i) the right that parents have to have their child immediately removed from such program upon their request; and
 - (ii) the options that parents have to decline to enroll their child in such program or to choose another program or method of instruction, if available; and
 - (B) assisting parents in selecting among various programs and methods of instruction, if more than one program or method is offered by the eligible entity.

ESSA CONNECTION

Title I of the ESEA, as amended by ESSA, now requires LEAs to conduct effective outreach to parents of ELs, including regular meetings. (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2016).

To access free letters and resources please visit transact.com. You can login with your school email, and if you have trouble, please contact their support team at (425) 977-2100 or support@transact.com.

Additionally, the Office for Civil Rights states that “School districts have a responsibility to adequately notify national-origin minority parents of school activities that are called to the attention of other parents. Notification must be sufficient so that parents can make well-informed decisions about the participation of their children in a district's programs and services. Districts may be required to provide notification in the parents' home language.” (<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/eeoEL/index.html>) WIDA provides translations of the Parent Report and a sample parent cover letter in many languages in the [WIDA Resource Library](#).

CONCLUSION

Guidance provided in this document is meant to assist school districts in appropriately identifying and serving English learners within the broad and varied scope of their enrollment in Montana schools. Each district meets the needs of its students in multiple ways, giving careful consideration to the linguistic and cultural resources and experiences they bring to the school community.

OPI CONTACTS

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OPI ASSESSMENT DIVISION
opiassessmenthelpdesk@mt.gov
1-844-867-2569



APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: MONTANA HOME LANGUAGE SURVEY



MT Office of Public Instruction HOME LANGUAGE SURVEY

Student Name: _____ Birth Date: _____ Sex: ☐ Male ☐ Female
Parent/Guardian Name: _____
Address: _____
Home Telephone: _____ Work Telephone: _____
School: _____ Grade: _____ Date: _____

1. Was your child born in the United States? ☐ Yes ☐ No
If yes, in which state? _____
If no, in what other country? _____
2. Has your child attended any school in the United States for any three years during their lifetime? ☐ Yes ☐ No
If yes, please provide school name(s), state, and dates attended:
Name of School _____ State _____ Dates Attended _____
Name of School _____ State _____ Dates Attended _____
Name of School _____ State _____ Dates Attended _____
3. What language is spoken by you and your family most of the time at home? _____
4. If available, in what language would you prefer to receive communication from the school? _____
5. Please check if your child is:
A. ☐ Native American Indian C. ☐ Spanish
B. ☐ German D. ☐ Other _____
6. Is your child's first-learned or home language anything other than English? ☐ Yes ☐ No
If you responded "Yes" to question number 6 above, please answer the following questions:
 7. What language did your child learn when he/she first began to talk? _____
 8. What language does your child most frequently speak at home? _____
 9. What language do you most frequently speak to your child? (Father) _____
(Mother) _____
 10. Please describe the language understood by your child. (Check only one)
A. ☐ Understands only the home language and no English.
B. ☐ Understands mostly the home language and some English.
C. ☐ Understands the home language and English equally.
D. ☐ Understands mostly English and some of the home language.
E. ☐ Understands only English.

Parent or Guardian's Signature

Date

OFFICE USE ONLY			
Student ID #	Date Distributed	Date Received	

00NCLB-B1a (Rev. 01/08 US)

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APPENDIX B: LANGUAGE OBSERVATION CHECKLIST SAMPLE

This form should be completed by the teacher(s) in collaboration with program staff familiar with the student.

Student Name: _____ State Student ID # _____
(Last Name, First Name)

School: _____ Grade: _____ Language: _____
(Home language other than English)

Compared to *Standard English-speaking* students of the same age, does the student consistently exhibit any of the following characteristics when listening, speaking, reading or writing?

CHARACTERISTICS	Oral		Written	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
a. Uses pronouns, genders correctly.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Uses tenses correctly.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Uses singular & plural forms correctly.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Uses prepositions correctly.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Understands teacher directions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Uses appropriate sentence structure.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Uses developmentally appropriate vocabulary.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

READING — PLEASE CHECK ONE:	COMMENTS:
<input type="checkbox"/> Non-reader (not reading) <input type="checkbox"/> Developing reader (reading below grade level) <input type="checkbox"/> Fluent (at or above grade level)	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
WRITING — PLEASE CHECK ONE:	COMMENTS:
<input type="checkbox"/> Non-writer (not writing) <input type="checkbox"/> Developing writer (writing below grade level) <input type="checkbox"/> Fluent (at or above grade level)	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
ORAL — PLEASE CHECK ONE:	COMMENTS:
<input type="checkbox"/> Non-speaker (non-English speaker) <input type="checkbox"/> Developing speaker (speaks below grade level) <input type="checkbox"/> Fluent (at or above grade level)	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

Date (Month/Day/Year)	Printed Name	Signature	Position
	Printed Name	Signature	Position

Adapted from Form #05-08-035b, March 2008, Alaska Department of Education & Early Development

APPENDIX C: CRITERIA FOR IDENTIFICATION OF ENGLISH LEARNERS

Appendix C: CRITERIA FOR IDENTIFICATION OF ENGLISH LEARNERS

 Montana Office of Public Instruction opi.mt.gov Elsie Arntzen, Superintendent	Criteria for Identification of English Learners
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These guidelines are the result of discussions with representatives of school districts in Montana with significant populations of English Learner (EL) students. School districts need to have a process for identifying the EL students in their schools that all instructional and counseling staff understand. Serving EL students is funded with a formula grant administered by the Office of Public Instruction (OPI); districts receive funding based on the numbers of EL students identified in their districts. Additionally, an annual assessment of EL students in the four domains of listening, speaking, reading and writing is required in ESEA Title I. As of spring 2001, statewide assessment results have been disaggregated based on limited English proficiency and other categories. Both for this purpose and in to provide appropriate accommodations, it's important to be clear on criteria for identifying students as EL.

Montana observes the following federal definition of English learner: the term "English learner," when used with respect to an individual, means an individual –

- (A) who is aged 3 through 21
- (B) who is enrolled or preparing to enroll in an elementary or secondary; AND
- (C) (i) who was not born in the United States or whose native language is a language other than English; or
 - (ii) who is a Native American or Alaska Native, or a native of the outlying areas; and who comes from an environment where a language other than English has had a significant impact on the individual's level of English language proficiency; or
 - (iii) who is migratory, whose native language is a language other than English, and who comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant AND
- (D) Whose difficulties in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language may be sufficient to deny the individual
 - (i) the ability to meet the challenging State academic standards
 - (ii) the ability to successfully achieve in classrooms where the language of instruction is English; or
 - (iii) the opportunity to participate fully in society (ESEA Section 8101(20))

It is important to note that the definition addresses both language and academic achievement. While language impact affects entire communities, academic achievement varies from student to student. EL students are those students who are not achieving academically due to the level of their English language proficiency.

The guidelines represent a summary of acceptable practices that districts may use in establishing their processes. The process may vary within districts depending on the level of English proficiency of the students (e.g., a newly-arrived immigrant student or a fourth-grade Native American student).

Given that reading comprehension depends on the language knowledge that a reader brings to the process of reading, which involves much more than decoding (in fact, EL students are often very good at decoding, while not comprehending well), it is useful to look at assessment of reading comprehension. In order to avoid the pitfalls of a one-time assessment, particularly for more proficient students, an on-going check of English proficiency that involves multiple measures, such as comprehension, writing, and reading is appropriate.

Keeping in mind that both language of impact (language other than English) and achievement must be considered. **In accordance with [state](#) and [federal](#) law, a district process must include the following steps:**

FALL	<input type="checkbox"/> The approved Home Language Survey is given to every student at the time of enrollment. <input type="checkbox"/> District Screens potential ELs within 14 days of enrollment using an approved WIDA screener. <input type="checkbox"/> Newly identified students AND transfer students are marked correctly in AIM . <input type="checkbox"/> Parents of newly identified ELs receive an EL designation and placement letter within the first 30 days of enrollment <input type="checkbox"/> ALL EL STUDENTS should be marked in AIM with the primary home language and language of impact by October count date.
WINTER	<input type="checkbox"/> All identified ELs are administered the ACCESS for ELLs during the test window.
SPRING	<input type="checkbox"/> Annual EL review meeting is conducted, and parents are invited . <input type="checkbox"/> ELs are retained or reclassified based on MT proficiency criteria . <input type="checkbox"/> ACCESS for ELLs results reports are sent home to parents.
SUMMER	<input type="checkbox"/> AIM is updated for students who have been exited by June 30 th .
NON-NEGOTIABLES OF IDENTIFICATION	<input type="checkbox"/> Home Language Survey is given to all students who enroll in the district. <input type="checkbox"/> Must screen with a WIDA English language proficiency screener. <input type="checkbox"/> Identification must be based on Montana's proficiency criteria.

The EL identification process should include appropriate measures at varying grade levels (i.e., the process for identifying kindergarten students will be different for those in upper grades). Districts can utilize classroom procedures in place to develop a balanced process that encompasses elements listed above.

Montana's Definition of *Proficient* for EL Students

To determine when EL students become proficient, districts must consider multiple measures which include:

- At a minimum, attaining a proficiency level of 4.0 in each individual domain (listening, reading, speaking, writing) along with a minimum proficiency level of 5.0 on the overall composite score on the ACCESS for ELLs English language proficiency assessment.
- Input from additional measures of reading, writing, or language development available from school assessments.

This guidance is based on input from school district staff members that serve EL students across the state, a review of practices in other states, and input from psychometricians. It is important for districts to review the results of the ACCESS for ELLs assessment and take them into consideration to update AIM to reflect accurate student EL status.

APPENDIX D: WIDA'S PERFORMANCE DEFINITIONS

WIDA Performance Definitions

At the given level of English language proficiency, English language learners will process, understand, produce or use:

6- Reaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> specialized or technical language reflective of the content areas at grade level a variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity in extended oral or written discourse as required by the specified grade level oral or written communication in English comparable to English-proficient peers
5- Bridging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> specialized or technical language of the content areas a variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity in extended oral or written discourse, including stories, essays or reports oral or written language approaching comparability to that of English-proficient peers when presented with grade level material
4- Expanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> specific and some technical language of the content areas a variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity in oral discourse or multiple, related sentences or paragraphs oral or written language with minimal phonological, syntactic or semantic errors that do not impede the overall meaning of the communication when presented with oral or written connected discourse with sensory, graphic or interactive support
3- Developing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> general and some specific language of the content areas expanded sentences in oral interaction or written paragraphs oral or written language with phonological, syntactic or semantic errors that may impede the communication, but retain much of its meaning, when presented with oral or written, narrative or expository descriptions with sensory, graphic, or interactive support
2- Emerging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> general language related to the content areas phrases or short sentences oral or written language with phonological, syntactic, or semantic errors that often impede the meaning of the communication when presented with one- to multiple-step commands, directions, questions, or a series of statements with sensory, graphic or interactive support
1-Entering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> pictorial or graphic representation of the language of the content areas words, phrases or chunks of language when presented with one-step commands, directions, WH-, choice or yes/no questions, or statements with sensory, graphic or interactive support oral language with phonological, syntactic, or semantic errors that often impede meaning when presented with basic oral commands, direct questions, or simple statements with sensory, graphic or interactive support

APPENDIX E: SUGGESTED INTERVENTIONS FOR EL STUDENTS

(Adapted from *Screening, Interventions and Pre-Referral Procedures for Limited English Proficient (LEP) Students*, prepared by Beth Hartley.)

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR ELS	STRATEGIES FOR ELS
<p>Instructional:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternative text • Books on tape • Checks for understanding • Demonstrate learning through multiple modalities • Highlighted texts • Modified texts • More frequent checks for understanding • Oral directions • Paraphrasing • Quiet work area • Reading aloud • Reduced assignment quantity • Restating directions • Scribing / dictation • Simplified directions • Small groups • Partnering • Use of calculator • Use of dictionary • Use of highlighter • Use of manipulatives • Word to word dictionaries • Word/picture book • Picture dictionaries <p>Physical:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extended time • Special seating • Frequent breaks 	<p>For Students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visuals (pictures, charts, graphs, drawings) • Computer based language programs • Audio Presentation of print materials • Journal writing • Graphic organizers • Order of operations and sequence charts • CALLA strategies (see page 30) • Specific skills focus: e.g. highlighting, note-taking, scanning • PQ3R <p>For Teachers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visuals • Modeling • SIOP features (see below) • Small group instruction • Guided reading • Repeated reading • Echo reading • Choral repetition • Activating prior and background knowledge • Games • Cooperative learning structures • Simplifying instruction • Checking for understanding • Identifying learning styles • Direct explicit instruction • TPR (Total Physical Response) • Brain Breaks • Non-verbal response • Webbing, mapping • Mnemonics • Reader's theater

APPENDIX F: SIOP AND CALLA STRATEGIES FOR ELS

SHELTERED INSTRUCTION (SIOP) STRATEGIES	CALLA STRATEGIES (COGNITIVE ACADEMIC LANGUAGE LEARNING APPROACH)
<p>Lesson Preparation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content objectives and Language Objectives • Supplementary materials (sensory, graphic and interactive supports) • Adaptation of content & Meaningful activities <p>Building Background</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concepts linked with background experiences • Links explicitly made b/n past and new learning • Key vocabulary emphasized <p>Comprehensible Input</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speech appropriate • Clear explanation of academic tasks • Use of a variety of techniques <p>Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ample opportunities to use strategies • Consistent use of scaffolding • Varied question types / integration of higher-order thinking skills <p>Interaction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequent opportunities for interaction • Grouping configurations support objectives • <u>Sufficient</u> wait time, opportunities to clarify in L1 <p>Practice Applications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hands-on materials • Activities that apply lang. and content knowledge • Integrate language skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing & culture) <p>Lesson Delivery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content and Language objectives supported • Students actively engaged 90-100% of the time • Pacing appropriate to students' levels <p>Review Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive review of key vocabulary • Comprehensive review of key content concepts • Regularly provide feedback to students • Regular assessment of student comprehension 	<p>Metacognitive Strategies</p> <p>Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advance organizers – Preview / Skim / Gist • Organization planning – plan what to do • Selective attention – listen or read selectively / scan / find specific information • Self-management – plan when, where, and how to study. <p>Monitoring</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring comprehension – think while listening / think while reading • Monitoring production – think while speaking / think while writing <p>Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-assessment – check back / keep a learning log / reflect on what you learned <p>Cognitive Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summarizing – say or write the main idea • Deduction / induction – use a rule / make a rule • Imagery – visualize / <u>make a picture</u> • Auditory recognition – use your mental tape recorder / hear it again • Making inferences – use context clues / guess from context / predict <p>Social / Affective Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questioning for clarification – ask questions • Cooperation – cooperate / work with classmates / peer-coaching • Self-talk – think positive

APPENDIX G: EL PROGRAM PLACEMENT LETTER (PAGE ONE)



MT Office of Public Instruction English Learner Program Placement

☐ Initial Placement ☐ Continuing Placement

English
English Learner Program Placement

Name of Student: _____ Date: _____
(mm/dd/yyyy)

School Location: _____

Dear Parent or Guardian:

Your child has been identified as an English learner. This letter provides information about your child's proficiency in English. Proficiency in a language is a measure of a person's ability to understand and communicate in that language or in a person's preferred mode of communication. The school will provide services that will help your child become proficient in English and do well in school. This letter provides information about how we decided your child is an English learner and other important information. Here is the information included in this letter:

- Your child's level of proficiency in English;
- The level of proficiency needed to be considered proficient;
- An estimate of how long it should take for your child to become proficient in English;
- The method of instruction used in English Learner Services;
- Other English Learner Services that may be available to help your child;
- Information about requesting other services to help your child become proficient in English;
- Information about refusing the English Learner Services we provide;
- If available, information about how your child is generally doing in school;
- Information about the percentage of English learners graduating from high school; and
- If your child has a disability, you will receive information about how services to help your child become proficient in English will help meet educational goals set for your child.

We must give you this information about your child. Education law requires that we send you this information and that we make sure that you understand it. If you need assistance understanding this letter, please contact:

Name: _____ Title: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Do you need an interpreter? Please tell us and we will make sure one is available.

Your child will receive instruction in our school district's English Learner Services that are paid for with money from Title I or Title III of the education law called the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) as amended 2015. Sometimes these services are paid for by both Title I and Title III.

You completed a home language survey and marked that your child speaks a language other than English. Because your child speaks a language other than English, we gave your child an English proficiency test. Based on the results of this test your child is eligible to receive English Learner Services. Placement in the English learner services that best meet your child's needs is based on 1) the results from this test, 2) how well your child is doing in school, and 3) other educational information about your child. The English Learner Services chosen are designed to help your child learn English so that your child will be able to meet academic standards, succeed in school, and graduate from high school. The expected rate of transition out of English learner services is _____ (number of years). The high school graduation rate for students receiving English Learner Services is _____. If your child has a disability and an Individualized Education Program (IEP), improvement in your child's ability to listen, speak, read, and write in English will help meet the goals of the IEP.

APPENDIX H: SAMPLE EDUCATIONAL PLAN FOR ELS (PAGE ONE)

ELP Annual Progress Review Form					
Date of Review:					
Last Name:			First Name:		
SSID:			Birth Date:		
District:			School:		
Grade:		ACCESS for ELLs Tier:		Date ACCESS administered:	
Listening Proficiency:	Speaking Proficiency:	Reading Proficiency	Writing Proficiency	Literacy Prof.	Composite Prof.

Identification Information:					
MT Approved Home Language Survey used? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No					
(Keep in permanent record folder)					
Identified in other district? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No					
Screener Used? YES/NO			<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	
W-APT/OTHER:			<input type="checkbox"/> W-APT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER	
W-APT or other screener score:					
Listening Proficiency:	Speaking Proficiency:	Reading Proficiency	Writing Proficiency	Literacy Proficiency	Composite Prof.
Kindergarten W-APT score					
Listening and Speaking Raw Score		Reading Raw Score		Writing Raw Score	
Oral Proficiency Score:		Reading Skills Description		Writing Skills Description	

APPENDIX I: ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA WORKSHEET

 Montana Office of Public Instruction opi.mt.gov Elsie Arntzen, Superintendent	Eligibility Criteria Worksheet MontCAS Alternate Assessments
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This form is intended to assist IEP teams in determining whether the student should participate in the general or alternate assessments and to address documentation requirements under IDEA. The IEP team must decide which MontCAS assessments (general or alternate) the student will participate in. When completed, this form must be attached to the student's IEP.

Student: _____

District: _____ **Grade/Age:** _____

For each of the statements below, circle YES or NO.

Does the student have an active IEP and receive services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)?	YES	NO
Does the student's demonstrated cognitive abilities and adaptive behavior require substantial adjustments to the general curriculum?	YES	NO
Does the student's learning objectives and expected outcomes focus on functional application of skills, as illustrated in the student's IEP annual goals and short-term objectives?	YES	NO
Does the student require direct and extensive instructions to acquire, maintain, generalize, and transfer new skills?	YES	NO
Does the student participate in statewide alternate assessments based on alternate achievement standards?	YES	NO

If you answer "NO" to **any** of the above questions, the student must participate in the general assessment. If **all** answers are "YES", the student is eligible to take the alternate assessment and is considered to be a student with a significant cognitive disability.

The decision to determine a student's eligibility to participate in an alternate assessment **may not be based on:**

- Excessive or extended absence
- Disability category
- Social, cultural, or economic difference
- The amount of time receiving special education services and/or
- Academic achievement significantly lower than his or her same age peers

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