**IMPORTANT CHANGES IN THE 2024 GUIDANCE ON ENGLISH LEARNER EDUCATION SERVICES AND PROGRAMMING**

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| **TOPIC** | **CHANGED/ADDED** | **DESCRIPTION** |
| **TERMINOLOGY** | | |
| Multilingual Learner (ML) & English Learner Terminology (EL) | ADDED | The Department clarified the context in which ML and EL terms will be used. |
| SLIFE definition | CHANGED | Edited based on feedback from stakeholders. Updates to SLIFE guidance will be available soon. |
| **INITIAL IDENTIFICATION** | | |
| Home Language Survey | CHANGED | Districts should administer the HLS provided by the Department to the parents of all new students enrolling in Pre-Kindergarten (Pre-K) through 12th grade. Districts will only use questions provided by the Department. |
| Interpretation of Home Language Surveys (HLS) | ADDED | Establish clear procedures to interpret HLS responses, including next steps that should be taken if responses are unclear or contradictory. |
| Parent Notification Regarding English Language Education | ADDED | Parent Notification Regarding English Language Education is added to step 3 of the diagram for initial identification. |
| Pre-K identification | CHANGED | Pre-K Screening tool will replace the tests (Pre-LAS, Pre-IPT) districts were using before. Districts should use the Pre-K Screening Tool provided by the Department to assess the English language proficiency of these students. |
| Identification and Parent Notification Deadline for Pre-K Students | CHANGED | Districts will provide parents of ELs identified for participation or participating in an ELE program, including identified Pre-K students, with a notification within the first 30 days of the school year.  If initial identification of a student as an EL occurs during the school year, this notification must be provided to parents within the first two weeks of the student’s enrollment in an ELE program. |
| Kindergarten Identification | CHANGED | All incoming Kindergarten students who have a language other than English on their HLS must be screened with WIDA Screener for Kindergarten regardless of their EL or non-EL status when they were in Pre-K.  Students who were identified as ELs in PreK, but do not qualify for ELE services based on the WIDA Screener for Kindergarten will not be considered FELs. |
| SLIFE Identification | EMPHASIZED | Strong recommendation to identify SLIFE to meet their linguistic and academic needs. |
| Exceptions for screening: Students Transferring from other WIDA States- CHANGED | CHANGED | ACCESS score lower than 4.2 overall and 3.9 literacy score: No need to screen for English language proficiency. Code the student as an EL and start providing services.    ACCESS score higher than 4.2 overall and 3.9 literacy score: No need to screen for English language proficiency. You can reclassify the student as FEL and start the 4-year FEL monitoring process.    ACCESS score lower than 4.2 overall and 3.9 literacy score, but the student met the exit criteria of the state they came from and reclassified as a FEL.  Massachusetts cannot accept the other state's reclassification determination based on their exit criteria. No need to screen for English language proficiency, but code the student as an EL and start providing services. |
| Early Administration of WIDA Screener to Incoming Kindergarten Students | CHANGED | If the district is administering the WIDA Screener for Kindergarten to students preceding their initial enrollment in kindergarten, the earliest recommended testing window is from mid-April to June. |
| **ELE SERVICES** | | |
| The table for recommended periods of ESL instruction | CHANGED | Level 3 counts as a Transitional level of proficiency. Overall cut scores for Foundational and Transitional levels of proficiency have been removed. Level 1 and Level 2 students are considered as Foundational, and Level 3 and Level 4 students are considered Transitional. The guidance includes some scenarios. |
| ELE services for Newcomers | ADDED | The Department provided additional guidance for ELE services for Newcomers. |
| Avoiding Unnecessary Segregation for ELs | ADDED | The Department provided additional guidance for self-contained programs for districts, to carry out these programs in the least segregative manner. |
| Scenarios to clarify program proposal applications | ADDED | The Department added another scenario that clarifies the requirement for districts that open the same program at different locations. |
| ELPAC Collaboration for Program Proposals | CLARIFIED | A district that intends to offer a new sheltered English immersion or alternative instructional English learner program in the next academic year must consult again with the ELPAC before the complete proposal is submitted for the Department’s review. |
| Students in Out-of-District Placements | ADDED | The school districts should make sure that:     * Parent notification letters as described in this document are sent to parents. * Students in out-of-district placement participate in ACCESS for ELLs testing as appropriate. * Students receive all services to which they are entitled. * Former English learners and students whose parents have opted them out of English learner services are monitored to make sure they receive the support they need to be successful in academics and English language acquisition. * They comply with all other applicable federal and state requirements. |
| RECLASSIFICATION | | |
| Reclassification criteria for ALT ACCESS | ADDED | The Department shared the reclassification criteria for students who take ACCESS ALT. DISTRICTS WILL NOT START RECLASSIFICATION PROCESS BEFORE THE DEPARTMENT PROVIDES CUT SCORES FOR THE NEW WIDA ALTERNATE ACCESS. |
| Reclassification criteria for ACCESS | CHANGED | All students who will score 4.2 or higher overall score and 3.9 or higher literacy score MUST be reclassified. |
| FEL monitoring | CHANGED | Language changed to align it to the OELA Toolkit Chapter 8. |
| Classifying FELs as ELs | CHANGED | Requirement for parent consent for re-entry |