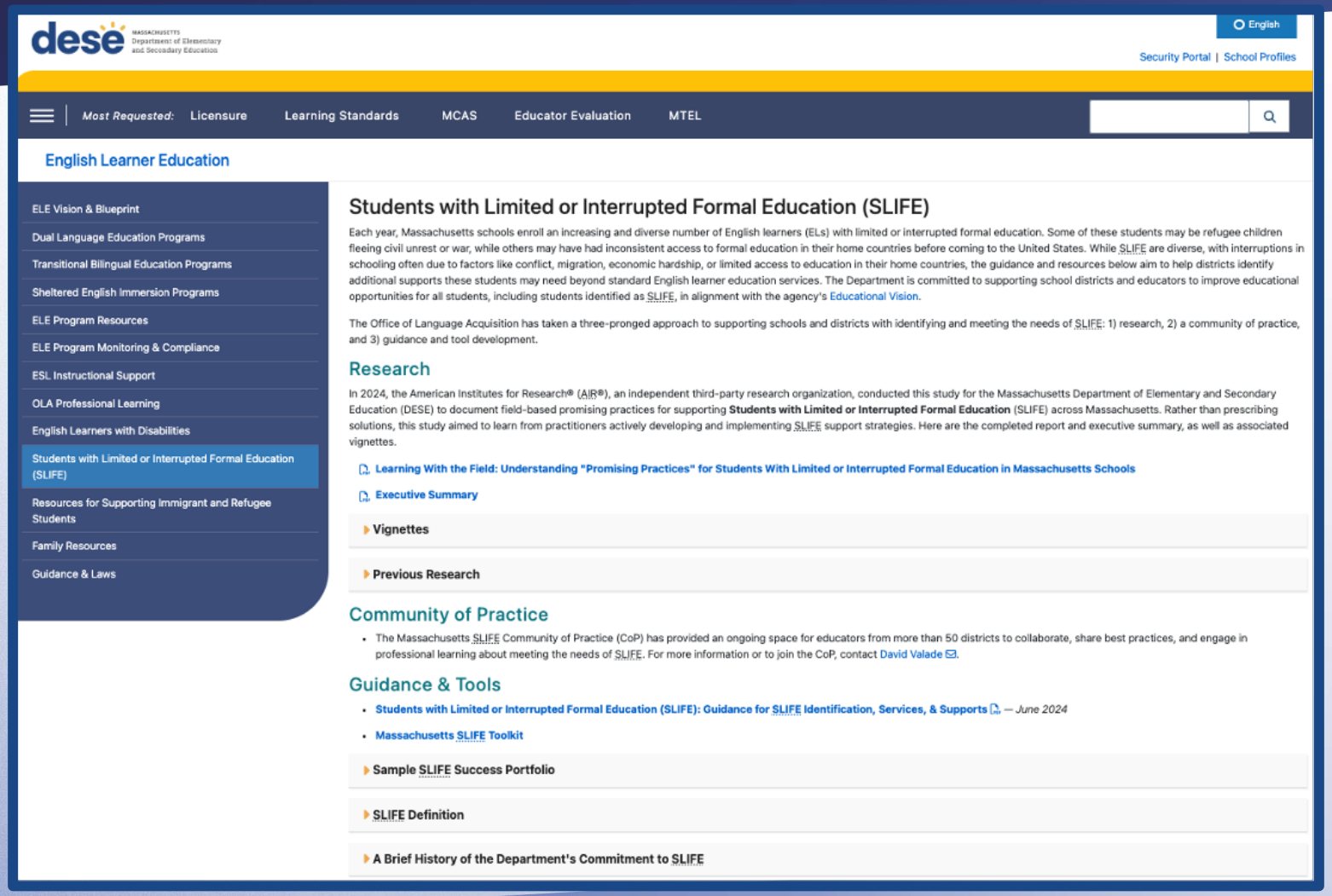
SLIFE District Self-Assessment

Training Webinar

Summer 2025

MASSACHUSETTS
Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

DESE SLIFE Guidance



https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/slife/default.html

Agenda–Part 1

Part 1

1. SLIFE District Self-Assessment:
   - Background and Purpose
2. Introduce the SLIFE District Self-Assessment process:
   - Assembling the Team
   - Reviewing Elements of Tool
   - Reflecting on Self-Check
   - Developing an Action Plan

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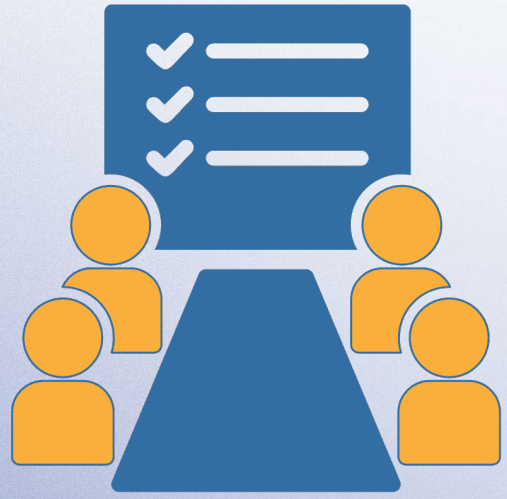
Agenda–Part 2



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Part 2

1. Diving into Steps 1–3
2. Diving into Step 4
    a. Academic and Linguistic Support
    b. Social-Emotional Support
    c. Family and Community Connections
    d. Progress Monitoring and Exiting SLIFE
3. Self-Check Reflections
4. Action Planning
5. Wrap-Up and Next Steps

SLIFE District Self-Assessment

Background and Purpose

Background

Each year, Massachusetts schools enroll an increasing number of diverse English learners (ELs) with limited or interrupted formal education.

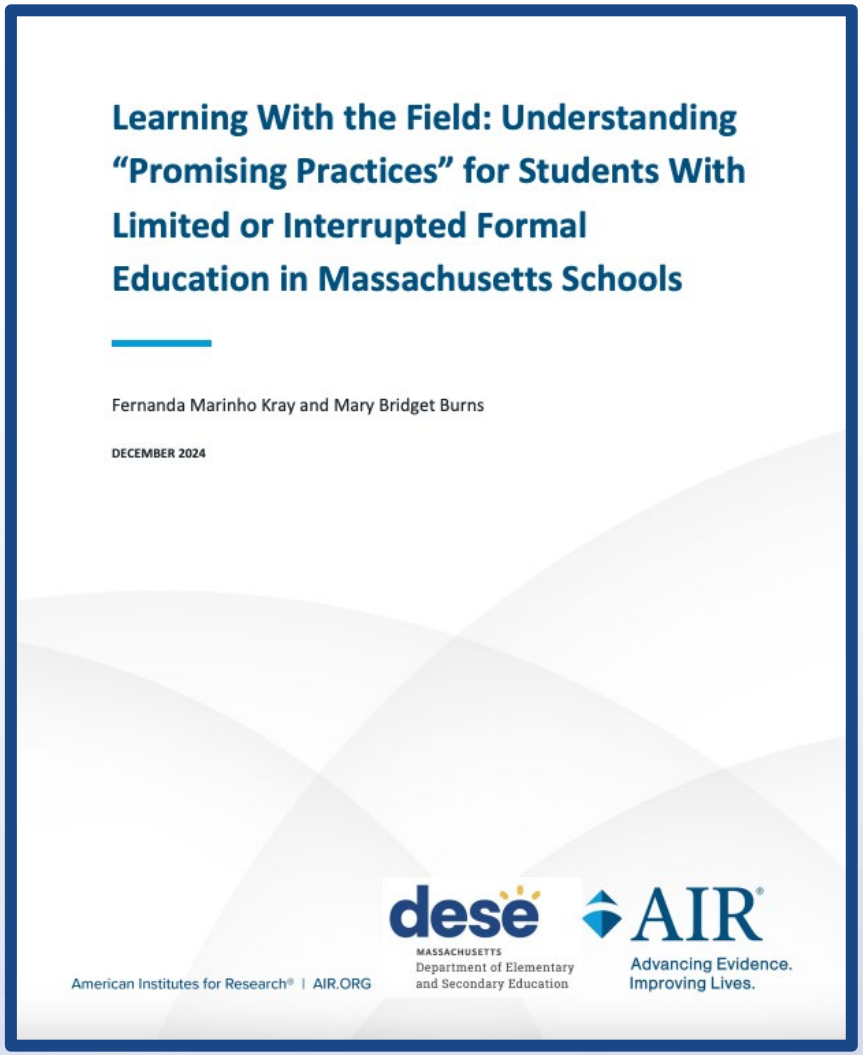
SLIFE:

Students with limited or interrupted formal education

Three-Pronged Approach

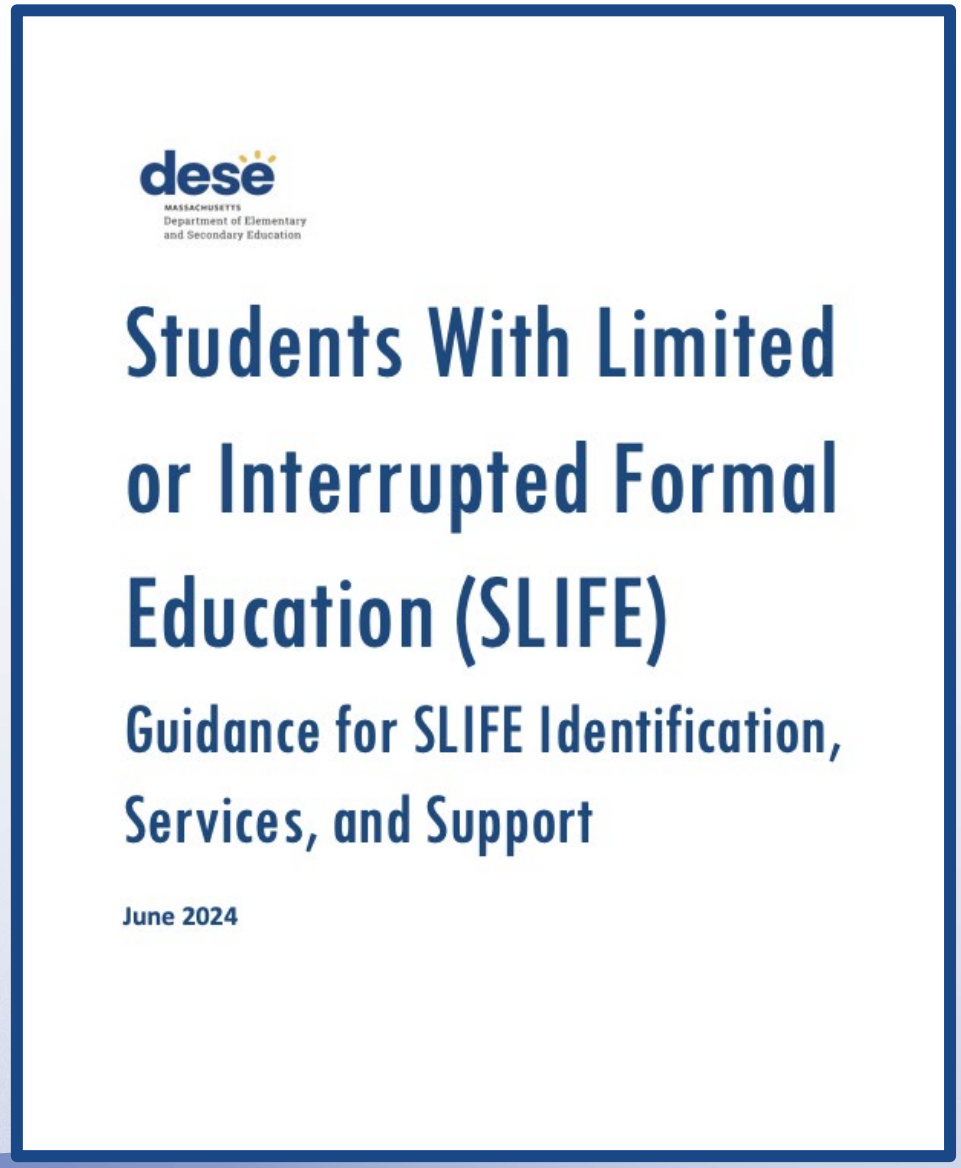
The DESE Office of Language Acquisition has taken a three-pronged approach to supporting schools and districts with identifying and meeting the needs of SLIFE: (1) research, (2) a community of practice, and (3) guidance and tool development.

Three-Pronged Approach – Research



Three-Pronged Approach – Community of Practice

Three-Pronged Approach – Guidance and Tool Development



Purpose

The SLIFE District Self-Assessment will:

- Enable Massachusetts school districts to assess their services and programming for SLIFE for alignment with the DESE SLIFE guidance document (2024)
- Facilitate data-driven decision-making for program improvement and resource allocation
- Support districts in better meeting the academic, linguistic, and social-emotional strengths and needs of SLIFE
- Provide a framework for developing a districtwide or schoolwide action plan

Components

Key Components	Description
SLIFE District Self-Assessment	SLIFE District Self-Assessment aligned to DESE SLIFE guidance steps
Self-Check	Allows districts and/or schools to reflect on the strengths and needs of the processes in place for identifying and meeting the needs of SLIFE
Action Plan Template	Allows districts and/or schools to develop an action plan to address needed improvements for identifying and meeting the needs of SLIFE

Overview

- The format is a paper document.
- District teams will assess themselves on key indicators addressing the implementation of SLIFE policies, programs, and practices.
- The district team will then tabulate the average scores across all four steps to review for action planning.
- A Google Sheets version will also be available to your teams. **https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1X6eTAV4ec0FfxmTwBI7b5CI18rdL-ciS/copy**

SLIFE District Self-Assessment – Assembling the Team

Form a SLIFE Planning Team

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Who Should Be on the SLIFE Planning Team

1. Central and building administrators
2. Coaches
3. Content and English as a Second Language teachers
4. Special Educators
5. Specialists serving SLIFE
6. Guidance and adjustment counselors
7. Nurses
8. Family liaisons
9. Registration staff
10. Intake personnel
11. Families
12. Students

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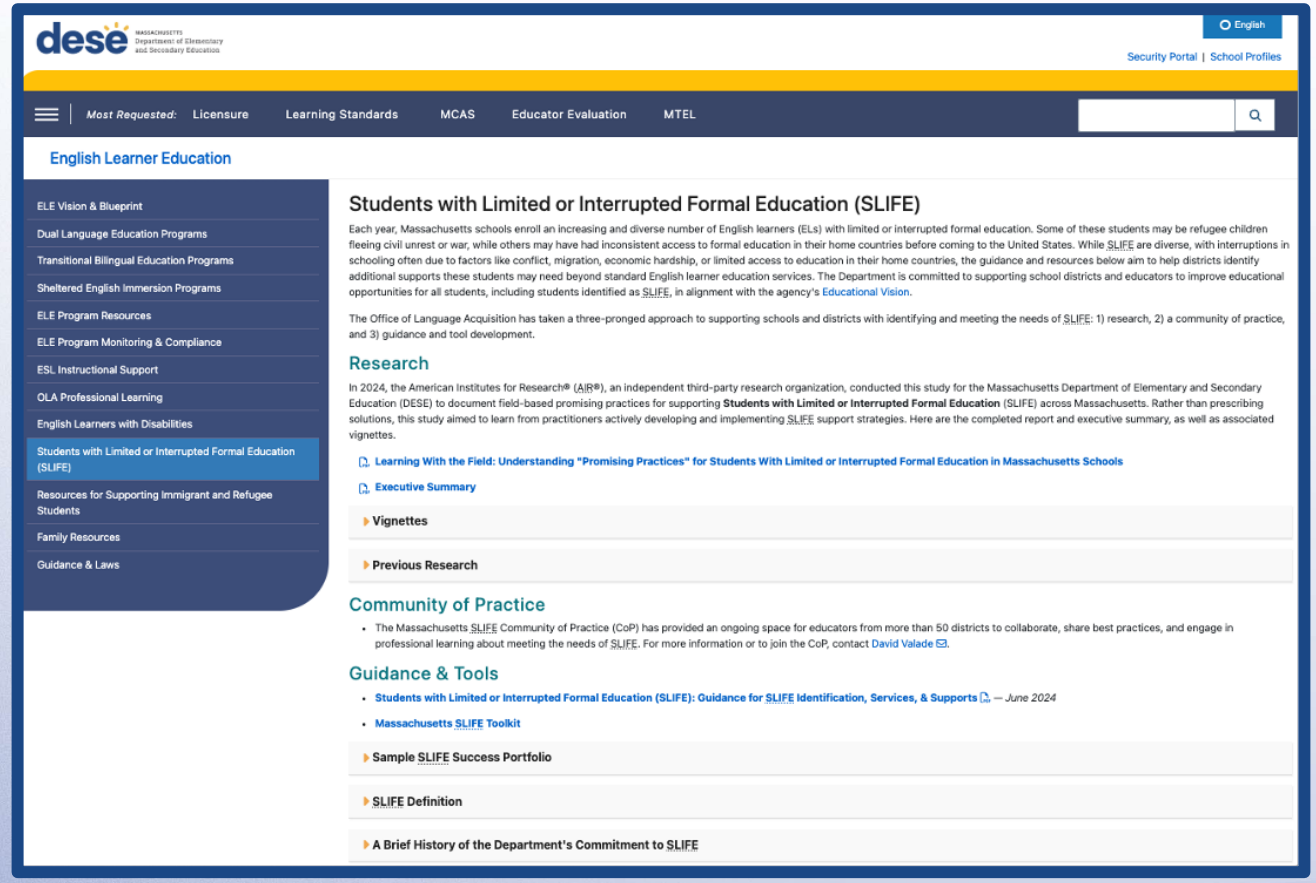
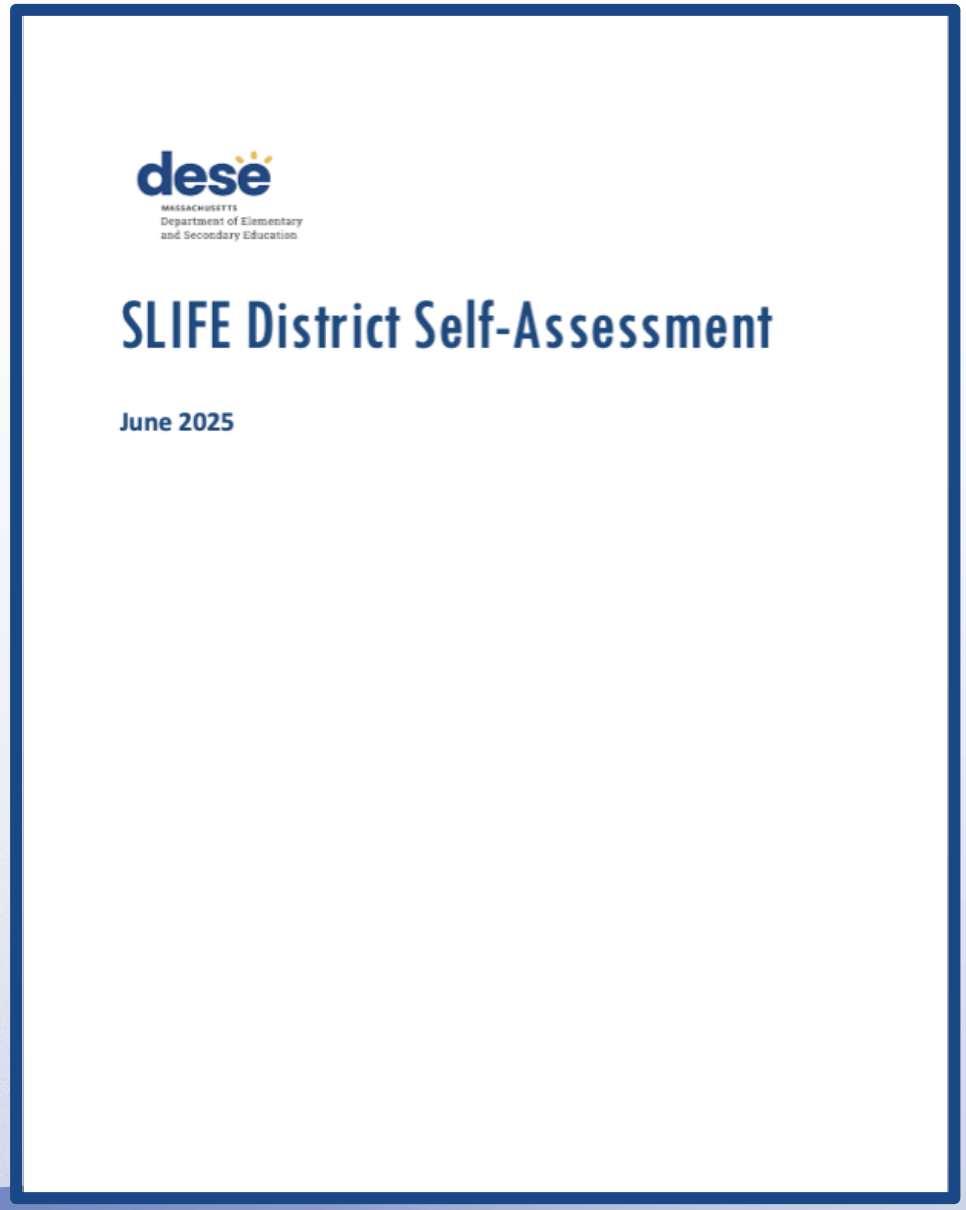
SLIFE District Self-Assessment Elements of the Tool

Guidance Document



The Tool


dese
MASSACHUSETTS
Department of Elementary
and Secondary Education
SLIFE District Self-Assessment
June 2025

Instructions

Overview

Each year, Massachusetts schools have enrolled an increasing and diverse number of English learners (ELs) with limited or interrupted formal education. Some of these students may be refugee children fleeing civil unrest or war, while others may have had inconsistent access to formal education in their home countries before coming to the United States. Although students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE) are diverse, with interruptions in schooling often due to factors like conflict, migration, economic hardship, or limited access to education in their home countries, the guidance and resources that follow are intended to help districts identify the additional supports that these students may need beyond standard EL education services. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) is committed to supporting school districts and educators in their efforts to improve educational opportunities for all students, including students identified as SLIFE, in alignment with the agency's Educational Vision.

DESE's Office of Language Acquisition has taken a three-pronged approach to supporting schools and districts with identifying and meeting the needs of SLIFE: (1) research, (2) a community of practice, and (3) guidance and tool development. This SLIFE District Self-Assessment is part of a robust ecosystem of resources designed to help schools and districts to plan effectively to meet the needs of SLIFE and their families.

Purpose

The SLIFE District Self-Assessment will:

- Enable Massachusetts school districts to assess their services and programming for SLIFE to ensure that such services and programming align with the DESE Guidance for SLIFE Identification, Services, and Support (2024) (hereafter "guidance document");
- Facilitate data-driven decision-making for program improvement and resource allocation;
- Support districts in better meeting the academic, linguistic, and social-emotional strengths and needs of SLIFE; and
- Provide a framework for developing a districtwide or schoolwide action plan.

Components

The SLIFE District Self-Assessment is aligned with DESE's Guidance for SLIFE Identification, Services, and Support. It allows teams to rate your district's readiness for addressing the needs of SLIFE. The tool provides space for individuals or teams to reflect on their ratings for the SLIFE systems that are in place in the district and identify places where those systems can be improved or developed. The final part of the tool provides a structure that teams can use to develop a district action plan.

How to Use the SLIFE District Self-Assessment

1. **Convene a SLIFE Planning Team.** Team composition may vary according to district size, staffing roles, and other characteristics. At the very least, the team should include staff with SLIFE expertise (or identify members to develop new SLIFE expertise) as well as administrators who can secure resources to implement changes to systems to meet the needs of SLIFE (e.g., placement, services, support, programming). Team composition could include key leads and various stakeholders—for example, central and building administrators, coaches, content and language teachers at different grade levels, special educators, specialists serving SLIFE, guidance and adjustment counselors, nurses, family liaisons, registration staff, intake personnel, families, and students. See Guidance for SLIFE Identification, Services, and Support (p. 10). Additional support can be found in the Massachusetts SLIFE Toolkit.

   If the team prefers to use an interactive spreadsheet version of the SLIFE District Self-Assessment in Google Sheets, they can request the link from el@doe.mass.edu.

2. **Assess.** Review the indicators for each step in the SLIFE Identification, Services, and Support four-step process and rate each indicator. It may be helpful for teams to have DESE's Guidance for SLIFE Identification, Services, and Support close by so that they can refer to the steps in more detail as they complete the scoring process. Score each indicator using the following conventions:

   1 = Not in place. We do not have any parts of this element in place.

   2 = Partially in place. We are working toward having this element in place but are just at the beginning stages.

   3 = Mostly in place. We have many parts of this element in place but not all of them are planned for or implemented yet.

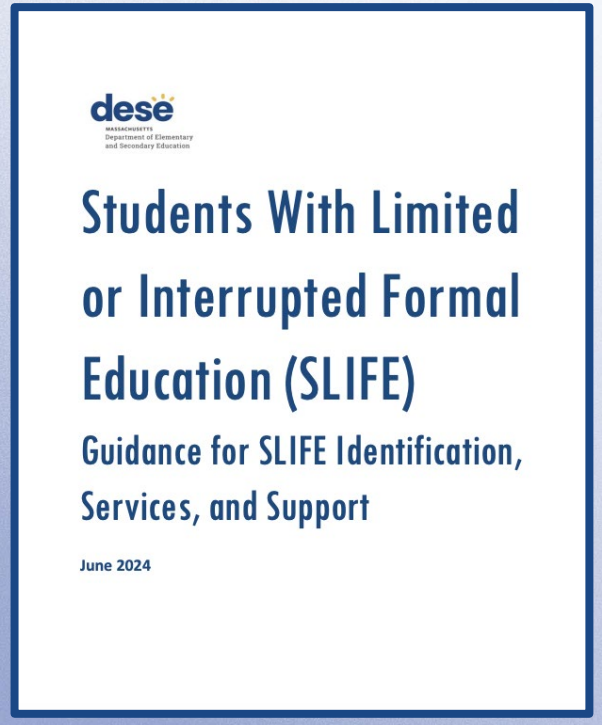
   4 = Fully in place. All components of this element are in place in terms of planning and implementation.

3. **Self-Check and Reflect.** After reviewing and scoring all indicators, reflect on the results. Identify the strengths or strongest indicators toward full systematic and comprehensive implementation as well as those indicators that may need to be further developed. Identify one to two areas that the team will prioritize as action items.

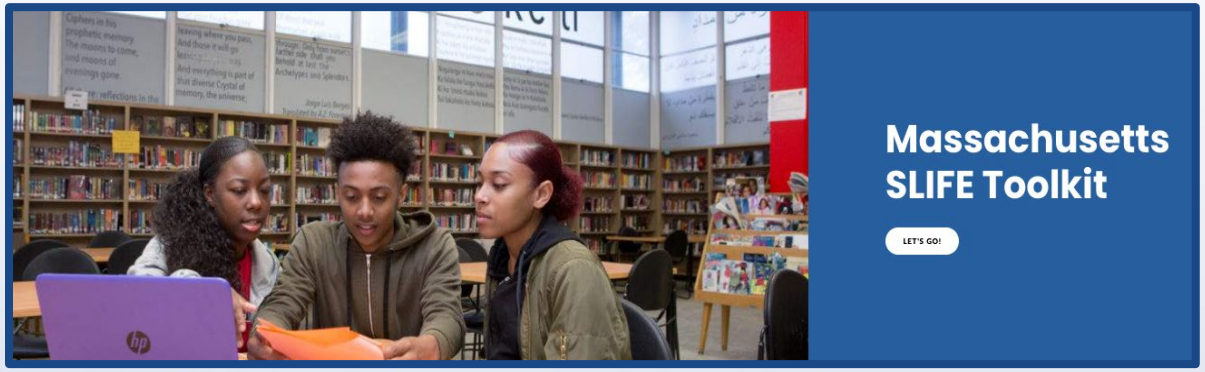
4. **Develop an Action Plan.** After reflection and prioritization, create an action plan that includes measurable goals and actions to be taken that focus on those areas for growth. Include a time-bound, realistic progression.

Links to Documents

Guidance Document



Toolkit



Scoring

2. **Assess.** Review the indicators for each step in the SLIFE Identification, Services, and Support four-step process and rate each indicator. It may be helpful for teams to have DESE's Guidance for SLIFE Identification, Services, and Support close by so that they can refer to the steps in more detail as they complete the scoring process. Score each indicator using the following conventions:

   1 = Not in place. We do not have any parts of this element in place.

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   4 = Fully in place. All components of this element are in place in terms of planning and implementation.

Scoring in Tool

Indicator	1 Not in place	2 Partially in place	3 Mostly in place	4 Fully in place	Notes
Pre-Screener: We have a Pre-Screener in place that is a consistent part of the registration process for all newly arrived ELs who are 8 years of age and older.	☐	☐	☐	☐	

Scoring Conventions

1. **Not in place:** We do not have any parts of this element in place.
2. **Partially in place:** We are working toward having this element in place but are just at the beginning stages.
3. **Mostly in place:** We have many parts of this element in place but not all of them are planned for or implemented yet.
4. **Fully in place:** All components of this element are in place in terms of planning and implementation.

Assessment Structure

First Three Steps

The first three steps of the four-step process are designed to work together as interconnected activities. Their purpose is not only to determine whether a student qualifies for SLIFE status but also to create a holistic, asset-based understanding of the student's interests, goals, strengths, and needs. The intake process integrates various types of data to build a comprehensive picture of a student's educational background and to assess their eligibility for SLIFE services. The initial three steps focus on gathering diverse and detailed information to support Step 4, where an individualized plan is developed to guide placement, services, and progress monitoring.

Step 1. Administer the Pre-Screener

In Step 1, a brief Pre-Screener is administered during enrollment to identify potential gaps in formal education and decide whether further screening is necessary.

Indicator	1 Not in place	2 Partially in place	3 Mostly in place	4 Fully in place	Notes
Pre-Screener: We have a Pre-Screener in place that is a consistent part of the registration process for all newly arrived ELs who are 8 years of age and older.	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Trained Staff: We systematically and comprehensively train appropriate staff to administer the SLIFE Pre-Screener with fidelity. Staff has been trained on the following topics: • The purpose of the SLIFE Pre-Screener • The components of the SLIFE Pre-Screener • How to administer each component of the SLIFE Pre-Screener in a consistent manner	☐	☐	☐	☐	

SLIFE District Self-Assessment
Step 1 – Administer the Pre-Screener

First Three Steps

Key Idea or Premise:

Develop a holistic, strengths-based understanding of the individual student.

Step 1 –

In Step 1, a brief Pre-Screener is administered during enrollment to identify potential gaps in formal education and decide whether further screening is necessary.

Step 1: Administer the Pre-Screener

Indicator	1 Not in place	2 Partially in place	3 Mostly in place	4 Fully in place	Notes
Pre-Screener: We have a Pre-Screener in place that is a consistent part of the registration process for all newly arrived ELs who are 8 years of age and older.	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Trained Staff: We systematically and comprehensively train appropriate staff to administer the SLIFE Pre-Screener with fidelity. Staff has been trained on the following topics: • The purpose of the SLIFE Pre-Screener • The components of the SLIFE Pre-Screener • How to administer each component of the SLIFE Pre-Screener in a consistent manner	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Indicator	**1 Not in place**	**2 Partially in place**	**3 Mostly in place**	**4 Fully in place**	**Notes**
Necessary Materials: We ensure that the staff administering the SLIFE Pre-Screener have gathered all the necessary materials to administer the Pre-Screener: • Information from registration/intake • Answer to the question - Is this a newly enrolled EL, 8 years of age or older? • Record review • SLIFE Pre-Screener document	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Administration Plan: We have developed a clear, systematic, and comprehensive plan for administering the SLIFE Pre-Screener that includes the following: • Scheduling • Logistics • Procedures for accommodating students as needed • Practice sessions where staff members can role-play administering the SLIFE Pre-Screener	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Sustained Quality of Administration: We continuously sustain the quality of the administration of the SLIFE Pre-Screener by: • Systematically and comprehensively evaluating the SLIFE Pre-Screener administration process • Identifying areas for improvement • Making necessary adjustments for future administration • Maintaining support for the systems in place • Ensuring that new staff are familiar with the process	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Total Scores Per Column					Average Score:

Step 1 – Five Indicators

- Pre-Screener
- Trained Staff
- Necessary Materials
- Administration Plan
- Sustained Quality of Administration

Scoring Reminder

1. **Not in place:** We do not have any parts of this element in place.
2. **Partially in place:** We are working toward having this element in place but are just at the beginning stages.
3. **Mostly in place:** We have many parts of this element in place but not all of them are planned for or implemented yet.
4. **Fully in place:** All components of this element are in place in terms of planning and implementation.

Evidence and Notes

Indicator	1 Not in place	2 Partially in place	3 Mostly in place	4 Fully in place	Notes
Necessary Materials: We ensure that the staff administering the SLIFE Pre-Screener have gathered all the necessary materials to administer the Pre-Screener: • Information from registration/intake • Answer to the question - Is this a newly enrolled EL, 8 years of age or older? • Record review • SLIFE Pre-Screener document	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Administration Plan: We have developed a clear, systematic, and comprehensive plan for administering the SLIFE Pre-Screener that includes the following: • Scheduling • Logistics • Procedures for accommodating students as needed • Practice sessions where staff members can role-play administering the SLIFE Pre-Screener	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Sustained Quality of Administration: We continuously sustain the quality of the administration of the SLIFE Pre-Screener by: • Systematically and comprehensively evaluating the SLIFE Pre-Screener administration process • Identifying areas for improvement • Making necessary adjustments for future administration • Maintaining support for the systems in place • Ensuring that new staff are familiar with the process	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Total Scores Per Column					Average Score:

Evidence and Notes

SLIFE District Self-Assessment Self-Check

Self-Check Guiding Questions

Self-Check

Return to the average scores for each step and focal point in the assessment and add those scores below.

Element	Average Scores
Step 1. Administer the Pre-Screener	
Step 2. Conduct the SLIFE Interview	
Step 3. Administer Academic Background Screener(s)	
Step 4. Develop a SLIFE Services and Support Plan	
• Step 4: Focal Point 1: Academic and Linguistic Support	
• Step 4: Focal Point 2: Social-Emotional Support	
• Step 4: Focal Point 3: Family and Community Connections	
• Step 4: Focal Point 4: Progress Monitoring and Exiting SLIFE Status	
Average Score for Step 4 and the Four Focal Points	

Reflection

- **Which of the steps in the four-step process are your strongest?**
- **Which steps need to be developed further?**
- **Which step would you like to prioritize for improvement?**
  - Select an area within your prioritized area(s) to serve as a goal for growth. This area reflects how you will focus on strengthening your priority area. Refer to the priority area where you scored in the lower range.
  - Use the priorities that you have chosen to identify a problem of practice in your school or district. This problem of practice will help you develop the action plan.

SLIFE District Self-Assessment Action Plan

Action Planning and Immediate Actions

Action Plan

Next Steps

Discuss the results of the self-assessment with the team. Allow the team enough time to contemplate what their priorities are for SLIFE services. Determine actions steps or goals for three phases: (1) Do Now, (2) Do Soon, and (3) Do Later.

The following are guiding questions to help the team determine its next steps.

Immediate Action/Goal: Do Now

1. Identify specific actions to implement over the next month to improve practice.
2. List potential actions such as workshops, coaching conversations, or resources.

Action/Goal (Specific and Realistic)	Resources Needed (Specific)	By When? (Time Related)	Outcome (Measurable)
Example: Participate in professional learning opportunities, both asynchronous and synchronous, to enhance our understanding of SLIFE support needs	Example: Time and personnel; technology; DESE resources	Example: February/March 2026	Example: We will build our ability to effectively support and involve educators in the educational process for SLIFE, ensuring that SLIFE receive the appropriate support and resources they need. As a result, educators will feel more included and engaged, leading to better educational outcomes for SLIFE.

Near Future Action/Goal: Do Soon

Near Future Action/Goal: Do Soon

1. Identify specific actions to implement over the next 6–12 months to improve practice.
2. List potential actions from workshops, coaching conversations, or resources.

Action/Goal (Specific and Realistic)	Resources Needed (Specific)	By When? (Time Related)	Outcome (Measurable)
Example: Administer a survey to educators to identify common concerns regarding the provision of SLIFE services	Example: Time and personnel; survey and feedback tools; technology	Example: May 2026	Example: By identifying common educator concerns regarding the provision of SLIFE services, we will be able to effectively address their concerns and improve communication and collaboration with staff.

Long-Term Action/Goal: Do Later

Long-Term Action/Goal: Do Later

1. Identify specific actions to implement over the next 12–18 months to improve practice.
2. List potential actions from workshops, coaching conversations, or resources.

Action/Goal (Specific and Realistic)	Resources Needed (Specific)	By When? (Time Related)	Outcome (Measurable)
Example: Revise the training to address the knowledge and skill of educators and enhance educator engagement	Example: Time and personnel; clear guidelines and templates	Example: December 2026	Example: We will create a more supportive environment, improve communication, increase educator involvement, and provide better educational outcomes for SLIFE by ensuring that educators feel more connected and informed.

Discussion

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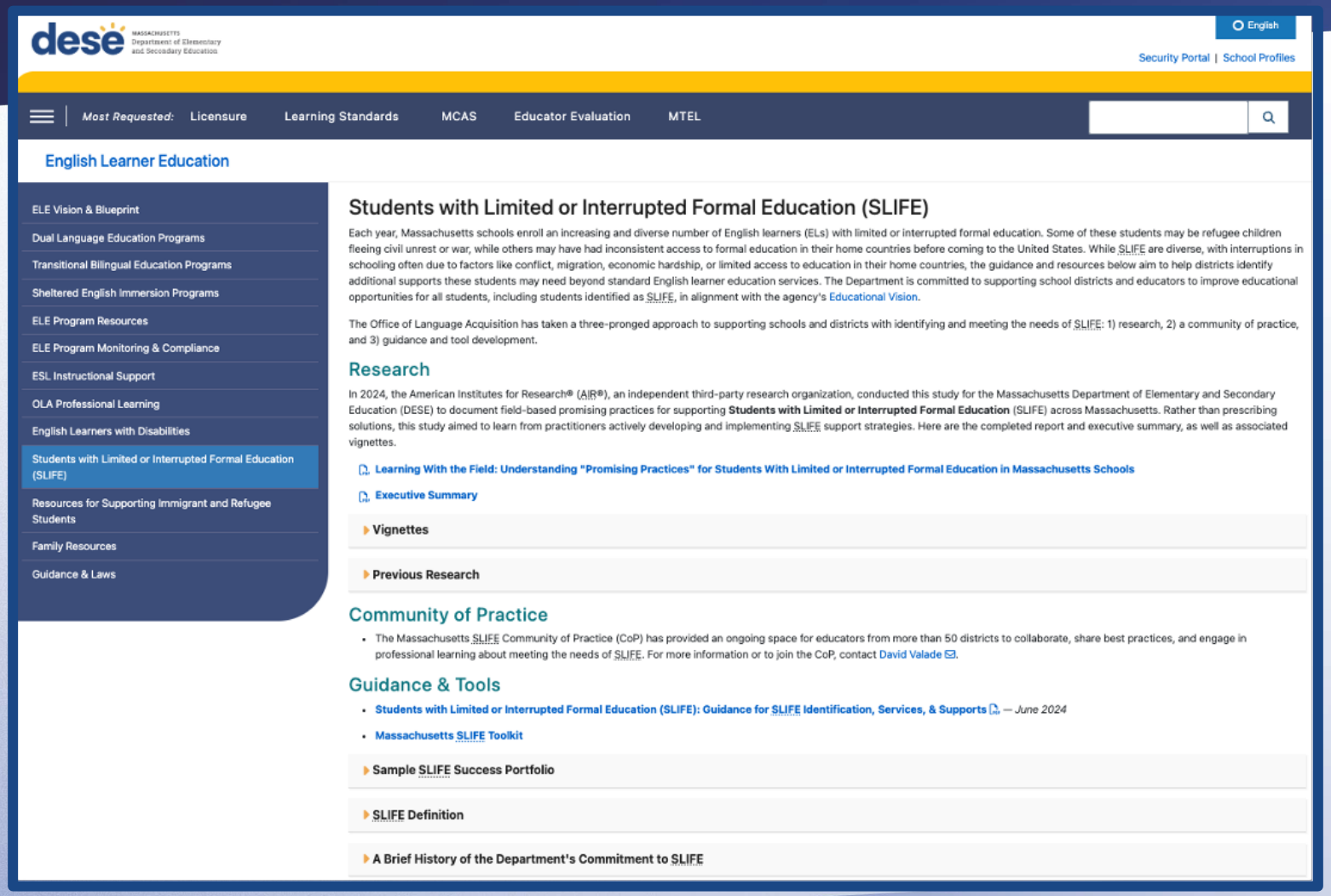
Time for a Pause

SLIFE District Self-Assessment Part 2

DESE SLIFE Resources



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Part 1

Part 1

1. SLIFE District Self-Assessment:
   - Background and Purpose
2. Introduce the SLIFE District Self-Assessment process:
   - Assembling the Team
   - Reviewing Elements of Tool
   - Reflecting on Self-Check
   - Developing an Action Plan

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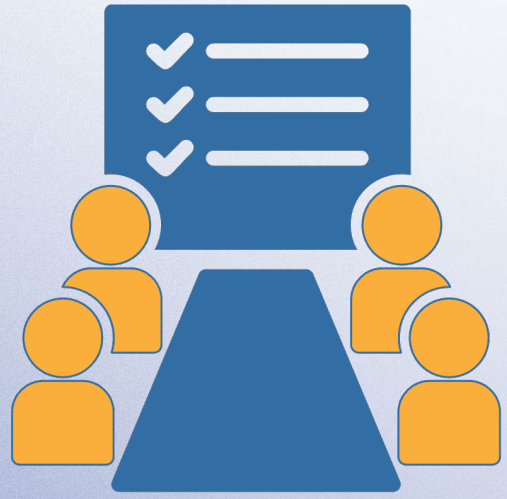
Part 2



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Part 2

1. Diving into Steps 1–3
2. Diving into Step 4
    a. Academic and Linguistic Support
    b. Social-Emotional Support
    c. Family and Community Connections
    d. Progress Monitoring and Exiting SLIFE
3. Self-Check Reflections
4. Action Planning
5. Wrap-Up and Next Steps

Four Steps for SLIFE Identification, Services, and Support

Steps 1–3: SLIFE Screening and Identification

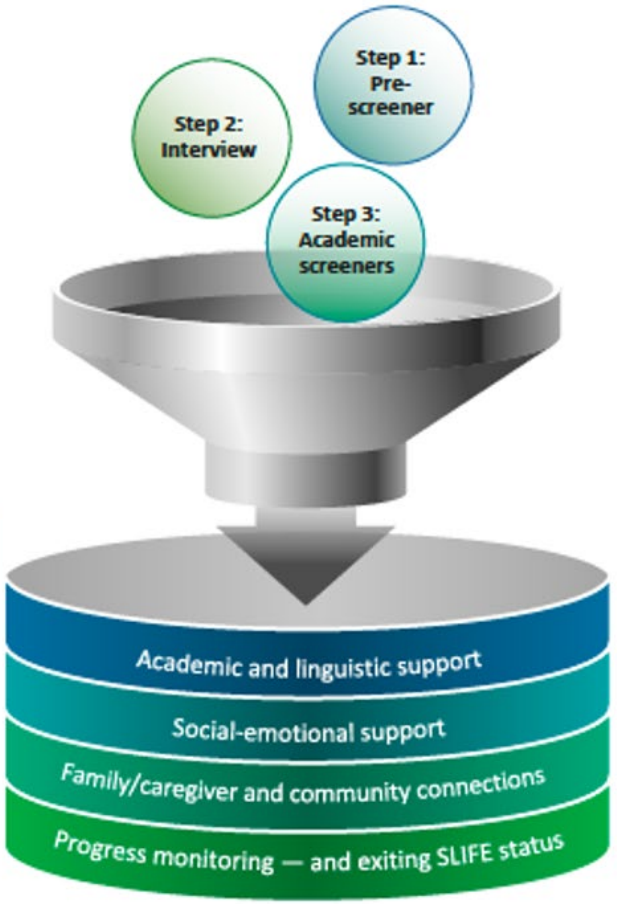
The intake process should involve the generation of multiple data points as well as triangulation of data to develop a holistic understanding of a student's profile and determine whether they would benefit from receiving services associated with a SLIFE classification.

- Step 1: Pre-screener
- Step 2: Interview
- Step 3: Academic screeners

Step 4: SLIFE Services and Support

Based on the data gathered through Steps 1–3 (SLIFE screening and identification), the team may develop an individualized plan to support the student's academic, social, and emotional well-being, and to monitor progress. We present four focal areas of services and support:

- Academic and linguistic support
- Social-emotional support
- Family/caregiver and community connections
- Progress monitoring – and exiting SLIFE status



https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/slife/guidance.pdf

SLIFE District Self-Assessment Steps 1-3

Steps 1-3

Key Idea/Premise:

Develop a holistic, strengths-based understanding of the individual student.

Step 1: Administer the Pre-Screener

Step 1

The intake process collects and combines a variety of data to better understand a student's educational background and decide if they may qualify for SLIFE services. Step 1 uses a short pre-screener at enrollment to identify possible gaps in formal education and determine if further screening is needed.

Key Idea/Premise:
Develop a holistic, strengths-based understanding of the individual student.

Step 1: Indicators

Step 1. Administer the Pre-Screener

In Step 1, a brief Pre-Screener is administered during enrollment to identify potential gaps in formal education and decide whether further screening is necessary.

Indicator	1 Not in place	2 Partially in place	3 Mostly in place	4 Fully in place	Notes
Pre-Screener: We have a Pre-Screener in place that is a consistent part of the registration process for all newly arrived ELs who are 8 years of age and older.	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Trained Staff: We systematically and comprehensively train appropriate staff to administer the SLIFE Pre-Screener with fidelity. Staff has been trained on the following topics: • The purpose of the SLIFE Pre-Screener • The components of the SLIFE Pre-Screener • How to administer each component of the SLIFE Pre-Screener in a consistent manner	☐	☐	☐	☐	

Key Idea/Premise:
Develop a holistic, strengths-based understanding of the individual student.

Step 2: Conduct the SLIFE Interview

Step 2

Focuses on gathering deeper context about the student through interviews. Educators collect information about the student's personal interests, education history, goals, living situation, and preferences for classroom integration. These interviews help build a fuller picture of the student's unique background and support needs and contribute to decisions about SLIFE classification.

Key Idea/Premise:
Develop a holistic, strengths-based understanding of the individual student.

Step 2: Indicators

Step 2. Conduct the SLIFE Interview

Step 2 focuses on gathering deeper context about the student through interviews. Educators collect information about the student's personal interests, educational history, goals, living situation, and preferences for classroom integration. These interviews help build a fuller picture of the student's unique background and support needs and can contribute to decisions about SLIFE classification.

Indicator	1 Not in place	2 Partially in place	3 Mostly in place	4 Fully in place	Notes
Interview Protocol: We have an interview protocol in place that is a consistent part of the enrollment and identification process.	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Approach to Interview: Our staff consistently and effectively conduct the SLIFE Interviews by engaging with students and caregivers with: • Warmth, • A welcoming demeanor, and • A culturally and linguistically responsive manner	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Trained Staff: We systematically and comprehensively train appropriate staff to administer the SLIFE Interview with fidelity. Staff has been trained on the following topics: • How to conduct the interview in a consistent and welcoming manner • The purpose of the chosen approach to the SLIFE Interview • The components of the SLIFE Interview • How to set up an interview environment so that it is supportive and welcoming to help students and families/caregivers to feel comfortable • How to use culturally and linguistically responsive, trauma-informed, and asset-based approaches • How to build knowledge about academic, extracurricular, and community resources that can be offered to students and families/caregivers	☐	☐	☐	☐	

Key Idea/Premise:
Develop a holistic, strengths-based understanding of the individual student.

Step 3: Administer the Academic Background Screener(s)

Step 3

Involves using academic screeners to assess a student's literacy and math skills, guide class placement, and support planning for instruction and services. These screeners help identify foundational strengths and needs rather than grade level, and should be done in the student's primary language, when possible, to ensure accuracy.

Key Idea/Premise:
Develop a holistic, strengths-based understanding of the individual student.

Step 3: Indicators

Step 3. Administer Academic Background Screener(s)

Step 3 involves using academic screeners to assess a student's literacy and math skills, guide class placement, and support planning for instruction and services. These screeners help identify foundational strengths and needs rather than grade level, and should be done in the student's primary language, when possible, to ensure accuracy.

Indicator	1 Not in place	2 Partially in place	3 Mostly in place	4 Fully in place	Notes
Academic Background Screener: We have an Academic Background Screener in place that is a consistent part of the process. • In home language literacy (or first language of instruction, if different from home language) • In math • With access to variations in home languages	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Trained Staff: We systematically and comprehensively train the appropriate staff to administer the Academic Background Screener(s). Staff has been trained on the following topics: • The purpose of the academic screening for SLIFE • The district's selected academic screeners • The components of those selected academic screeners for SLIFE • How to administer the academic screener(s) in a consistent manner • How to set up the academic screening space • How to store, manage, and share (as appropriate) the information collected • How to create a supportive environment during the academic screening • How to use culturally and linguistically responsive, trauma-informed, and asset-based approaches	☐	☐	☐	☐	

Key Idea/Premise:
Develop a holistic, strengths-based understanding of the individual student.

SLIFE District Self-Assessment Step 4

Preparation for Step 4

Steps 1–3: SLIFE Screening and Identification

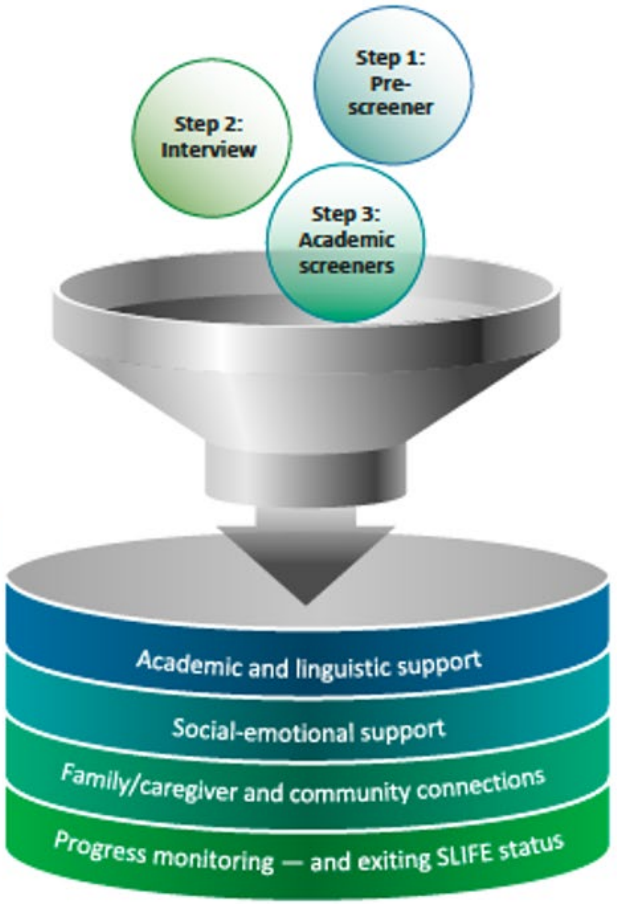
The intake process should involve the generation of multiple data points as well as triangulation of data to develop a holistic understanding of a student's profile and determine whether they would benefit from receiving services associated with a SLIFE classification.

- Step 1: Pre-screener
- Step 2: Interview
- Step 3: Academic screeners

Step 4: SLIFE Services and Support

Based on the data gathered through Steps 1–3 (SLIFE screening and identification), the team may develop an individualized plan to support the student's academic, social, and emotional well-being, and to monitor progress. We present four focal areas of services and support:

- Academic and linguistic support
- Social-emotional support
- Family/caregiver and community connections
- Progress monitoring – and exiting SLIFE status



https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/slife/guidance.pdf

Step 4: Develop a SLIFE Services and Support Plan

Step 4

Focuses on creating an individualized support plan for SLIFE students based on the information gathered in earlier steps. This plan may include academic and linguistic support, social-emotional support, family and community connections, and progress monitoring and exiting SLIFE status.

Step 4: Indicators

Indicator	1 Not in place	2 Partially in place	3 Mostly in place	4 Fully in place	Notes
SLIFE Planning Team The district has developed a SLIFE Planning Team that: • Promotes shared responsibility for collaboration, coordination, and communication • Includes staff with SLIFE experience as well as administrators who can secure resources • Includes a variety of stakeholders such as: – central district and building administrators, – coaches, – content and language teachers at all grade levels, – special educators, – specialists serving SLIFE, – guidance and adjustment counselors, – nurses, – family liaisons, – registration and intake staff, – families, and – students.	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Trained Staff: We systematically and comprehensively train the appropriate staff to: • Recognize the unique characteristics and heterogeneity of SLIFE • Provide a person-centered approach • Develop cultural competency, trauma-informed practices, and collaboration skills • Promote an inclusive and supportive environment • Provide teaching frameworks, strategies, and approaches designed specifically for SLIFE	☐	☐	☐	☐	

Step 4: Focal Points

Steps 1–3: SLIFE Screening and Identification

The intake process should involve the generation of multiple data points as well as triangulation of data to develop a holistic understanding of a student's profile and determine whether they would benefit from receiving services associated with a SLIFE classification.

- Step 1: Pre-screener
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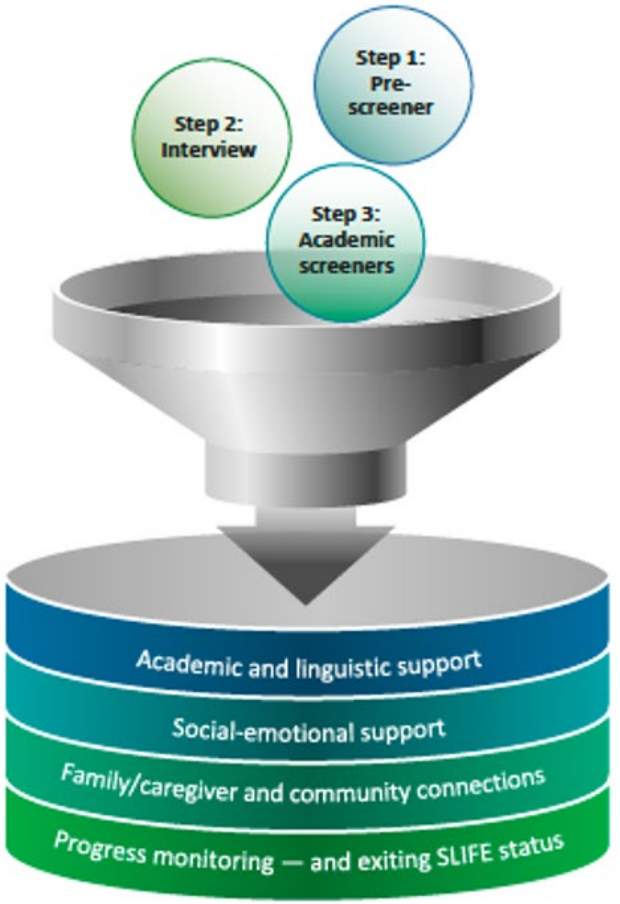


https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/slife/guidance.pdf

Step 4, Focal Point 1: Academic and Linguistic Support

Step 4, Focal Point 1: Academic and Linguistic Support

Purpose: Given their significant interruptions in formal schooling, SLIFE may need specialized, asset-based assistance to succeed in Massachusetts classrooms. The purpose of academic and linguistic support is to provide SLIFE with responsive and equitable access to high-quality language and content development so they can achieve their full potential in the educational setting.

Indicator	1 Not in place	2 Partially in place	3 Mostly in place	4 Fully in place	Notes
Full Educational Experience Toward Equity: Our staff fosters authentic dialogue that allows SLIFE to be fully engaged in and integrated into educational experiences by: • Community building • Honoring students' funds of knowledge and assets • Using culturally and linguistically sustaining practices	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Explicit, Systematic, and Sustained Language Development: Our staff ensures that SLIFE receive high-quality language instruction that: • Is individualized to address the educational backgrounds of SLIFE • Honors and develops the home language with bilingual support, where possible • Builds academic content, vocabulary, discourse practices, and dimensions of language • Provides multiple opportunities to practice speaking, listening, reading, and writing with peers	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Develop Literacy and Numeracy: Our staff ensures that SLIFE are supported in developing their academic skills by: • Building foundational literacy skills that are scaffolded to meet individual student needs and use the home language, where possible • Building foundational numeracy skills that are scaffolded to meet individual student needs and use the home language, where possible	☐	☐	☐	☐	

Step 4, Focal Point 2: Social-Emotional Support

Step 4, Focal Point 2: Social-Emotional Support

Purpose: To plan aspects of SLIFE services and support that foster a student's sense of belonging, inclusivity, and well-being

Indicator	1 Not in place	2 Partially in place	3 Mostly in place	4 Fully in place	Notes
Trauma-Informed Instruction: Our staff can provide trauma-informed supports and instruction by: • Possessing the knowledge and skills needed to recognize and address SLIFE needs related to past traumatic experiences	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Welcoming School Environment: Our staff provides SLIFE with a welcoming environment that values: • Belonging • Inclusion • Strengths-based student-centered instruction • Developing relationships with students and their families	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Establish Programs for Additional Support: Our staff provide SLIFE with additional social-emotional support by: • Establishing school and classroom norms for belonging • Establishing programs such as peer ambassadors • Developing community partnerships to assist SLIFE and their families	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Total Scores Per Column					Average Score:

Notes:

Step 4, Focal Point 3: Family and Community Connections

Step 4, Focal Point 3: Family and Community Connections

Purpose: Establish strong family/caregiver and community partnerships that support SLIFE social-emotional well-being, academic success, and overall development

Indicator	1 Not in place	2 Partially in place	3 Mostly in place	4 Fully in place	Notes
Honoring SLIFE's Communities: Our staff honor SLIFE and their families by: • Continuing to learn about their cultures, languages, and experiences • Engaging in effective communication • Inviting families to participate in school events • Providing welcoming environments for families • Conducting home visits and community walks	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Community Partnerships: Our staff has developed community partnerships that sustainably support SLIFE and their families with: • Translation and interpretation services • The provision of basic needs • Courses for family members on jobs skills, language, and access to resources • Career guidance • School-related orientations	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Total Scores Per Column					Average Score:

Notes:

Step 4, Focal Point 4: Progress Monitoring and Exiting SLIFE

Step 4, Focal Point 4: Progress Monitoring and Exiting SLIFE Status

Purpose: The purpose of progress monitoring is to observe, document, interpret, and reflectively act to enhance the growth, achievement, and well-being of SLIFE. Progress monitoring also helps to determine the appropriate time to transition a student out of SLIFE status.

Indicator	1 Not in place	2 Partially in place	3 Mostly in place	4 Fully in place	Notes
Structures and Systems: We have systems, processes, and structures in place for: • Progress monitoring SLIFE • Determining criteria for exiting SLIFE status	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Staff Knowledge and Skills: Our staff has the knowledge and skills to: • Access and use the English proficiency benchmarks • Use a data-driven approach to determining pathways for SLIFE with the SLIFE planning team • Collect and analyze data • Set appropriate goals • Use multiple data sources	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Monitoring Progress: Our staff monitor progress: • On a regular basis • In multiple areas including language, academics, social-emotional well-being, and cross-cultural understanding	☐	☐	☐	☐	

SLIFE District Self-Assessment-Self-Check Review

Sample Scoring

Indicator	1 Not in place	2 Partially in place	3 Mostly in place	4 Fully in place	Notes
Pre-Screener: We have a Pre-Screener in place that is a consistent part of the registration process for all newly arrived ELs who are 8 years of age and older.	☐	☐	☐	☒	
Trained Staff: We systematically and comprehensively train appropriate staff to administer the SLIFE Pre-Screener with fidelity. Staff has been trained on the following topics: • The purpose of the SLIFE Pre-Screener • The components of the SLIFE Pre-Screener • How to administer each component of the SLIFE Pre-Screener in a consistent manner	☐	☒	☐	☐	
Necessary Materials: We ensure that the staff administering the SLIFE Pre-Screener have gathered all the necessary materials to administer the Pre-Screener: • Information from registration/intake • Answer to the question - Is this a newly enrolled EL, 8 years of age or older? • Record review • SLIFE Pre-Screener document	☐	☒	☐	☐	
Administration Plan: We have developed a clear, systematic, and comprehensive plan for administering the SLIFE Pre-Screener that includes the following: • Scheduling • Logistics • Procedures for accommodating students as needed • Practice sessions where staff members can role-play administering the SLIFE Pre-Screener	☐	☒	☐	☐	
Sustained Quality of Administration: We continuously sustain the quality of the administration of the SLIFE Pre-Screener by: • Systematically and comprehensively evaluating the SLIFE Pre-Screener administration process • Identifying areas for improvement • Making necessary adjustments for future administration • Maintaining support for the systems in place • Ensuring that new staff are familiar with the process	☐	☒	☐	☐	
Total Scores Per Column		8		4	Average Score: 2.4

First Calculation	1 Not in place	2 Partially in place	3 Mostly in place	4 Fully in place	Total Across Indicators
Total for Step	0	8	0	4	12

Second Calculation	Total Across Indicators	Number of Indicators	Average for Step
Average for Step	12	5	2.4

Adding It Up

Self-Check

Return to the average scores for each step and focal point in the assessment and add those scores below.

Element	Average Scores
Step 1. Administer the Pre-Screener	
Step 2. Conduct the SLIFE Interview	
Step 3. Administer Academic Background Screener(s)	
Step 4. Develop a SLIFE Services and Support Plan	
• Step 4: Focal Point 1: Academic and Linguistic Support	
• Step 4: Focal Point 2: Social-Emotional Support	
• Step 4: Focal Point 3: Family and Community Connections	
• Step 4: Focal Point 4: Progress Monitoring and Exiting SLIFE Status	
Average Score for Step 4 and the Four Focal Points	

Sample Tallies: Steps 1-3

Self-Check

Return to the average scores for each step and focal point in the assessment and add those scores below.

Element	Average Scores
Step 1. Administer the Pre-Screener	2.4
Step 2. Conduct the SLIFE Interview	3.2
Step 3. Administer Academic Background Screener(s)	1.0
Step 4. Develop a SLIFE Services and Support Plan	
• Step 4: Focal Point 1: Academic and Linguistic Support	
• Step 4: Focal Point 2: Social-Emotional Support	
• Step 4: Focal Point 3: Family and Community Connections	
• Step 4: Focal Point 4: Progress Monitoring and Exiting SLIFE Status	
Average Score for Step 4 and the Four Focal Points	

Sample Tallies: Steps 1-4

Self-Check

Return to the average scores for each step and focal point in the assessment and add those scores below.

Element	Average Scores
Step 1. Administer the Pre-Screener	2.4
Step 2. Conduct the SLIFE Interview	3.2
Step 3. Administer Academic Background Screener(s)	1.0
Step 4. Develop a SLIFE Services and Support Plan	2.4
• Step 4: Focal Point 1: Academic and Linguistic Support	
• Step 4: Focal Point 2: Social-Emotional Support	
• Step 4: Focal Point 3: Family and Community Connections	
• Step 4: Focal Point 4: Progress Monitoring and Exiting SLIFE Status	
Average Score for Step 4 and the Four Focal Points	

Sample Tallies: 4 Focal Points

Self-Check

Return to the average scores for each step and focal point in the assessment and add those scores below.

Element	Average Scores
Step 1. Administer the Pre-Screener	2.4
Step 2. Conduct the SLIFE Interview	3.2
Step 3. Administer Academic Background Screener(s)	1.0
Step 4. Develop a SLIFE Services and Support Plan	2.4
• Step 4: Focal Point 1: Academic and Linguistic Support	3.0
• Step 4: Focal Point 2: Social-Emotional Support	2.8
• Step 4: Focal Point 3: Family and Community Connections	3.4
• Step 4: Focal Point 4: Progress Monitoring and Exiting SLIFE Status	2.5
Average Score for Step 4 and the Four Focal Points	

Sample Tallies: Complete Average Step 4

Self-Check

Return to the average scores for each step and focal point in the assessment and add those scores below.

Element	Average Scores
Step 1. Administer the Pre-Screener	2.4
Step 2. Conduct the SLIFE Interview	3.2
Step 3. Administer Academic Background Screener(s)	1.0
Step 4. Develop a SLIFE Services and Support Plan	2.4
• Step 4: Focal Point 1: Academic and Linguistic Support	3.0
• Step 4: Focal Point 2: Social-Emotional Support	2.8
• Step 4: Focal Point 3: Family and Community Connections	3.4
• Step 4: Focal Point 4: Progress Monitoring and Exiting SLIFE Status	2.5
Average Score for Step 4 and the Four Focal Points	2.8

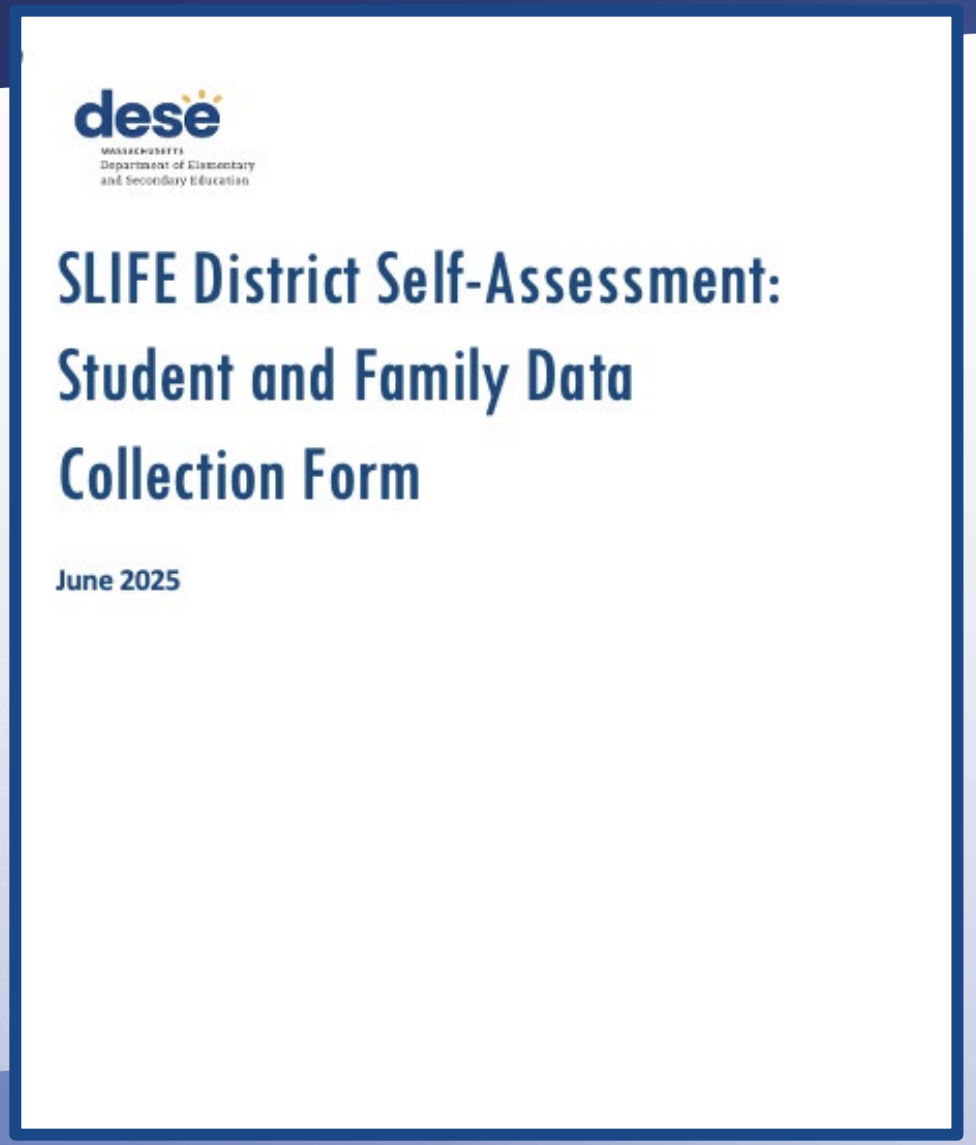
Guidance for Reflection

Reflection

- **Which of the steps in the four-step process are your strongest?**
- **Which steps need to be developed further?**
- **Which step would you like to prioritize for improvement?**
  - Select an area within your prioritized area(s) to serve as a goal for growth. This area reflects how you will focus on strengthening your priority area. Refer to the priority area where you scored in the lower range.
  - Use the priorities that you have chosen to identify a problem of practice in your school or district. This problem of practice will help you develop the action plan.

SLIFE District Self-Assessment Student and Family Data Collection

Student and Family Interview Guide



SLIFE District Self-Assessment Action Plan Review

Immediate Actions

Action Plan

Next Steps

Discuss the results of the self-assessment with the team. Allow the team enough time to contemplate what their priorities are for SLIFE services. Determine actions steps or goals for three phases: (1) Do Now, (2) Do Soon, and (3) Do Later.

The following are guiding questions to help the team determine its next steps.

Immediate Action/Goal: Do Now

1. Identify specific actions to implement over the next month to improve practice.
2. List potential actions such as workshops, coaching conversations, or resources.

Action/Goal (Specific and Realistic)	Resources Needed (Specific)	By When? (Time Related)	Outcome (Measurable)
Example: Participate in professional learning opportunities, both asynchronous and synchronous, to enhance our understanding of SLIFE support needs	Example: Time and personnel; technology; DESE resources	Example: February/March 2026	Example: We will build our ability to effectively support and involve educators in the educational process for SLIFE, ensuring that SLIFE receive the appropriate support and resources they need. As a result, educators will feel more included and engaged, leading to better educational outcomes for SLIFE.

Near Future

Near Future Action/Goal: Do Soon

1. Identify specific actions to implement over the next 6–12 months to improve practice.
2. List potential actions from workshops, coaching conversations, or resources.

Action/Goal (Specific and Realistic)	Resources Needed (Specific)	By When? (Time Related)	Outcome (Measurable)
Example: Administer a survey to educators to identify common concerns regarding the provision of SLIFE services	Example: Time and personnel; survey and feedback tools; technology	Example: May 2026	Example: By identifying common educator concerns regarding the provision of SLIFE services, we will be able to effectively address their concerns and improve communication and collaboration with staff.

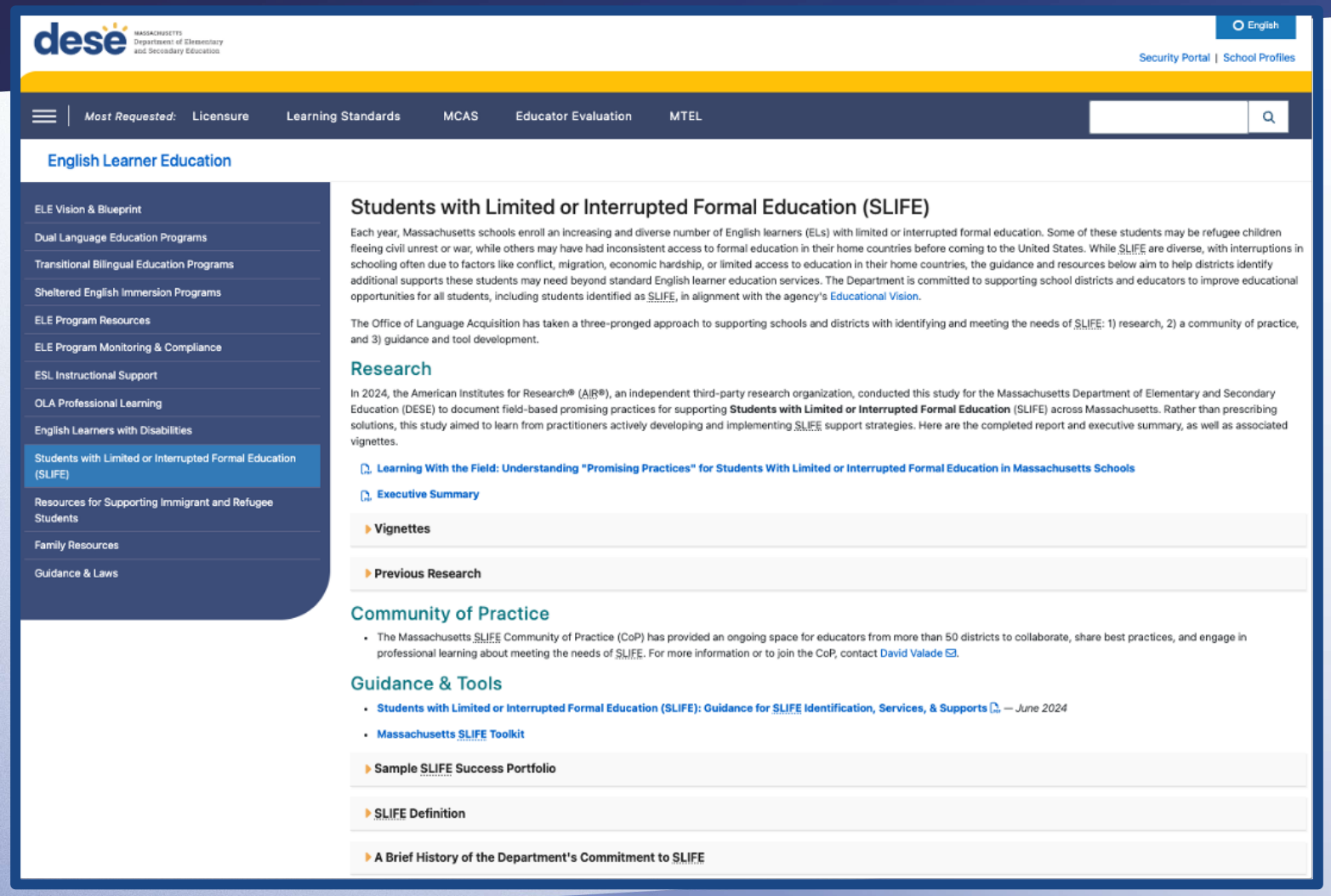
Long-Term

Long-Term Action/Goal: Do Later

1. Identify specific actions to implement over the next 12–18 months to improve practice.
2. List potential actions from workshops, coaching conversations, or resources.

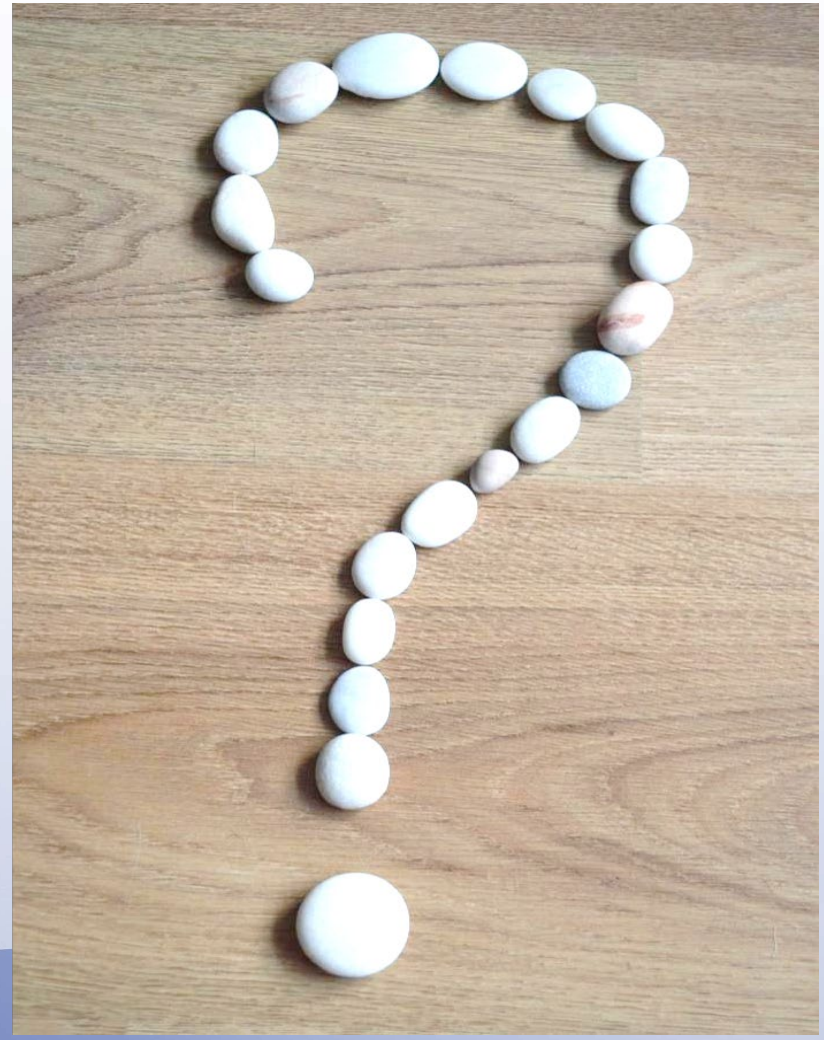
Action/Goal (Specific and Realistic)	Resources Needed (Specific)	By When? (Time Related)	Outcome (Measurable)
Example: Revise the training to address the knowledge and skill of educators and enhance educator engagement	Example: Time and personnel; clear guidelines and templates	Example: December 2026	Example: We will create a more supportive environment, improve communication, increase educator involvement, and provide better educational outcomes for SLIFE by ensuring that educators feel more connected and informed.

Resources



https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/slife/default.html

Questions

If you have questions about the SLIFE District Self-Assessment, you can contact us at:

Office of Language Acquisition at el@doe.mass.edu