

Multilingual Learner Identification

(Multilingual learners were formerly referred to as English learners.)

Maine's Multilingual Learner Identification Policy

All students in Maine schools undergo the same process for determining multilingual learner status. The first step of that process is administration of the Language Use Survey. If a student's [Language Use Survey](#) reflects a primary/home language other than English (meaning that any of the three questions is answered with a language other than or in addition to English), an English language proficiency screener must be administered. In order to ensure consistent and equitable identification practices, school staff may not make subjective decisions about which students will and will not be screened.

See the [Identification and Placement Guidance](#) document for current required screeners and their corresponding identification thresholds by grade level, as well as details about logistics for administering the screening assessments. (Note that students whose only primary/home language other than English is American Sign Language are not eligible for multilingual learner status per federal policy. See this [priority notice](#) for more information.)

Per federal regulation, multilingual learners are required to be identified within 30 days of enrollment.

- [Click here for a printable step-by-step guide to Registering and Enrolling New Students from Multilingual Families.](#)
- [Click here for the Multilingual Learner Identification Decision Tree](#)
- [Click here for guidance regarding students who speak an English-based Creole language](#)

Language Use Survey and Parent/Guardian Letter

The [Language Use Survey](#) (LUS), available in 26 languages in addition to English, must be administered to every newly enrolled student (pre-Kindergarten through grade 12) and schools are required under federal civil rights laws to identify all students whose primary or home language is other than (or in addition to) English and who are not yet proficient in English. Because a student has a civil right to be identified and provided ESOL services (if eligible) parent/guardian consent is not required in the identification process. Parents/guardians may decline services, but schools are still obligated under civil rights law to meet the language-learning needs of all identified multilingual learners.

Protocol for Requesting a Change in Multilingual Learner Identification

Note that requests for change in ML status will not be accepted during the ACCESS for ELLs/Alternate ACCESS for ELLs assessment administration window, which is 1/8/24-3/1/24. All identified MLs must be assessed.

If a student has been identified by a school in Maine as a multilingual learner (ML) but a teacher, school administrator, parent/guardian, or the student himself/herself (over the age of 18) believes this identification to be incorrect, a request for change in identification may be made. Please note that students who were properly identified as MLs following state policy and have not yet reached the Maine DOE's definition of English language proficiency (a composite proficiency level of 4.5 on ACCESS for ELLs or level P2 on Alternate ACCESS, as applicable) are not eligible for a change in ML identification.

To initiate this request, a letter or email (in any language) must be submitted to the student's district superintendent. If the superintendent approves the request, the superintendent will complete a [Request for Change in ML Identification](#).

The final decision will be made by the ML identification review committee at the Maine Department of Education within two weeks of receipt of the request. The superintendent is responsible for informing the student's parent/guardian of the Department's final decision in the parent's/guardian's preferred language and format, written or oral. Oral notifications must be followed by written notice. The Department's decision may be appealed in light of additional evidence.

It is important to ensure that identifications are accurate prior to the start of the ACCESS for ELLs/Alternate ACCESS testing window, as requests for change in ML identification are not accepted during the testing window. All students who are identified as MLs during the testing window must be administered ACCESS for ELLs or Alternate ACCESS for ELLs, as applicable. See the [Maine page on the WIDA website](#) for this year's dates for Maine's testing window.

Reentering a Student into Multilingual Learner Status

Students who were formerly identified as MLs and have exited may be eligible to officially re-enter ML status if they demonstrate a need for continued English language learning support. To determine if a former ML needs to be re-entered into ML status, districts must have a clear protocol for monitoring during the two-year intensive monitoring period and beyond. To effectively monitor, all general education teachers must have an awareness of how language learning needs may manifest in the classroom, as well as an understanding of how non-linguistic factors may affect student performance. To assist districts in developing a strong monitoring protocol, the US Department of Education's Office of English Language Acquisition has

produced [Chapter 8 of the EL Tool Kit: Tools and Resources for Monitoring and Exiting English Learners from EL Programs and Services](#). It includes sample monitoring forms, information about digital monitoring systems, and a self-assessment.

When a continued need for ESOL services is suspected, teachers should refer the student to the ESOL teacher/coordinator for re-screening. The student should be administered the WIDA Screener Online. When a former ML scores below an overall proficiency level of 4.5, the district must [submit an online request](#) to officially re-enter the student into ML status in the state student data system. Note that students who were screened for ML status upon enrollment, but did not qualify at that time, may be re-screened at any time if a potential need for ESOL services becomes apparent.

Essential Provisions and Services (EPS) funding for the next school year is based on the previous school year's October 1 enrollment counts. Students who are re-entered into ML status are eligible for an additional weighted EPS funding amount, like all other students who are MLs.

For questions about multilingual learner identification, contact Jane Armstrong, ESOL State Specialist

[Is there a way to know if a student who is transferring from another Maine SAU has already been identified as a multilingual learner?](#)

[If a student with a primary/home language other than \(or in addition to\) English transfers from one Maine school administrative unit \(SAU\) to another, is rescreening necessary?](#)

[If a student who was identified as a multilingual learner in another state transfers to a Maine SAU, is it necessary to screen the student?](#)

[If a student who exited multilingual learner status in another state transfers to a Maine SAU, is it necessary to screen the student?](#)

[Is it necessary to screen a student with a primary/home language other than \(or in addition to\) English if that student has a disability?](#)

[What should be done if a parent/guardian indicates English only on the Language Use Survey, but school staff observe evidence that the student has a primary/home language other than English?](#)

[Do parents/guardians need to provide consent for administration of an English language proficiency screener?](#)

[What should be done if a student is erroneously identified as a multilingual learner?](#)

[If a student has been exposed to another language but only speaks English, can that student be identified as a multilingual learner?](#)

[If a student was adopted from family that speaks a language other than English, but the primary/home language is now English, can the student still be identified as a multilingual learner?](#)

[What happens if a student has two \(or more\) Language Use Surveys completed at different times \(such as in the case of transferring from one Maine SAU to another\), and the responses are conflicting?](#)

