



**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA  
Department of Education**

**DATE:** June 30, 2017  
**TO:** Division Superintendents  
**FROM:** Steven R. Staples, Superintendent of Public Instruction  
**SUBJECT: Entrance Procedures and Recommended Entrance Criteria for Identifying English Learners**

[Superintendent's Memo 168-17](#), released on June 9, 2017, announced that Virginia will use an overall proficiency score of 4.4 as the ACCESS for ELLS® 2.0 English Language Proficiency (ELP) Assessment exit criterion for the 2016-2017 assessment year. The purpose of this memorandum is to communicate standardized entrance procedures for English Learner (EL) identification as required under the *Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015* (ESSA) and to provide recommended entrance criteria for EL identification.

## **Entrance Procedures**

### **Screening Identification**

The [English Learner Toolkit](#) created by the U.S. Department of Education (USED) states that LEAs must accurately identify EL students in a timely manner. The USED Office for Civil Rights in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Justice has approved the following questions to demonstrate minimal compliance with the requirement to identify possible EL students in need of language assistance:

- What is the primary language used in the home, regardless of the language spoken by the student?
- What is the language most often spoken by the student?
- What is the language that the student first acquired?

These identifying questions must be included on registration documents or on a separate home language survey provided to all students enrolling in a Virginia public school. If a parent or guardian responds with any language other than English for one or more questions, then the student should be progressed to the language screening process. School divisions must develop a written protocol to ensure that incoming ELs are identified, screened, and placed in appropriate programs and services within thirty days of enrollment, and must ensure that all ELs enrolling in a school division are identified in a consistent manner.

### **Screening Process**

Designated division personnel should review registration and/or home language survey documents submitted to the school for educational information, language, and ELP assessment scores to determine the next step. If a current ACCESS for ELLS® 2.0 score (within one year of testing) is provided, the score can be used to determine the student's EL status and the services to be provided. If a current ACCESS for ELLS® 2.0 score is not provided, designated personnel should administer a World-Class Instructional Design Assessment (WIDA) screening tool to determine the student's English proficiency level. For the 2017-2018 school year, school divisions may select from the following WIDA screening tools:

- WIDA Screener – Paper or Online
- WIDA MODEL (Grades 1-12) – Paper or Online
- Kindergarten MODEL – Paper

- W-APT – Paper
- Kindergarten W-APT – Paper

WIDA recommends that school divisions adopt the WIDA Screener, as scores on this screener are aligned on the same score scale as the ACCESS for ELLS® 2.0. The new score scale does not apply to the WIDA MODEL or the W-APT. School divisions should be aware that as of August 31, 2017, the W-APT grades 1-12 will no longer be available from WIDA; however, the Kindergarten W-APT will remain available on the WIDA website.

## **Parent Notification**

Within thirty days of identification, the school division must provide written notification to the parents of the identified EL, to include information about the student’s EL status and the services to be provided. Notification should be provided to parents in their native language or a language they understand.

## **Entrance Criteria**

The Department recommends the criteria below for EL identification. The recommendations may be adjusted if changes are made to the ACCESS for ELLS® 2.0 exit criterion following the upcoming review of data from the 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 assessment years to determine long-term exit criteria using the new ACCESS for ELLS® 2.0 scale. Please note that Virginia will continue to recognize [WIDA Performance Definitions](#).

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Screening Tool</b>	<b>Domains</b>	<b>Levels indicating Student is an EL</b>
Rising Kindergarten	*Kindergarten W-APT	Listening and Speaking	Oral raw score less than <b>21</b>
Kindergarten 1st semester	*Kindergarten W-APT	Listening and Speaking	Oral raw score less than <b>28</b>
Kindergarten 2nd semester	*Kindergarten W-APT	Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing	Listening & Speaking Less than <b>28</b> <i>OR</i> Reading less than <b>14</b> <i>OR</i> Writing less than <b>17</b>
Kindergarten 1st semester	WIDA MODEL	Listening and Speaking	Oral Language Level less than <b>5.0</b>
Kindergarten 2nd semester	WIDA MODEL	Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing	Overall less than <b>5.0</b>
Grade 1 - 12	W-APT or WIDA MODEL	Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing	Overall less than <b>5.0</b>
Grade 1 - 12	WIDA Screener (online and paper)	Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing	Overall less than <b>4.5**</b>

\*The Kindergarten W-APT provides a specific raw score that cannot be mapped to a specific Proficiency Level using the WIDA ELP scale.

\*\*The WIDA Screener provides an overall score to the nearest 0.5.

## **Students with the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities**

On a case-by-case basis where appropriate documentation exists, students with disabilities may be provided with accommodations on the WIDA Screener, W-APT, or WIDA MODEL. Currently there is no alternate screening tool for students with significant cognitive disabilities. The IEP team should determine if the student should be administered a screening tool with accommodations for EL identification.

If you have questions, please contact the student assessment staff at [student\\_assessment@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:student_assessment@doe.virginia.gov) or (804) 225-2102 or Lynn Sodat, Director, Office of Program Administration and Accountability, at [Lynn.Sodat@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:Lynn.Sodat@doe.virginia.gov) or (804) 225-2870.

SRS/SLR/Is

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Links:

[Superintendent's Memo 168-17: English Proficiency Criteria for ACCESS for ELLS® 2.0 English Language Proficiency \(ELP\) Assessment - 2016-2017 Assessment Year](#)

[Title III Toolkit](#)

[WIDA Performance Definitions](#)

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