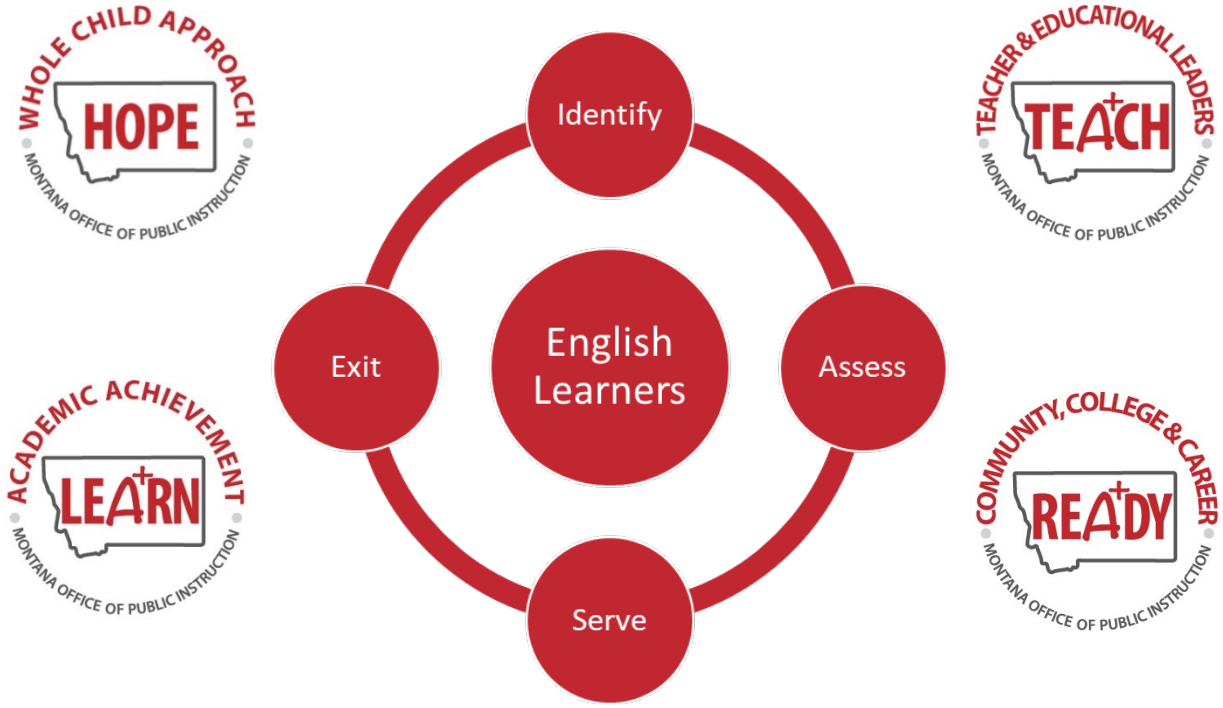
MONTANA

OFFICE OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

2020–2021

ENGLISH LEARNER GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Effective August 1, 2020



The "Montana English Learner Guidance for School Districts" describes the Office of Public Instruction's (OPI) policies and procedures required to serve English Learner (EL) students in the state of Montana. These requirements fall under the authority of both state and federal laws and regulations which are defined further throughout this manual.

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INTRODUCTION

This manual is designed to provide guidance to school districts and to define the state policies for serving English language learning students in Montana's accredited schools. The state Board of Public Education establishes and maintains standards for all public schools in Montana and those private schools seeking accreditation (§20-2-121, MCA).

English Learners (EL) are school-aged children whose English proficiency, or lack thereof, affects their academic excellence and ability to equally participate in academic programs like mathematics, reading/language arts, science, and social studies. 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 purpose of this document is to outline the requirements of determining the identification of ELs and their respective English proficiency. This document further provides guidance to school districts to offer support for ELs in both social and instructional situations so they may succeed in school settings (ARM 10.53.301–311).

The landmark Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 was reauthorized as the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in December 2015. ESSA requires all children have fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging academic content standards. With this vision, emphasis on educational services, assessment, and accountability have been heightened to serve ELs and close achievement gaps under the authority of Title I and Title III[9] (ESEA Section 1111(b)(2)(B)(vii)(III)). A key purpose of Title I under ESSA is to promote educational excellence and equity so that all students master the knowledge and skills by the time they graduate high school. Further requirements for ELs are defined under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI), Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974 (EEOA), Montana Code Annotated (MCA), and Administrative Rules for Montana (ARM). These laws, regulations, and state policies require the OPI and school districts to ensure all students have equal access to education and educators take the appropriate action(s) to help ELs overcome language barriers that impede equal participation in instructional programs[18].

The following state assessments are used to satisfy the state and federal requirements for the annual assessment of the English language proficiency of ELs:

- ACCESS for ELLs 2.0, an online assessment for Grades 1–12;
- Kindergarten ACCESS for ELLs, a paper-based assessment for Kindergarten; and
- Alternate ACCESS for ELLs, a paper-based assessment for ELLs in Grades 1–12 who have significant cognitive disabilities.

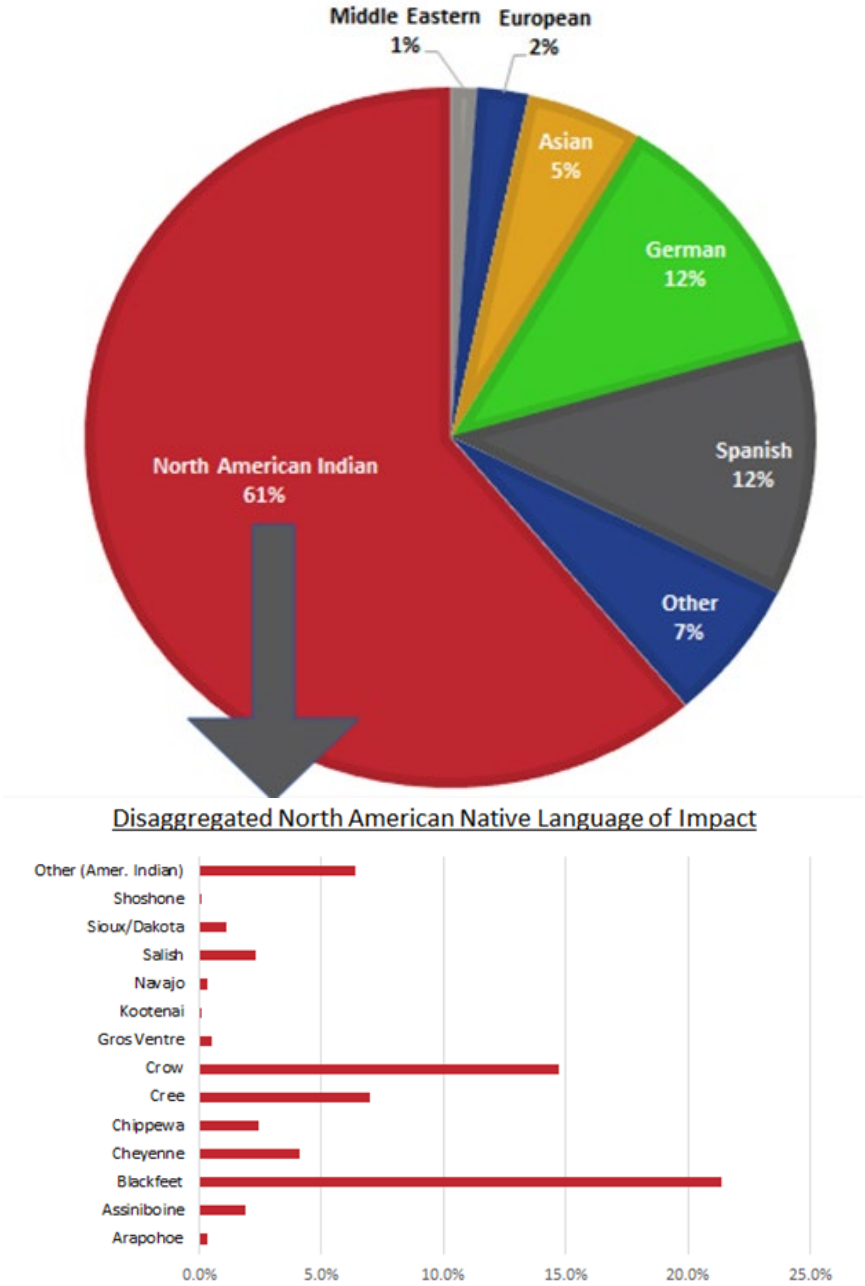
The guidance document paves a path for school districts to create a positive, whole-school environment that welcomes the student, his or her family and culture, provides appropriate learning experiences, and conveys high expectations that will open the door to quality education. School districts are encouraged to use this guidance to understand the state's policies and procedures for identifying and serving ELs. There are also options available for further training and technical assistance to serve ELs.

STATE CONTEXT

Montana is a geographically large, rural state with distinct and unique regional and cultural differences. With these vast differences in community composition, it is even more critical to understand Montana's unique EL student population given the diversity of the languages and culture represented in the *Treasure State*. **Figure 1** shown below illustrates Montana's percentage of students with "language of impact" used to classify their cultural language experience. The "language of impact" information reported in **Figure 1** is collected through Montana's state-specific data collection which is used to study "heritage languages" more deeply (see ACRONYM GLOSSARY: Table 5). Under the federal reporting categories, the " home primary language" indicates the specific language normally used by the student or normally used by the parents of the student other than English in their home. If having a "home primary language" other than English were the sole criteria, American Indian students who are primarily English speaking would not be appropriately represented in this reporting, but the law recognizes that students don't need to be active

speakers of the native language to be affected by the language in their communities. The "language of impact" is the language other than English that influences the student's English language development. For more information on this collection, visit the AIM Data Dictionary Website.

Figure 1. 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 necessary 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 school 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:

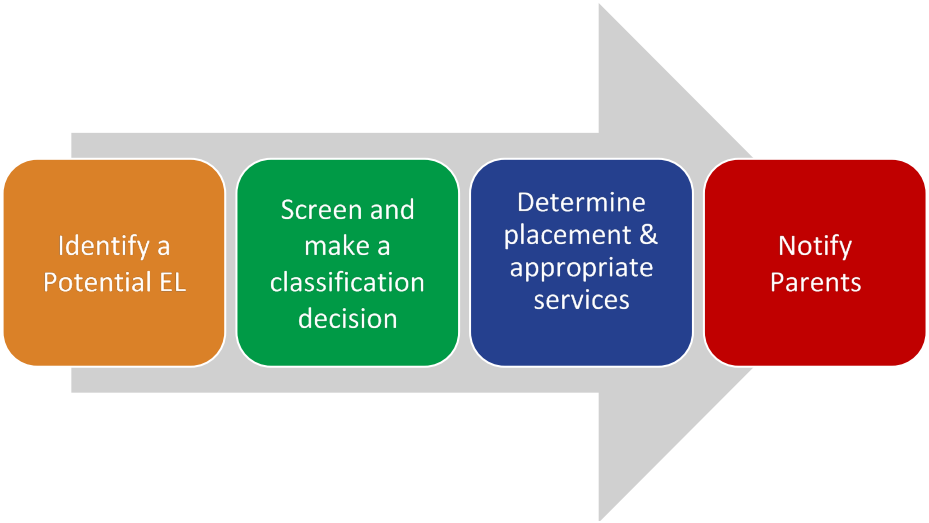
- American Indian children who are impacted by the heritage language of their family and/or community such as Crow or Blackfeet.
- Hutterite children who learn German as their first language.
- American-born children of immigrants who learn their native language in the home from their parents or guardians.
- 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 to describe ELs, as 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 (see ESEA Section 8101(20)).

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 EL proficiency and other student subgroup categories. Both for this reporting purpose and in order to provide appropriate support so ELs are served in standardized and equitable fashion consistent with their individualized needs.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Under state and federal law, all public and accredited non-public school 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.

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[17,18,19]. **School districts must:**

- 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; and
- 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 school district, not national origin. Children who do not speak English cannot be required to present documents that are not required by any other student while 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 school districts 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; and
- full participation in mainstream classrooms when the student is proficient in English.

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)** found in Appendix A.

If the HLS 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 EL 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** found in 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 (see **Figure 4**).

In communities where there is a "language of impact" 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

Federal law and regulations require the OPI to administer an alternate ELP assessment for ELs with the most significant cognitive disabilities who cannot participate in the ELP assessment even with appropriate accommodations. States may develop alternate ELP achievement standards for the alternate ELP assessment (see 34 CFR 200.6(H)(5)).

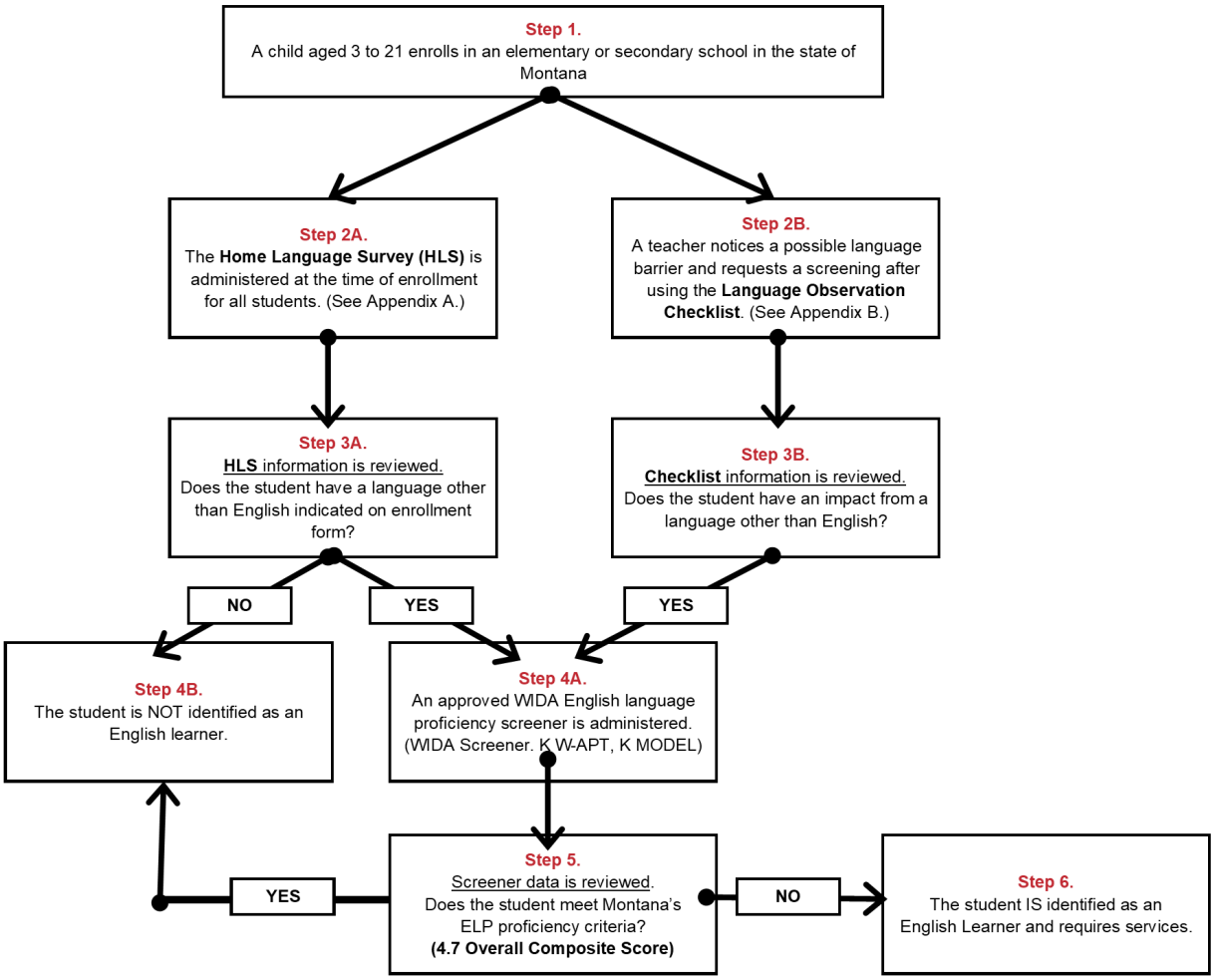
Special care should be taken in the screening of students with significant cognitive disabilities who are potential ELs. ELs with significant cognitive disabilities are individuals who have one or more disabilities that significantly impact their intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior as documented 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. To learn more about the characteristics of ELs with significant cognitive disabilities the following report from the WIDA consortium and the ALTELLA project is available: Characteristics of English Learners with Significant Cognitive Disabilities: Findings from the Individual Characteristics Questionnaire.

IDENTIFICATION OF ELs

Under federal law, all school districts are required to identify students who are eligible for language assistance. School districts must use the guidance from the Superintendent of Public Instruction to identify ELs and annually monitor individual progress in acquiring academic English consistent with all state and federal laws and regulations (ARM 10.56.104).

Figure 4. Identification Process



PROVISIONAL IDENTIFICATION DURING SCHOOL CLOSURES OR REMOTE LEARNING

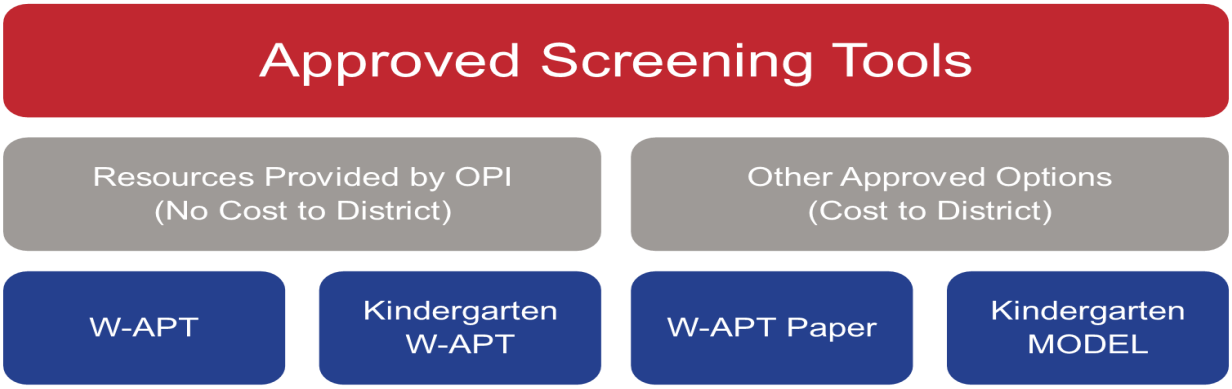
The Provisional English Learner Identification Procedure remote-learning guidance document provides a means of provisionally identifying ELs in times of extended school closures where remote-learning plans have been approved by the Governor and school districts are providing a continuity of educational services online and face-to-face screening is not possible.

ADMINISTERING ELP SCREENERS

All potential ELs must be screened for placement using the OPI's approved ELP screeners so identification decisions can be based on standardized and objective criteria. The screeners are available to all school districts at no cost. **Figure 5** and **Table 1** below outline the screening tools that are available in Montana. The screeners are required to identify ELs because of the test's alignment with to Montana's WIDA English Language Development Standards, WIDA Proficiency Level Definitions, and Montana's English language proficiency criteria (see ARM 10.53.301–10.53.311).

In order to be considered proficient in English, students must, at a minimum, reach 4.7 overall composite score on the ACCESS for ELLs assessment and for students with significant cognitive disabilities testing on the Alternate ACCESS for ELLs reach at a minimum a proficiency level of "P2".

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 1** below details Montana's proficiency criteria. The Kindergarten ACCESS Placement Test (W–APT) results in a raw score rather than proficiency levels. 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 second semester Kindergarten and first semester are provided as well. Students in the first semester of first grade are administered the Kindergarten W-APT. This assessment is more appropriate for first semester first grade ELs because they have not had sufficient instruction in first grade content at the beginning of the year.

Table 1. Montana's Screener Criteria

Kindergarten First Semester	Kindergarten Second Semester
Test Name: Kindergarten **W-APT**, Kindergarten **MODEL** **Domains Administered:** Speaking and Listening **Criteria:** K W-APT: 29 or higher (total raw score of the 2 domains) is considered proficient K MODEL: 5.0 on Speaking and Listening	**Test Name:** Kindergarten **W-APT**, Kindergarten **MODEL** **Domains Administered:** Speaking, Listening, Reading, Writing **Criteria:** K W-APT: 29 or higher (total raw score of the listening and speaking domains) Reading domain 11 or higher Writing domain 12 or higher K MODEL: 5.0 on Speaking and Listening

Grade 1 First Semester	Grade 1–12 Second Semester
Test Name: Kindergarten **W-APT**, Kindergarten **MODEL** **Domains Administered:** Speaking, Listening, Reading, Writing **Criteria:** K W-APT: 29 or higher (total raw score of the listening and speaking domains) Reading domain 11 or higher Writing domain 12 or higher K MODEL: 5.0 overall composite proficiency level score	**Test Administered:** WIDA Screener (online or paper) **Domains Administered:** Speaking, Listening, Reading, Writing **Criteria:** 4.7 proficiency level or higher overall composite level score

SCREENING TOOLS FOR STUDENTS WITH SIGNIFICANT COGNITIVE DISABILITIES

Students with mild or moderate disabilities fall under the same criteria as those without disabilities where school districts are required to administer statewide assessments with or without accommodations based on individual student needs consistent with all state and federal laws and regulations. The Individualized Education Program (IEP) team for a student shall determine if the student meets the eligibility criteria for the statewide alternate assessment based on the alternate achievement standards (ARM 10.56.104). It is recommended to consult with Yvonne Field at the OPI if you have a student with a significant cognitive disability and need assistance identifying a screening process.

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.

Students eligible to participate in alternate assessments make up approximately 1% of the total student population. The decision to move a special education student to an alternate assessment has significant implications for the path that a student will take in their K–12 school career. It means the student is not able to participate in the general education curriculum even when provided with accommodations. A student who participates in alternate assessment requires a modified curriculum (See Appendix I: Eligibility Criteria Worksheet).

For students, who because of their disability cannot participate in the general assessment, the OPI has policies and procedures to follow to determine a child's participation in the 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 "Alternate Eligibility Criteria Worksheet Form" (See Appendix I: Eligibility Criteria Worksheet) 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.

For students that are eligible for the alternate assessment, educators are asked to complete the Individual Characteristics Questionnaire (ICQ). The purpose of the ICQ is to learn more about the characteristics of ELs with the most significant cognitive disabilities. These questions have been adapted from questions from the First Contact Survey (Nash, Clark, & Karvonen, 2015) and Learner Characteristics Inventory (Kearns, Klienert, Klienert, & Towles-Reeves, 2006).

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 EL, please indicate LEP in AIM and also mark the Alternate Assessment checkbox. Questions can be directed to the AIM Help Desk 1.877.424.6681 or 406-444-3800 or opiaimhelp@mt.gov. Additional information about completing the statewide assessment editor in AIM can be found in the IEP Updates: Statewide Assessment Editor.

SUPPORTING IDENTIFICATION DECISIONS WITH ADDITIONAL ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT DATA

In addition to using an approved screening tool, school districts are encouraged to support the identification of ELs with data from state, 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

ACCESSING WIDA SCREENER TEST MATERIALS

The ELP screeners are available in paper and online formats. The Kindergarten W–APT is a paper-based test that is administered on a one-to-one basis. The ELP 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 are available to all WIDA Consortium member states at no additional cost and are reproducible. Please contact your System Test Coordinator (STC) 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 Help Desk at 1.844.867.2569 or email at OPIAssessmentHelpDesk@mt.gov.

UPDATING STUDENT EL INFORMATION IN AIM

Once it is determined that a student will be identified as an EL they must be flagged as EL in AIM. The EL AIM module is used to collect, monitor, and report out on students identified as ELs by the reporting school district. The OPI uses this data to calculate student participation in state and federal programs and the annual ELP 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), school districts should contact the OPI. The OPI will discuss the individual student needs and recommend appropriate screening strategies. Yvonne Field the Assessment and Accountability Specialist is available to provide technical assistance on local accessibility decisions for students with significant cognitive disabilities.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT EL IDENTIFICATION

This section has been adapted from the Guidelines for EL Identification and Assessment & Data Reporting from the Alaska Department of Education.

Which school 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.

Do EL determinations follow the student if they transfer?
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.

Note: The student does not need to be re–identified by the new school district. Students may not be placed into a pending identification status; their EL status determination must be made within the required time frames.

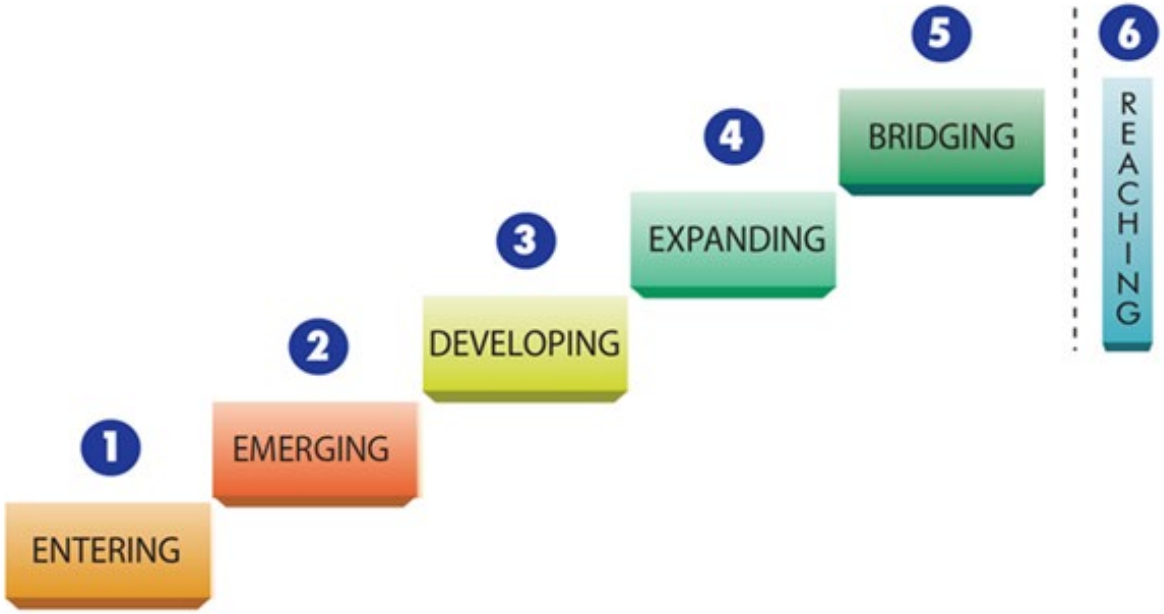
How is a student identified as an EL?
Schools should make every effort to find out about the child's background by requesting prior school records and talking with the parents and student, which may require an interpreter. It is important to find out if the student is literate in his/her native language and if he/she has attended school prior to registration. School districts must develop a district-wide screening process, identify educators in the district who will be responsible for completing screener test administration training and administer the screener. School 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.

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

What will the ELP screeners tell me about the student?
The results of the 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: WIDA's Performance Definitions for WIDA's performance definitions describing what students can do at each proficiency level. They can also be found at the WIDA Montana State 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) (see **Table 2**).

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 reading/language arts. English language proficiency includes reading, writing, listening, and speaking (see Appendix D: WIDA's Performance Definitions further description of language proficiency and the stages of second language acquisition).

> ***"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)***

While hiring a full-time English as a Second Language (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 OPI offers the following programmatic recommendations and considerations for rural districts with low incidence EL populations as well:

- 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 (Reading/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 school 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 ELs 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 OPTIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

It is not enough to assume that an EL with a 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 disabilities 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, best practice to consider and include English language learner objectives in the IEP. In school 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.

1. Steps to Include EL students with disabilities in standards-based lessons: 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 ELs at different proficiency levels;
4. Identify supports that address the language needs of your ELs with disabilities that will allow them to participate in the lesson; and
5. Provide the accessibility supports that are documented in the IEP for ELs with disabilities.

RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS ON SERVING THE NEEDS OF ELS WITH SIGNIFICANT COGNITIVE DISABILITIES

These resources will be helpful for teachers in understand how to serve the needs of ELs with significant cognitive disabilities. They were created as a part of the ALTELLA project and are published by WIDA.

- ALTELLA Brief No. 1: Establishing a Definition of English Learners with Significant Cognitive Disabilities
- ALTELLA Brief No. 2: Considerations for Educators Serving English Learners with Significant Cognitive Disabilities
- ALTELLA Brief No. 3: Nonverbal Communication in Diverse Classrooms: Intercultural Competence Considerations for Supporting English Learners with Significant Cognitive Disabilities
- ALTELLA Brief No. 4: Individualized Education Programs for English Learners with Significant Cognitive Disabilities
- ALTELLA Brief No. 5: A Framework for Understanding English Learners with Disabilities: Triple the Work
- ALTELLA Brief No. 6: Case Examples of English Learners with Significant Cognitive Disabilities
- ALTELLA Brief No. 7: The Role of Language and Communication in the Education of English Learners with Significant Cognitive Disabilities

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 ELs with language acquisition (See Appendix E: Suggested Interventions for EL Students and APPENDIX F: SIOP AND CALLA 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.
- Develop content knowledge alongside language abilities at all language proficiency levels.
- 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.
- Teach hands-on, activity-oriented, and visual thematic units to facilitate learning, particularly through small group or cooperative learning in all subject areas.
- Pair language-minority students with English-speaking students as class companions, bus, playground and/or cafeteria helpers.
- 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 in all classes.
- Provide encouragement to continue to speak, read, and write in the native language particularly if the student is literate.
- Use differentiated and personalized instruction for ELs, as for other students.

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 OPI 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, ELs benefit from opportunities to learn academic content in their native language as well. As part of the 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.

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

Table 2. A Brief Description of Language Proficiency (based on the work of Jim Cummins)[3,7]

BICS	CALP
Social language takes approximately 1–3 years to develop. 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.	**Classroom Language 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 BICS: • 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.	**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 theory[1]. In districts with few ELs, at a minimum, 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:

[1] Detailed information on creating and evaluating programs for ELs 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, visit WIDA and review their Protocol for Review of Instructional Materials for ELLs (PRIME) which correlates the ELP standards to instructional materials. What Works Clearinghouse is another resource to review researched-based instructional materials. To review K–12 instructional materials, visit Prime V2.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT PROVIDING PROGRAM SERVICES

This section is adapted from the Office for Civil Rights Questions and Answers on the Rights of ELs.

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 Screener data from the results reports to guide program and instructional decisions for the ELs 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 ELP Screener. The OPI also provides face to face trainings and online webinars. For more information about professional development opportunities contact the OPI Assessment Help Desk at 1.844.867.2569 or email at OPIAssessmentHelpDesk@mt.gov.

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 EL 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. School 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.). 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 school districts 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)].

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 ELP Screener scores), the student's native language proficiency, and the student's instructional history. **Table 3** 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 3. 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 home primary 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: 4.0 Speaking: 2.0 Reading: 2.0 Writing: 1.0

There are two categories of general supports for ELs, 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.

For special population students (e.g., students with disabilities, students with section 504, or EL educational plans), accommodations help these students access the general education curriculum. All accessibility tools and accommodations should be used in instruction and assessment throughout the school year and at least three months before the state assessment. Supports that are provided on state assessments must be familiar to the student and must match those supports and accommodations that are provided for classroom instruction and assessments throughout the school year. Student's parents/guardians should be knowledgeable about the supports and accommodations planned for their child so they are aware of the conditions under which their child will participate in the assessment. The purpose of accessibility is to eliminate the effects of student barriers that prevent them from demonstrating what they know and can do. All students can work toward grade-level academic content standards via differentiation and appropriately selected supports and accommodations.

In most cases, the EL supports that are provided to students 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 usability, accessibility and accommodation OPI guidelines for each state assessment and understand the allowable supports and context for each accessibility feature. These manuals provide guidance on allowable supports for ELs and detail the standardized procedures for administering the state test to ELs. Test administrators who will work with EL assessment must receive test administration, test security, and test accessibility training prior to administration of any state assessments to accurate, valid and reliable results of student achievement .

PROVIDING ACCOMMODATIONS TO ELS WITH DISABILITIES

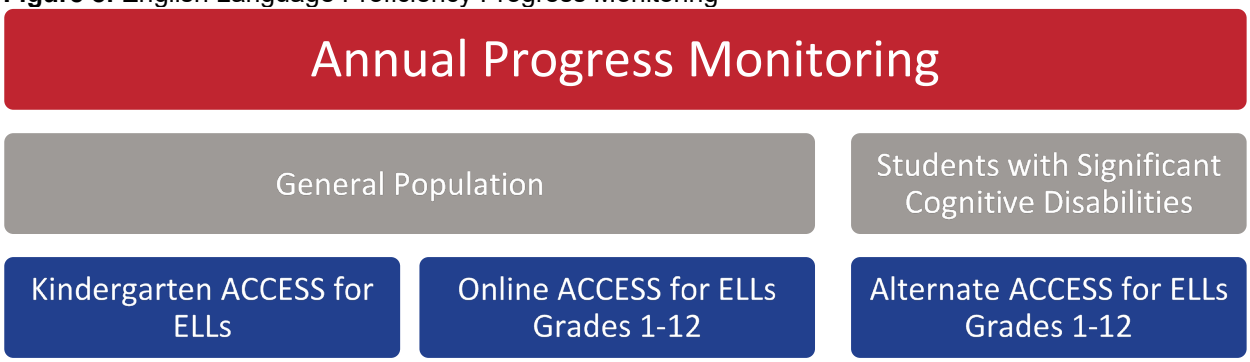
Montana has in place procedures to ensure the inclusion of all accredited and public elementary and secondary school students with disabilities in the Montana Comprehensive Assessment System (MontCAS) state testing program.

Under 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 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. For more information please go to OPI Statewide Testing Page on Accessibility Resources.

ASSESSMENT

Under state and federal law, all districts are required to assess the English proficiency of English language learners annually (ARM 10.56.102 and ESEA Section 1111(b)(2)(B)(vii)(III)).

Figure 8. English Language Proficiency Progress Monitoring



COLLECTION REQUIREMENTS

School 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 Primary Language (HPL)
2. Language of Impact (LOI)
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)], school districts must report on the number and percentage of former ELs meeting state standards for four years.

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 for ELLs assessments can be conducted using the WIDA Montana State page.

REQUIRED TRAINING FOR TEST ADMINISTRATORS

Annually all WIDA accounts are reset and refreshed by the OPI. Test administrators are required to be certified every two years for renewal purposes and first-time certification is mandatory for any new test administrators to be eligible to administer the ACCESS for ELLs and the ELP Screener. Training for school 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. Periodic training events hosted by the OPI can be found on the OPI's Learning Opportunities Portal. The WIDA website trainings are password protected and must be accessed through WIDA Secure Portal. Test administrators can contact their System Test Coordinator to obtain a personal password. For questions about WIDA accounts, contact the OPI Assessment Help Desk at 1.844.867.2569 or email at OPIAssessmentHelpDesk@mt.gov.

ACCESS FOR ELLS ASSESSMENT

In addition to an initial assessment for identification and program placement, all identified ELs must be assessed annually for ELP 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 ELs and students with IEPs, identified at the time of state testing must be accounted for when the assessment results are reported to the U.S. Department of Education (ED).

The testing window is eight 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

All kindergarten domains and the speaking portion of the paper version of grades 1–12 ACCESS for ELLs are rated by test administrators during the test administration. If students take the online ACCESS for ELLs, which is Montana's preferred method, the speaking portion of the test is also on the computer and the test delivery contractor rates the responses for grades 1-12. Printed copies of the following results reports are mailed to schools the first week of April. These reports include each of the following:

Table 4. Score Report Types and Intended Audiences

ACCESS Score Report	Audience or Stakeholder	Types of information
Parent / Guardian Report	• 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	• 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	• 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	• 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.)	• 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 school 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.

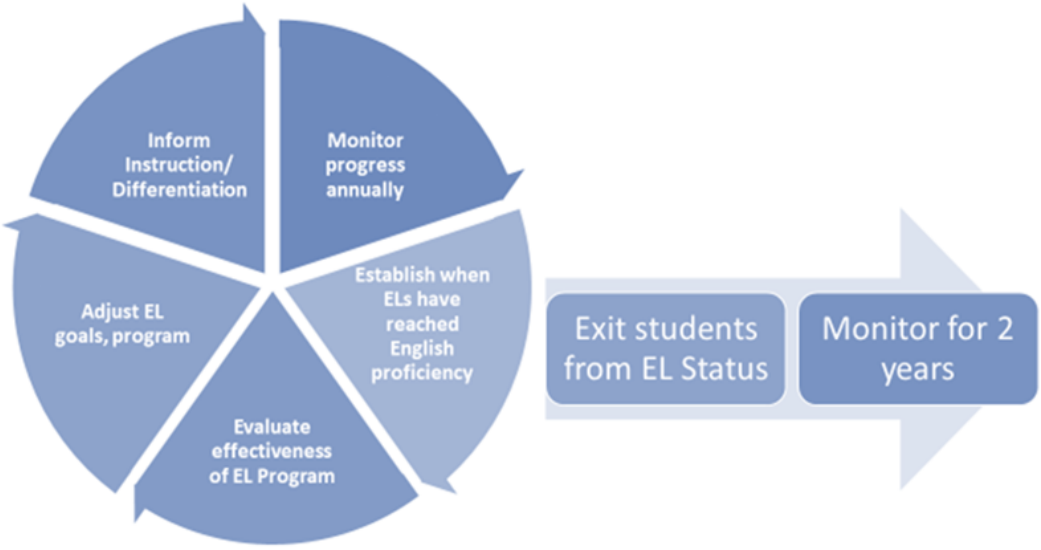
USING ACHIEVEMENT DATA

The OPI recommends using the data from the ACCESS for ELLs as a part of a feedback loop and to inform the continuous improvement process (see ARM 10.55.601). The state Board of Public Education established the requirement for a continuous school improvement plan where each school district and each of its schools must develop, implement, and evaluate continuous school improvement plans and make the plans available to the public.

It is required both in state and federal law that parents are provided with transparency on state testing including participation requirements, time requirements, and information available from the assessments in a timely manner (see ESEA Section 1112, ARM 10.56.102(6), and ARM 10.55.603(3)-(4)). In addition to this requirement, school districts are required to provide timely individual student reports to parents, teachers, and principals and include the results on local report cards (ESEA Section 1111).

When results reports are delivered, the scores are used to monitor annual progress by showing how much a student has grown or when the student meets Montana's proficiency criteria and is ready to exit the EL program. School 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 school district may continue to use the same program or may need to make a change if a student is not progressing. School districts can also use achievement data to track progress towards the previous year's goals and to set new goals for the next annum. Finally, EL achievement and progress data is used by educators to determine the instructional supports and differentiation in content lessons based on the student proficiency levels in each assessment domain (see **Figure 9**).

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



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT ASSESSMENT

This section was adapted from the Guidelines for EL Identification and Assessment & Data Reporting from the 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 reading/language arts and mathematics and in grades 5, 8 and 11 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 reading/language arts assessment. If a student has been enrolled in a US School for less than twelve months, they have a one-time exemption from taking the required state ELA 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 ELs must participate in state 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 with learning disabilities. 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 Alternate 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.

What ELP assessment does Montana use?
The OPI has selected WIDA's ACCESS for ELLs assessment to measure English proficiency for ELs. The ACCESS for ELLs is a large-scale English language proficiency assessment aligned to the WIDA English language development standards (2011). Subtests include the domains of listening, speaking, writing, and reading. The ACCESS for ELLs is given annually to monitor EL progress in acquiring academic English. There is an Alternate ACCESS for ELLs for students who are ELs and have significant cognitive disabilities. It is important that registration information within Montana's Achievement in Montana (AIM) student information system be as accurate and complete as possible for the appropriate identification of students eligible for this assessment. Montana amended its exit procedures for EL so an EL must achieve an overall composite score of 4.7 to be considered proficient in English and to exit EL status. Additionally, Montana defined proficiency for the Alternate ACCESS for ELLs as an achievement level "P2" for ELs with the most significant cognitive disabilities.

Why does the OPI administer the WIDA screeners and ACCESS for ELLs assessments?
The WIDA screeners are used to provide an objective measure to help districts determine when a student who has another language spoken in the home should be identified as an EL. Once a student is identified as an EL, the appropriate ACCESS for ELLs test (Kindergarten ACCESS for ELLs, Online ACCESS for ELLs, or Alternate ACCESS for ELLs) is used to help monitor EL progress in Grades K-12 toward English language proficiency according to Montana's proficiency criteria on an annual basis. Student participation is important for both federal and state compliance (ARM 10.56).

Why is it important to include all students?
Every Student Succeeds Act (or ESSA) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and the Civil Rights Act require the fair and equal treatment of all students. As such, ESSA requires all students to participate in state assessments. This includes all students who receive special education services no matter what their disability or level of service, and ELs. State assessments are census-based meaning they are intended to measure the learning of all students in public elementary and secondary schools. For this reason, all students should be included in the state assessment to the fullest extent possible.

How will this data be used for accountability?
Student participation is mandatory for both federal and state compliance. Montana's accountability system uses results from this assessment for all schools with ten or more ELs to calculate the ESSA EL Progress. ELs take this assessment until they reach proficiency according to Montana's proficiency criteria. For accountability purposes, school districts must annually assess all students and in instances of special circumstance may not fall below the 95 percent threshold or 95 percent threshold for student subgroups. School districts must also adhere to the 1 percent of the total population student cap for students identified as eligible to participate in the alternate assessment(s). Students who meet participation requirements and who do not test are typically assigned a score of "Novice" and designated as a non-participant for accountability purposes.

What grade(s) and subject(s) are assessed?
The ELP assessments are given in Grades K-12 to every identified EL in the four domains of listening, speaking, writing, and reading. The content specification from which the test was developed directly aligns to Montana's Content Standards for English language proficiency. This design and development was necessary to ensure the assessment covers the range of knowledge and skills described in Montana's standards (ARM 10.53).

When are the ELP assessments given in Montana?
The ELP screeners are given to all incoming students whose Home Language Survey indicates that there is another language spoken in the home. One of the WIDA screeners must be administered within 14 days of enrollment and an EL determination must be made within 30 days of enrollment. The WIDA screeners can be administered at any time of year dependent upon enrollment of new students. The WIDA screener page on the WIDA website provides comprehensive information for implementation. The test is administered annually from the first Wednesday in December to the last Wednesday in January.

Who is included in Montana's accountability system?
The MontCAS state testing program is designed to ensure that all students participate and are included to the fullest extent possible. Specifically, the OPI's policy is designed to reduce variation in achievement reporting and to ensure maximum student participation in these required assessments. There are extremely rare (low incident) circumstances, such as a major medical event, that may preclude a student from participating in the required state test. However, it is never allowable to exclude students based on expected performance, difficulty in administering the test, disability, or EL status. ELs must be evaluated using an approved OPI ELP screener to determine their identification as an EL and consequent participation in the required state ELP assessment consistent with state and federal policies. All EL students enrolled in grades K–12 are required to participate in one of the ACCESS for ELLs English language proficiency assessments except the following:

- Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who meet the criteria for participation in an alternate assessment (approximately one percent or fewer of the entire student population). These students will participate in the Alternate ACCESS for ELLs assessment.
- If the student has been enrolled in a US School for less than twelve months, they have a one-time exemption from taking the required state ELA assessment.
- Foreign Exchange Students are expected to participate if the student is enrolled in the AIM/Infinite Campus and included into MAEFAIRS for purposes of determining the Average Number Belonging (ANB) but are not included for accountability.

How should students with disabilities and English language learners meaningfully participate in state tests?
All students with disabilities and ELs must be included in state assessments. This has prompted the creation of a range of test participation options, making it possible for students even with the most significant disabilities have the opportunity to demonstrate what they know and can do on a test aligned with general education content standards. There are three options for ELs to participate in state tests:

1. Participate in general population assessments without accommodations.

2. Participate in general population assessments with accommodations (see Accessibility Resources).
3. Participate in alternate assessments when the participation criteria are met.

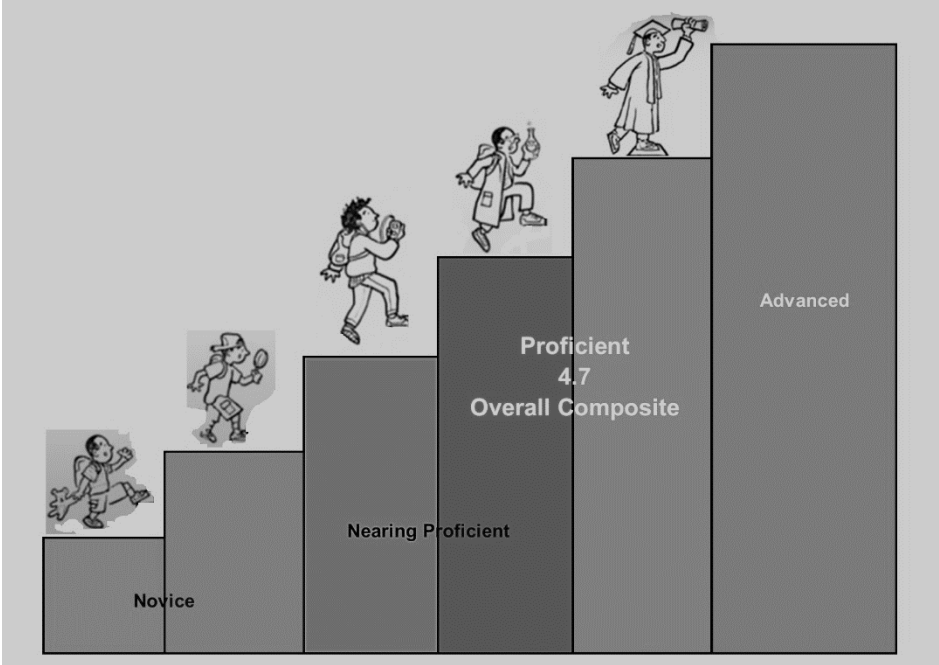
PROFICIENCY CRITERIA AND EXIT PROCESS

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

According to Montana's definition of proficient, a student must achieve an overall composite score of 4.7 (see **Figure 10)** on Montana's ELP assessment (or the ACCESS for ELLs 2.0) to be considered proficient in English. Additionally, Montana defined proficiency for the Alternate ACCESS for ELLs as an achievement level "P2" for ELs with the most significant cognitive disabilities. The Alternate ACCESS for ELLs is aligned to alternate ELP achievement standards.

Figure 10. Montana's Criteria for English Language Proficiency



PROFICIENCY CRITERIA FOR ELS WITH SIGNIFICANT COGNITIVE DISABILITIES

During the 2019 Montana WIDA Standards Validation Workshop, the stakeholders established a minimum requirement to exit EL services for ELs with the most significant cognitive disabilities as an overall composite score of "P2" on the Alternate ACCESS for ELLs assessment. When students meet the exit criteria of "P2" on the Alternate ACCESS for ELLs school district staff must re-designate students and update students' EL status in AIM and inform parents of the decision to exit the student from EL status. The students will continue to be monitored for two years after re-designation.

EL EXIT PROCESS

STEP 1: Has the student achieved English language proficiency according to Montana's definition of Proficiency? Consider ELP data from the ACCESS for ELLs assessment. Data from the ACCESS for ELLs 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 meeting grade level expectations in the area of reading comprehension?)
- Input from general education and content teachers

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 students as long term ELs after this time.

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 (Linquanti 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 student information system (e.g., 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 school 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 school districts to conduct effective outreach to parents of ELs, including regular meetings.

To access free letters and resources, visit transact.com. Districts can login with school email, and send questions to the Transact support team at 1.425.977.2100 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.” 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 intended 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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GENERAL QUESTIONS

OPI Assessment Help Desk at 1.844.867.2569 or email at OPIAssessmentHelpDesk@mt.gov.

OPI AIM Help Desk 1.877.424.6681 or 406-444-3800 or opiaimhelp@mt.gov.

WIDA Secure Portal Client Services Center at 1.866.276.7735 or email at help@wida.us.

WIDA AMS/DRC Portal at 1.855.787.9615 or email at WIDA@datarecognitioncorp.com.

ACRONYM GLOSSARY

Table 5. 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).
HL	**Heritage Language**	Languages other than the dominant language (or languages) in a given social context.
HPL	**Home Primary Language**	The specific language normally used by the student or normally used by the parents of the student. This list of codes and languages are from the Federal code set ISO-639.2 and was updated and approved by the OPI Data Governance committee in June 2018. (See AIM Data Dictionary Website, page 34.)
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.
LOI	Language of Impact	The language other than English that influences the student's English language development. For OPI American Indian student Achievement unit to identify students whose first language is English, the Language of Impact is the tribal (or cultural) language. For immigrant or colony students the Language of Impact is the language spoken at home. (See AIM Data Dictionary Website, page 42.)
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.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: MONTANA HOME LANGUAGE SURVEY

Follow the Appendix A link to view, print, and download or double-click on the image below to open Appendix A as a separate 1-page PDF attachment.

Montana Office of Public Instruction opi.mt.gov Elsie Arntzen, Superintendent	**APPENDIX A** **MONTANA HOME LANGUAGE SURVEY** **SCHOOL YEAR 2020–2021** **AUGUST 1, 2020**

Student Name:_____Birth Date:_____Sex: ☐ Male ☐ Female

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Address: _____

Home Telephone:_____Work Telephone:_____

School: _____Grade:_____Date:_____

1. Is your child's first-learned or home language anything other than English? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If you responded "Yes" to question number 1 above, please answer the following questions:

2a. What language did your child learn when he/she first began to talk? _____

2b. What language does your child most frequently speak at home? _____

2c. What language do you most frequently speak to your child?

(Father) _____

(Mother) _____

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 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**

APPENDIX B: LANGUAGE OBSERVATION CHECKLIST SAMPLE

Follow the Appendix B link to view, print, and download or double-click on the image below to open Appendix B as a separate 1-page PDF attachment..

Montana Office of Public Instruction opi.mt.gov Elsie Arntzen, Superintendent	APPENDIX B LANGUAGE OBSERVATION CHECKLIST SAMPLE SCHOOL YEAR 2020–2021 AUGUST 1, 2020

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

Student Name: _____ State Student ID:_____
(Last Name, First Name) (Nine Digits)

School: Grade: _____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.	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Uses tenses correctly.	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Uses singular & plural forms correctly.	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Uses prepositions correctly.	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. Understands teacher directions.	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. Uses appropriate sentence structure.	☐	☐	☐	☐
g. Uses developmentally appropriate vocabulary	☐	☐	☐	☐

READING – PLEASE CHECK ONE:	COMMENTS:
☐ Non-reader (not reading)	
☐ Developing reader (reading below grade level)	
☐ Fluent (at or above grade level)	
WRITING – PLEASE CHECK ONE:	**COMMENTS:**
☐ Non-writer (not writing)	
☐ Developing writer (writing below grade level)	
☐ Fluent (at or above grade level)	
ORAL – PLEASE CHECK ONE:	**COMMENTS:**
☐ Non-speaker (non-English speaker)	
☐ Developing speaker (speaks below grade level)	
☐ Fluent (at or above grade level)	

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

Note: Adapted from Form »OS-O8-03SO, March 2C08. Alaska Department of Education 5, Early Development]

APPENDIX C: CRITERIA FOR IDENTIFICATION OF ENGLISH LEARNERS

Follow the Appendix C link to view, print, and download or double-click on the image below to open Appendix C as a separate 2-page PDF attachment.

Montana Office of Public Instruction opi.mt.gov Elsie Arntzen, Superintendent	**APPENDIX C** **CRITERIA FOR IDENTIFICATION OF ENGLISH LEARNERS** **SCHOOL YEAR 2020–2021** **AUGUST 1, 2020**

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:**

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APPENDIX D: WIDA'S PERFORMANCE DEFINITIONS

Follow the Appendix D link to view, print, and download or double-click on the image below to open Appendix D as a separate 1-page PDF attachment.

Montana Office of Public Instruction opi.mt.gov Elsie Arntzen, Superintendent	**APPENDIX D** **WIDA DESCRIPTIONS OF PERFORMANCE** **SCHOOL YEAR 2020–2021** **AUGUST 1, 2020**

WIDA Performance Definitions

Achievement is defined in the Administrative Rules for Montana (ARM) 10.53.306–10.53.311 and in the WIDA Website. At the given level of English language proficiency, English language learners will process, understand, produce or use:

6- Reaching	• 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	• 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	• 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	• 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	• 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	• 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

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APPENDIX E: SUGGESTED INTERVENTIONS FOR EL STUDENTS

Follow the Appendix E link to view, print, and download or double-click on the image below to open Appendix E as a separate 1-page PDF attachment.

Montana Office of Public Instruction opi.mt.gov Elsie Arntzen, Superintendent	**APPENDIX E** **SUGGESTED INTERVENTIONS FOR EL STUDENTS** **SCHOOL YEAR 2020–2021** **AUGUST 1, 2020**

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

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR ELS	STRATEGIES FOR ELS
Instructional: • 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 Physical: • Extended time • Special seating • Frequent breaks	For Students: • 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 For Teachers: • 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

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Appendix F: SIOP and CALLA Strategies for ELs

Follow the Appendix F link to view, print, and download or double-click on the image below to open Appendix F as a separate 1-page PDF attachment.

Montana Office of Public Instruction opi.mt.gov Elsie Arntzen, Superintendent	**APPENDIX F** **SIOP AND CALLA STRATEGIES FOR ELS** **SCHOOL YEAR 2020–2021** **AUGUST 1, 2020**
SIOP STRATEGIES SHELTERED INSTRUCTION	CALLA STRATEGIES (COGNITIVE ACADEMIC LANGUAGE LEARNING APPROACH)
Lesson Preparation - Content objectives and Language Objectives - Supplementary materials (sensory, graphic and interactive supports) - Adaption of content & Meaningful activities **Building Background** - Concepts linked with background experiences - Links explicitly made b/n past and new learning - Key vocabulary emphasized **Comprehensible Input** - Speech appropriate - Clear explanation of academic tasks - Use of a variety of techniques **Strategies** - Ample opportunities to use strategies - Consistent use of scaffolding - Varied question types / integration of higher- order thinking skills - **Interaction** - Frequent opportunities for interaction - Grouping configurations support objectives - Sufficent wait time, opportunities to clarify in L1 **Practice Applications** - Hands-on materials - Activities that apply lang, and content knowledge - Integrate language skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing & culture) **Lesson Delivery** - Content and language objectives supported - Students actively engaged 90-100% of the time - Pacing appropriate to students' levels **Review Assessment** - Comprehensive review of key vocabulary - Comprehensive review of key content concepts - Regularly provide feedback to students - Regular assessment of student comprehension	**Metacognitive Strategies** **Planning** - 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. **Monitoring** - Monitoring comprehension - think while listening / think while reading - Monitoring production - think while speaking / think while writing **Evaluation** - Self-assessment - check back / keep a learning log / reflect on what you learned **Cognitive Strategies** - Summarizing - say or write the main idea - Deduction / Induction - use a rule / make a rule - Auditory recognition - use your mental tape recorder / hear it again - Making inferences - use conte« clues / guess from conte« / predict **Social / Affective Strategies** - Questioning for clarification - ask questions - Cooperation - cooperate / work with classmates / peer-coaching - Self-talk - think positive

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APPENDIX G: EL PROGRAM PLACEMENT LETTER

Follow the Appendix G link to view, print, and download or double-click on the image below to open Appendix G as a separate 1-page PDF attachment.

Montana Office of Public Instruction opi.mt.gov Elsie Arntzen, Superintendent	**APPENDIX G** **EL PROGRAM PLACEMENT LETTER** **SCHOOL YEAR 2020–2021** **AUGUST 1, 2020**

☐ **Initial Placement** ☐ **Continuing Placement**

Name of student: _____Date:_____

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 m 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.

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APPENDIX H: SAMPLE EDUCATIONAL PLAN FOR ELS

Follow the Appendix H link to view, print, and download or double-click on the image below to open Appendix H as a separate 4-page PDF attachment.

Montana Office of Public Instruction opi.mt.gov Elsie Arntzen, Superintendent	APPENDIX H SAMPLE EDUCATIONAL PLAN FOR ELS SCHOOL YEAR 2020–2021 AUGUST 1, 2020

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? ☐ Yes ☐ No					
(Keep in permanent record folder)					
Identified in other district? ☐ Yes ☐ No					
Screener Used? YES/NO		☐ YES		☐ NO	
W-APT/OTHER:		☐ W-APT		☐ 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	

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APPENDIX I: ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA WORKSHEET

Follow the Appendix I link to view, print, and download or double-click on the image below to open Appendix A as a separate 2-page PDF attachment.

Montana Office of Public Instruction opi.mt.gov Elsie Arntzen, Superintendent	**APPENDIX I** **ALTERNATE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA** **SCHOOL YEAR 2020–2021** **AUGUST 1, 2020**

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 student, who as a result of their disability cannot participate in the state's general assessment, the state education agency (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 following alternate assessments, the results of which will be included in the state accountability system on a yearly basis.

Science and Alternate Science	Grades 5, 8, and 11
Smarter ELA and Math: MSAA	Grades 3 through 8
ACT with Writing (ELA and Math): MSAA	Grade 11
ELP: Alternate for English Language Learners	Grades K through 12

PLEASE NOTE:

- 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 Learners (EL) 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 of 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 both eligible to take the alternate assessments and are designated as EL please indicate EL in AIM and also mark the Alternate Assessment checkbox.

For more information on reporting EL in state's student information system, Achievement In Montana (AIM), visit AIM Website.

For more information on state testing for ELs, review the Statewide Assessment Participation and Registration on the MontCAS Statewide Testing Website.

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    a. Identifying All English Learner Students
    b. Providing English Learners with a Language Assistance Program
    c. Staffing and Supporting an EL Program
    d. Meaningful Access to Core Curricular, Extra Curricular Programs
    e. Creating an Inclusive Environment and Avoiding Unnecessary Segregation
    f. Addressing English Learners with Disabilities
    g. Serving English Learners who Opt-Out of EL Programs
    h. Monitoring and Exiting English Learners from EL Programs and Services
    i. Evaluating the Effectiveness of a Districts EL Program
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