

Administering the ELPA Screener in 2020-21

In-Person Screening, Remote Identification, Unique Screening, and Screening With Physical Distancing

Last revision 8/20/20

Overview

This guidance provides updated information found in ODE’s *Guidance on Screening and Identification for English Learners Under Distance Learning for All* (2019-20). Please read the following carefully, as significant changes have been made. This guidance will be updated as circumstances dictate. Such circumstances could include:

- Updated guidance from the US Department of Education
- The development of a viable remote screening instrument
- A significant change in the impact of the COVID pandemic on the educational landscape

This document has four main sections:

- In-Person Screening
- Remote Identification
- Unique Screening
- Administering the ELPA Screener with Physical Distancing

Note: references to “family” throughout this document are assumed to include parents, guardians, or adult students.

Student, Family, and Staff Health and Safety

The guidance in this document prioritizes the health and safety of students, staff, and families. Districts should always maintain health and safety as the clear priority across all assessment contexts.

In-Person Identification

In-person screening is possible under all three instructional models: On-Site, Hybrid, and Comprehensive Distance Learning. For students being served in On-Site instructional models or Hybrid models during the in-person timeframes, administration of the English language proficiency (ELPA) screener proceeds as it has in the past.

For students being served in a Comprehensive Distance Learning model, students may be screened according to the guidelines set out under ODE’s [Guidance for Limited In-Person Instruction During Comprehensive Distance Learning](#). This guidance defines the maximum

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student presence on-site and defines what districts can offer (but are not required to offer; see below).

While in-person screening is more accurate than remote identification, districts are permitted to choose remote identification over in-person screening when there is good reason to do so. “Good reason” includes but is not limited to the following:

- In-person interactions pose a health or safety risk to a student, staff member, or community member.
- It is not possible or feasible to screen the student in person within the federally required timeline.
- The student’s family may not be able to, or may be opposed to, bringing the student to the designated testing site (due to health and safety concerns, for example).
- Members of the student’s household belong to a high risk demographic.

Limited in-person instruction places restrictions on cohort size, the number of cohorts allowed per student, the time of visitation, and total number of students who can be served in a building in a given week. These restrictions may present some barriers to in-person screener completion, particularly for newly enrolling and the related federal evaluation timelines, despite a district’s good faith efforts. In such situations, districts should screen students in the following order, when possible.

1. Students whose initial English learner status needs determination (such as newly enrolling students)
2. Students eligible for unique screening, where district academic and observational evidence indicates a significant probability of scoring Proficient
3. All other students, from lowest grade band to highest

Districts may develop local criteria to further prioritize students within these categories.

It is important to remember that the central purpose of screening is based on students’ civil right to receive appropriate English language development services in a timely manner. Districts should construct their priorities to maximize student access to a free and appropriate public education within a reasonable time frame.

Remote Identification

Overview

As detailed above, there are multiple circumstances under which a district may be unable to determine a student’s English language proficiency through in-person screening. In such situations, students whose Language Use Survey (LUS) indicates the need for screening will

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temporarily be considered to have English learner status until the ELPA Screener can be administered safely and securely.

English learners who are identified solely through the Language Use Survey under such conditions are referred to as “remotely identified English learners.”

Remotely identified English learners do not have permanent English learner status. They must be screened with the ELPA Screener when it is safe and secure to do so (for example, upon the resumption of on-site instruction). Such students’ EL status will be adjusted based on the results of this screening. A step-by-step process is outlined below.

Two Language Use Survey forms are [currently available](#) for district use: the Legacy Language Use Survey and the Bridge Language Use Survey. The Bridge LUS was developed with statewide input to minimize over-identification of English learners.

For students whose initial English learner status needs determination, and in-person screening is not possible or will not be pursued for reasons such as those outlined under In Person Identification above, the following process applies:

1. The student’s family completes the LUS.
 - a. Districts may choose Bridge or Legacy LUS.
 - b. Districts decide how the LUS is given, but it will need to occur at a distance. Districts take affirmative steps to ensure the family understands the LUS and their responses are meaningful.
2. If the LUS indicates the student does not need screening, or if at any point the family indicates they made a mistake on the LUS and corrections indicate the student does not need screening, the process stops. The student is not an EL.
3. If the LUS indicates that the student needs screening, districts will temporarily consider the student to have EL status. The district will follow all normal procedures for a newly identified EL, including contacting the family, delivering language services, and reporting the student as an EL in relevant data collections.
 - a. Just as with any other EL identification, families may waive services. Family decisions to waive services have no impact on a student’s temporary or final EL status.
 - b. Districts should use the administration date of the LUS as the start date when reporting remotely identified English learners. Specific guidance on how to include these students in EL data collections will be included in future trainings.
 - c. Until their status is finalized via administration of the ELPA Screener, remotely identified English learners are ELs. Schools must follow all appropriate state and federal guidelines for EL education.
 - d. The Council of Great City Schools has developed sample questionnaires which may help districts determine appropriate service provision for remotely identified ELs (found [here](#) and [here](#)). These **optional** oral questionnaires are **not**

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part of the LUS and do not determine English learner status, but they may be helpful in painting a more detailed picture of the student's language experience and environment. Information gathered from tools like these questionnaires can help districts select appropriate services and instruction for remotely identified students.

4. The district retains the list of remotely identified ELs who have not been screened.
 - a. When there is a safe and secure opportunity to do so, the district administers the ELPA Screener to remotely identified ELs and adjusts the student's EL status according to the results. The family is involved in this process.
 - b. This process occurs whether the family chose to accept or waive services during distance learning.
5. The student's records will be updated as appropriate.
 - a. If the remotely identified EL student scores Proficient, then this student is not an EL and the student's EL status will need adjustment.
 - b. If the remotely identified EL student does not score Proficient (i.e. Emerging or Progressing), this student remains an EL. The new ELPA score will be entered into their record.
 - c. Specific guidance on data and reporting for students in (a) and (b) above will be given in data collection trainings.

Best Practices

For families with a student who is a remotely identified EL, the district should contact the family to gather information about the best way to serve the student. It is recommended that an EL professional from the district participate in this contact.

- Recommended questions: *How does the child learn best? Has the child received language services in the past? What were they?*
- Just as with in-person instruction, the family may choose to accept or waive language services. This decision may be revisited at any time. Whether the family accepts or waives services, the district will still screen the student to adjust their EL status when on-site schooling resumes.
- Family decisions to accept or waive services during distance learning remain in force when in-person instruction resumes.

Some reminders for Local Education Agencies (LEAs), such as school districts:

- LEAs may not inquire about a student's or parent's citizenship or immigration status. Ensure the LEA's and building's enrollment forms do not request this information or the student's or parent's social security numbers.
- LEAs may not require a student's birth certificate for enrollment. LEAs must accept a variety of documents to establish a student's age and residency. Alternative documents

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could include but are not limited to a religious, hospital, or physician's certificate showing date of birth; an entry in a family bible; an adoption record; an affidavit from a parent; a birth certificate; previously-verified school records; or any other documents permitted by law. LEAs should make parents aware of any alternatives that exist as part of their efforts to ensure a welcoming and inclusive environment for all students.

Important Points

- Remote identification is used when in-person interaction with students is not permissible.
 - Standard identification via the ELPA Screener is more accurate than remote identification. If in-person interaction is permissible, potential English learner students should be screened via the ELPA Screener.
 - Remote identification is temporary. When in-person interactions resume, the student must be screened via the ELPA Screener and their EL status adjusted based on the results.
 - Health and safety are a priority. Please refer to [Ready Schools, Safe Learners](#), sections 0-3 for specific expectations.
 - As mentioned in the introduction to this document, if a remote screening instrument becomes available, this guidance will be updated.
- COVID has increased the complexity of the EL identification, instruction, and testing process. For non-experts, such as families, it may be useful to center communication around talking points like the following:
 - We found out a little bit about the student at enrollment.
 - We will use this information to provide the student with a high quality education that prepares them to succeed.
 - When we can welcome this student to school in-person, we will be able to find out more about them.
 - At that time, we will use the new information to improve instruction.
 - Families are an important part of this process. We will be in regular contact with families.

Unique Screening in 2020-21

Overview

In spring of 2020, the COVID pandemic interrupted ongoing statewide summative testing. As a result, some students with English learner status did not complete the English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA) Summative as scheduled. Although most students with English learner status had completed ELPA testing at the time of COVID-related school closures in 2020, some students had only partially completed the ELPA, while others had not yet begun.

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As school resumes in the 2020-21 school year, districts need to know if students with English learner status remain eligible for language services. Therefore, districts will make a good faith effort to present all students with English learner status who did not complete the ELPA Summative in spring 2020 with the opportunity to be assessed on the ELPA Screener to determine their need for language services in school year 2020-21. ODE is calling this process **unique screening**.

Parameters

Districts whose local contexts allow for unique screening will complete the process between the dates of August 4, 2020 and November 20, 2020. Such districts must make a good faith effort to screen all eligible students during this window. For exceptions, see note on in-person attendance below, as well as the Parent communication section.

All students who would have been required to complete an ELPA Summative in spring 2020, but did not, are eligible for unique screening. This includes students who partially completed the ELPA Summative in spring 2020, as well as students who did not begin the ELPA Summative.

Districts may test students at any time during the unique screening window. Districts will develop local criteria for when to screen students, which will contain, at a minimum:

- Prioritizing students whose previous academic or observational data indicate are more likely to score Proficient

Local criteria could also include some or all of the following:

- Prioritizing students who are more likely to experience scheduling or course-taking impacts as a result of a Proficient determination (such as many secondary students)
- Scheduling testing with sensitivity to students' social-emotional state and potential COVID-related traumas
- Building in time for students to acclimate to new environments and new school routines

Since every Screener administration includes a one-to-one component, students must be present for in-person administration during the unique screening window to participate in unique screening. Students not present for in-person administration during this window (or students with a period of absence sufficient to render unique screening impossible) will not participate in unique screening and will experience no change in their English learner status.

Students must be screened at their current enrolled grade for school year 2020-21. For example, a student who was scheduled to take the Grade 7 ELPA Summative in spring 2020, but did not due to COVID-related school closures, and who advances to 8th Grade during the 2020-21 school year, will be screened on the Grade 8 Screener.

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Students participating in unique screening must be tested under a Temporary ID, even if they have no ELPA Screener score associated with their Secure Student ID (SSID). Districts should *not* merge Temporary IDs created for unique screening purposes with SSIDs. Districts should *not* use an SSID for unique screening. This could overwrite existing screener data and add confusion to a student’s ELP testing history. As unique screening scores cannot be linked to a student’s SSID in TIDE, it is recommended that districts preserve these scores in their local information systems where possible (digitally, physically, or both).

If a Temporary ID already exists for a student with the same name or birthdate as the student about to participate in unique screening, a warning dialogue box will appear asking the district to verify creation of a new Temporary ID. This is a cautionary measure intended to reduce unintentional rescreening of students. Districts should confirm the creation of a new Temporary ID and note the ORT# to help differentiate unique screening Temporary IDs from any Temporary IDs that may have been used to screen this student in the past. More recently-created Temporary IDs will have a higher ORT#.

Parent Communication

Districts should inform parents, guardians, and adult students (referred to in this guidance as “parents”) of intent to screen a student. In general, districts should adhere to the standards and procedures used when communicating with parents regarding standard screening, with the addition that unique screening is a special event precipitated by COVID-related disruptions to regular ELP testing, and helps supply districts with missing information for students who did not have the opportunity to complete the ELPA Summative in spring of 2020.

While districts are required to offer unique screening, parents may decline unique screening for any reason. If they do, the student will remain identified as an English learner for 2020-21 and participate in 2020-21 ELP testing. The student will participate in the district’s English language development program, unless the parent has signed a waiver for program participation. It is appropriate to inform parents of their right to decline unique screening and the effects of such a decision. It is not appropriate to attempt to influence a parent decision regarding unique screening.

Results, Interpretation, Impacts on Instruction and Testing

Unique screening is scored just like any other administration of the ELPA Screener. If a student scores 4 or higher in all nonexempt domains, that student is Proficient and will no longer have English learner status. Such students no longer need English language development services and will not participate in future administrations of the ELPA Summative.

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Students who score a 3 or lower in at least one nonexempt domain will remain in EL status and will continue to receive English language development services. Districts may use unique screening results to inform placement and instructional decisions for such students.

Districts will provide language services to all eligible students until their EL status is resolved via unique screening.

Reporting and EL Status

Students who participate in this unique screening will be reported to the 2020-21 Fall and Spring EL collections under the EL Record Type Code = CS (COVID Screener Participant). Under this code, students can be reported as continuing in the EL program or exiting the EL program based on scoring Proficient on the ELPA Screener. Students will be able to be reported with instructional program models (Program Model 1, 2 and 3) or reported as not participating in the program.

Students exiting the EL program through unique screening will enter monitor status the school year following the exit. As students are unique screening in 20-21 the school year, they will be reported as monitor year 1 in the 21-22 school year. Accountability for ELs scoring Proficient during this unique screening will be determined at a later date. It is not yet clear if or how COVID-related factors will impact accountability during the 2020-21 school year.

Special Considerations

Practice Step 1

Practice Step 1 is primarily intended for students who may be encountering the ELPA interface for the first time. Many students participating in unique screening will be familiar with the ELPA interface and may wish to skip or “click through” Practice Step 1. Some students may wish to proceed more slowly so as to re-acclimate themselves to the test.

The decision of how rapidly to proceed through Practice Step 1 lies with the student. It is appropriate to inform students that items in Practice Step 1 are unscored and may be skipped without impacting the student’s score. It is not appropriate to attempt to influence student decisions in this area.

To maintain physical distancing and minimize handling of surfaces by multiple individuals, it is permissible for students who fully understand the purpose and function of Practice Step 1 to request that a TA advance through Practice Step 1 on their behalf. If there is any doubt that a student fully understands the purpose and function of Practice Step 1, they should be given the opportunity to participate in this step.

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Mobile Students, In-district and Inter-district Transfers

If a student with English learner status changes schools or districts during the unique screening window, the receiving school or district should make a good faith effort to discover if the student:

- Is eligible for unique screening, and
- Has not yet participated in unique screening in any of their districts of origin.

If both of the above criteria are met, test the student. Otherwise, do not test the student; the student will retain their EL status and participate in the ELPA Summative in spring 2021.

Accommodations and Supports

Districts should test students using the most up-to-date accommodation and support decisions available. Because unique screening is intended to measure a student’s need for language services during the coming school year, districts are not required to reproduce the support profile that a student would have used on the 2020 Summative; rather, they should test using the most appropriate profile for the student given current knowledge.

If there is uncertainty about the appropriateness of a student’s support profile, best practice would suggest that the district wait to test until the student’s IEP or 504 team has convened and discussed an appropriate support profile for unique screening.

Testing Multiple Students

While it is not possible to conduct truly simultaneous screening for a group of students, it is possible to arrange a “staggered start” for students who are confident with the interface and able to proceed independently. A TA’s one-to-one responsibilities for such students end after the Step 2 “on the fly” Speaking items. Districts with significant populations of students who are able to test independently could schedule testing so that students arrive one by one for their “staggered start” time to increase testing efficiency. However, note that cleaning and physical distancing considerations will likely introduce delays into several steps of the testing procedure.

Beginning the 2020-21 School Year with Distance Learning

Due to COVID-related factors, some districts may begin the 2020-21 school year with a distance learning model and delay implementation of in-person instruction.

To summarize information found earlier in this document:

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- In-person screening (including both standard and unique screening) is available under any educational model.
- Districts may decline to pursue in-person screening if they have good reason (discussed under In-Person Identification).
- In the absence of such good reasons, the district should make a good faith effort to offer unique screening opportunities to all eligible students, within the limits of the unique screening window.
 - Districts must develop local criteria to prioritize unique screening order for eligible students.
 - Eligible students who do not or cannot participate in unique screening (due to insufficient time, resources, unexpected absences, etc.) will retain their EL status and will participate in the next available ELPA Summative administration.

Administering the ELPA Screener with Physical Distancing

Guidance for All Administrations of the ELPA Screener

Districts must observe appropriate physical distancing while screening students for possible change in English learner status. Since every English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA) Screener begins with a one-to-one Test Administrator (TA) and student component, ODE makes the following recommendations. The following serves as a supplement to (not a replacement of) health protocol guidance already present in ODE's [Ready Schools, Safe Learners](#) guidance (Sections 1-3). Guidance found in Ready Schools, Safe Learners is not reproduced here; TAs should review the relevant sections of Ready Schools, Safe Learners and be familiar with the related health and safety protocols put in place at their schools.

The requirements and recommendations below apply to all administrations of the ELPA Screener with physical distancing, including both standard and unique screening. (Note also that the US Department of Education has confirmed that English learner identification timelines for 2020-21 remain the same as in previous years: 30 days from the beginning of the school year, 14 calendar days once the school year has begun.)

Practice Step 1

The purpose of this step is to determine student facility with technology, identify possible need for technology assistance, and evaluate student participation. All of these observations should be possible while maintaining appropriate physical distancing.

Note: At the end of Step 1, the TA is required to indicate whether and to what degree a student is participating in the Screener. This is the TA's responsibility, not the student's, and will require the TA to momentarily operate the student computer. If the TA mistakenly ends the Screener

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for a student who is in fact participating, there is no need to create a new Temporary ID. The district should submit a test impropriety and request that the Screener be reopened.

Students who need technology assistance

If a student needs direct assistance from the TA throughout screening, the district will need to plan for a longer testing session than normal, depending on student need. Some students may only need help with a few tasks, while others may need the TA to make all answer selections on their behalf. Solutions in this situation will likely need to be tailored to the individual student. Refer to suggestions outlined under General Recommendations below.

The concept of “needing technology assistance” should be evaluated with care. A physically distanced environment may impact the feasibility or effectiveness of technology-related TA prompts or suggestions. One-to-one assistance may be appropriate for more students (or different students) than without physical distancing. This decision should be made based on what is most likely to enable the student to fully demonstrate what they know and can do in English on the Screener.

Step 2—“On the fly” Speaking scoring

Step 2 of the Screener begins with a set of Speaking items that must be scored on site, in real time (“on the fly”) by the TA. This requires the TA and student to exchange places, as the TA will enter the Speaking score on the student’s computer. In a physically distanced environment, the TA should be able to hear students who speak loudly and clearly; for softly-spoken students, the TA may need to “click back” to the items in question and listen to the recorded response (just as they would in a normal environment if they needed to hear the student speech sample multiple times).

Headsets and microphones

The purpose of a headset is to preserve test security and minimize possible testing disruptions for other students. If these concerns are sufficiently addressed in the testing environment (for example, testing in a separate setting), the student may test using speakers or other appropriate audio devices.

Step 3

There are no TA scoring responsibilities during Step 3 of the Screener. Physical distancing adaptations will only be needed for students who require one-to-one technology assistance from the TA.

General Recommendations

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Under normal circumstances, screening procedures require TAs and students to handle the same equipment (keyboard, mouse, laptop, tablet, etc.). In addition, students who need one-to-one technology assistance would normally need to work in close proximity with the TA throughout screening.

The optimal solution for these challenges in a given district or school will vary depending on available resources and the nature of assistance required by students. Some guidelines and recommendations are listed below to help districts think through the best path for their local situation.

It is best practice for both district personnel and students to wear face coverings or face shields while sharing the same space (adhering to the most current statewide health and safety requirements if they are more stringent than this recommendation). If district personnel are to use health and safety equipment, including but not limited to disposable gloves and face masks, best practice would indicate they be trained in appropriate use of such equipment (see Ready Schools, Safe Learners guidance, p. 17).

In some districts, it may be useful to create a “staging area” where Practice Step 1 and the Speaking items in Step 2 of the Screener are administered. Students ready to proceed independently (and thus no longer needing one-to-one TA assistance) could subsequently relocate to a supervised independent work area.

Districts should also consider health and safety measures for non-testing visitors, such as family members or accompanying guardians who may need to wait on district premises while the student is testing. Waiting areas will need to be disinfected and sanitized according to the requirements in Section 2j in ODE’s Ready Schools, Safe Learners guidance (p. 25).

Requirements

- Students should wash their hands before and after using equipment (or sanitize if washing is not possible).
- Headsets and microphones should always be cleaned between uses. This is even more important in a COVID-impacted environment.
- If multiple students are to test on the same equipment, contact surfaces (keyboard, mouse, touch screens) should be cleaned between test sessions. The same is true for other contact surfaces in the testing area (chairs, tables, door handles, etc.).

Options for equipment handling and one-to-one technology assistance

- Attach multiple devices to the same computer (keyboard, mouse, etc.), or “rotate” devices during the testing session (such as swapping out one keyboard or mouse for another). TA uses one set, student uses the other.

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- It may be useful to clearly label or color code devices to indicate which are reserved for TA use and which for student use.
- Erect a clear plastic barrier between the student and TA.
 - When used in tandem with “multiple devices” above, equipment handled by TA would be on one side of the barrier, equipment handled by student on the other.
- Use device barriers such as keyboard or mouse covers.
 - Disposable barriers must be replaced between test sessions.
 - Reusable barriers must be cleaned between uses.
- TA wears gloves while operating student testing equipment.
 - If the TA is testing one student at a time, the TA should change gloves between test sessions. If the TA is testing multiple students simultaneously, they should use a different set of gloves to handle each set of equipment.
 - If the test is to be taken on a device with a touch screen, the district should verify beforehand if gloves to be used by the TA still permit conductivity sufficient to operate the screen. If touching a bare screen cannot be avoided, the TA should wash or sanitize their hands before and after operating the screen.
- Project the test on a screen, wall, or markable surface for students to indicate their answer choices.
- Lay a transparent, writeable and erasable surface over the screen so that students can mark their preferred answer.
 - Any objects handled by students, such as markers, must be cleaned before and after testing.
- Adaptive use of other existing designated supports or universal tools, such as Scratch Paper.

Contact information

For questions about funding and reporting, please contact [Kim Miller](#).

For other questions about this guidance, please contact [Ben Wolcott](#).