***Step 2: SLIFE Interview – Sample List of Interview Questions***

**Directions**: If a school or district decides to use a voluntary interview as part of its SLIFE identification process, it may consider the following sample questions when designing its SLIFE interview protocol. Select only the most relevant questions that would fit within a reasonable interview time and yield the information you need. Consider which questions are most appropriate, depending on the student’s age and other factors.

After the initial broad list of potential interview questions below, you will find an example of how a district or school might select only the questions they find most relevant for their incoming students**.**

# Introductions, Interests, Goals

*Create a welcoming climate, make connections, and build rapport with the student.*

*Solicit student interests and hopes to provide them with school-based experiences that help advance their goals.*

Let me tell you a little bit about myself. I am … I would like to get to know you a little so together we can figure out how the school can help you develop your interests and reach your goals. Is that okay with you? Would you like to tell me a little bit about yourself? If I ask any questions you don’t feel comfortable answering, you don’t have to answer them. If at any point you want to take a break or stop the conversation, just let me know.

1. What do you like to do outside of school? (e.g., sports, music, crafts, art, work, cook, read, play video games, babysit)
2. What are your hopes, or what excites you about coming to this new school?
3. What do you want to do when you leave school?
   1. What kind of job would you like to have?
   2. Would you like to go to college?

## Background

*Invite the student to share aspects of their background, allowing you to gain insights into the cultures and languages they’ve encountered. Additionally, this approach can subtly provide clues about their social-emotional well-being.*

1. Tell me about your background: Share some details about where you’ve lived and your experiences growing up.
   1. Where else have you lived?
   2. How long did you live there?
   3. What was it like growing up/living there?
   4. What did you most like about it?
   5. What language(s) did you speak?

## Current Living Situation

*Learn about the student’s current living situation to gather clues about potential needs for other support, such as wraparound services.*

1. What is your new home like in Massachusetts?
   1. Who do you live with now?
   2. What languages are spoken at home?
   3. Do the languages change depending on the time or situation?
   4. Do you watch TV? If so, in what languages?
   5. When you talk to your friends, what language(s) do you use?
2. Do you currently work?
   1. What kind of work do you do?
   2. Did you work in your home country? If so, what did you do?
3. There are many great family organizations in Massachusetts. Are you or your family/caregiver currently engaging with any such programs? (e.g., refugee case management, health services, food pantry, assistance with housing, support for individuals who have experienced domestic violence)

**Previous Schooling Experiences**

*Learn about previous schooling experiences to better understand any gaps in formal education.*

1. How old were you when you started going to school?
2. How many years total did you attend school? (See Educational Background Review chart on page 50)
3. Where did you go to school last?
   1. What about before that—in what country (countries/U.S. states) have you attended school?
   2. In what language(s) were you taught in school?
4. How did you feel about going to school?
   1. What were some of your favorite things to do at school?
5. What subjects did you study?
   1. What was your favorite?
6. Tell me about a typical day in your favorite class.
   1. Tell me about two things that are different about school here in Massachusetts and in your previous country.
7. What were you like as a student?
   1. If your teachers were asked to describe you as a student, what do you think they would say?
   2. What felt easy or challenging at school?
8. What was the scheduling of your school day like?
   1. How many hours each day?

*If the student has difficulty specifying how many hours they attended school each day, could consider asking them -- What time did your school day usually start? What time did your school day usually end?*

* 1. How many days a week did you go to school?
  2. What month did the school year begin and end?
  3. If you remember, when were school breaks or vacations?

1. Did you regularly attend school?
   1. Are there times you did not attend school?
   2. Would you like to tell me what happened?
   3. How often did you have to miss school?
2. When did you stop going to your last school?
   1. What was the last grade you attended?

## Literacy, Numeracy, and Technology Practices

*Learn about previous academic experiences to gather clues about areas of strength and need, and potential academic support.*

1. What kinds of materials did you have in school? (e.g., books, notebooks, pencils, individual or shared computers)
2. Do you like to read?
   1. In what languages do you read?
   2. Currently, what are some of your favorite books/magazines/websites?
   3. What other types of reading did you do? (e.g., listen to and read song lyrics, read signs)
3. Do you like to draw?
4. Do you like to or write?
   1. Do you prefer to write on paper or on the computer?
   2. In what languages can you write?
5. How do you feel about math?
   1. What are some examples of how you use math in your life? (e.g., Did you have to count money and count change?)
6. What technology do you use? (e.g., computer, tablet, cell phone, video games)
   1. In what language(s)?
7. Do you have a computer/cell phone?
   1. If yes: What types of activities do you like to do on your computer or cell phone?

**Planning Introductions and Entry Into the Classroom**

*Learn about how the student would like to be introduced and supported in the classroom.*

1. How would you like to be introduced to your new teachers and classmates? For example, would you like me to share with your teachers and classmates where you are originally from, what languages you speak, how long you’ve been in the U.S. and Massachusetts, and some of your interests? Anything else?
2. How can your teachers help you feel comfortable in class?
   1. What kinds of strategies have worked in the past, and what might work in this new school setting? (e.g., materials in the home language, use of visuals, preference for sitting closer to the front of the classroom, preferences for partner or small group activities)
   2. What worries do you have about starting in a new school?
3. What would you like your teachers to know about you?
   1. Are there any holidays or observances your teacher should be aware of?
   2. Do you have any dietary restrictions?
   3. Is there anything else you would like to share about yourself?
4. Are you interested in participating in any school clubs or playing a sport after school?
5. What questions do you have right now about coming to this new school?
6. Is there anything else you would like to share with me?

# SLIFE Interview: Sample District Interview Form

This is a sample interview form. Adapt as needed for your school's and student's context. Images can be helpful visual aids to support students during school intake interviews, helping to bridge language barriers and facilitate clearer communication with students and families/caregivers. The icons below are intended to generate ideas for images that schools may consider incorporating into their interview processes. It's important to note that while 2-dimensional images may be helpful for some students, they may not be as effective for others, so flexibility in approach is key.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Pre-Interview: Demographic Information**  *Consider completing this demographic section prior to the interview with the student/caregiver.* | |
| Date of interview: Time: Location: Student’s name: SASID: Place of birth: Date of birth: Age: Gender and preferred pronouns: Who is being interviewed? ◻ Student ◻ Caregiver ◻ Other  Name of person being interviewed, if not student: Interviewer’s name: Title: Interpreter’s name (if applicable):  In what language is this interview being conducted? | *Notes* |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **SLIFE Interview Sample Form: Personal Information**[**9**](#_bookmark0) | |
| **Interviewer** | **Student or caregiver response** |
| Let me tell you a little bit about myself. I am … I would like to get to know you a little so together we can figure out how the school can help you develop your interests and reach your goals. Is that okay with you?   1. Would you like to tell me a little bit about yourself?    * For example, what do you like to do outside of school? (e.g., sports, music, crafts, art, work, cook, read, play videogames, babysit) |  |
| 1. Can you tell me a little about your previous home/country?    * How long did you live there? What did you like most about it? What was it like growing up there? |  |
| 1. What is your new home like in Massachusetts?    * Who do you live with now? |  |

9 Graphics from Illustrated WIDA Guiding Principles, Microsoft stock images, Google searches.

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| --- | --- |
| **SLIFE Interview Sample Form: Previous Schooling** | |
| **Interviewer** | **Student or caregiver response** |
| 4. How old were you when you started going to school? | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18 |
| 5. How many years total did you attend school? | Classroom with solid fill  0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 |
| 6. In what countries have you attended school? In what language(s) were you taught? Have you attended school in any  other U.S. states? If yes, which states? |  |
| 7. Tell me about two things that are different about school here in Massachusetts and in your previous country. | Teach Kids About The Concept of "Same & Different" = ≠ |
| 8. What subjects did you study the last time you were in school? | Illustration of comedy and tragedy theater masks |
| 1. What was the scheduling of your school day like?    * How many hours each day? *If the student has difficulty specifying how many hours they attended school each day, could consider asking them -- What time did your school day usually start? What time did your school day usually end?*    * How many days a week did you go to school?    * What month did the school year begin and end?    * If you remember, when were school breaks or vacations? |  |
| 10. How often did you have to miss school? |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **SLIFE Interview Sample Form: Literacy, Numeracy, and Technology Practices** | |
| **Interviewer Student or caregiver response** | |
| 1. Do you like to read?    * What are some of your favorite books/magazines/websites now?    * In what languages are they? | A yellow face with white eyes and a white line |
| 1. Do you like to write?    * In what languages? | A yellow face with white eyes and a white line |
| 1. How do you feel about math?    * What are some examples of how you use math in your life? |  |
| 1. Do you have a computer/cell phone?    * If yes: What types of activities do you like to do on your computer or cell phone? |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **SLIFE Interview Sample Form: Future Plans/Planning Introductions** | |
| **Interviewer** | **Student or caregiver response** |
| 15. What do you want to do when you leave school? Go to college? Work? |  |
| 16. What excites you about coming to this new school? | Grinning face with solid fill with solid fill |
| 17. What worries you about coming to this new school? | Confused face with solid fill with solid fill |
| 1. How can your teachers help you feel comfortable in class?    * What support would be most helpful to you?    * What has worked well in the past? |  |
| 19. How would you like to be introduced to your new teachers and classmates? |  |
| 20. Do you have any dietary restrictions? |  |
| 21. Is there anything else you would like to share about yourself? |  |