

Recommended CT Home Language Survey Guidelines¹

This guidance outlines the process for identifying students who are English learners and eligible to receive language assistance services. The steps of the identification process are as follows:

Step 1: Determine if the student is a potential EL student through the completion of the Home Language Survey

Step 2: Review the HLS results to determine if the results indicate that the student has a language other than English and may be an English learner.

Step 3: Administer the approved English Language Proficiency (ELP) Assessment.

Step 4: If the student’s results on the ELP assessment indicate that the student is an English learner, student’s parents are informed of the service options for their child and opt in to the service that the student will receive or waive services.

Section	State Guidelines Proposed Text
Step 1	Home Language Survey
1.1 HLS purposes and intended uses	<p>The U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights and Connecticut state law require school districts to collect information about a student’s language background at the time of enrollment/registration in order to determine whether the student is a potential English learner. (or, is someone who potentially may need English language assistance services). Connecticut has chosen to use the Home Language Survey to gather this information.</p> <p>The Home Language Survey does not collect information about immigration status, nor does it determine education services to be provided to the student. When a language other than English is identified, students will be screened for English proficiency in order to determine whether the student is an English learner and, if so, identify appropriate language services.</p>
1.2 What is in the HLS (see attached recommended survey)	<p>The HLS includes the following sections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The purpose of the HLS - what it is and is not • Recommended questions to determine if a student is a potential English learner and might qualify for English language services • Optional questions that districts may choose to administer in addition to the recommended questions for determination of potential eligibility
1.3 Recommendations for HLS administration	<p>The HLS should be distinguishable from the rest of the registration packet:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administered separately from the registration; or • If embedded in the registration packet <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If paper - different color ○ If online - also different color or different screen • The state does not have a recommendation about whether the HLS should be administered at the school or district level; this can be decided by the district.
1.4 HLS Staffing	Those who administer the HLS must have a thorough understanding of the purposes and processes for its administration. Any staff that will

¹ Recommended HLS Guidance prepared for CT SDE by Home Language Survey Working Group, December 2015 (facilitated by REL Northeast and Islands).

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	administer the HLS should be trained on the identification process and HLS administration. Each district should designate the appropriate people and/or staff positions to administer the HLS. Appropriate HLS administrators may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District registration staff • District support staff • School support staff • School-based parent or community coordinator • School-based EL teacher
1.5 Recommended administrative procedures	While each district can modify procedures to local context, procedures should include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HLS administrators should complete the state-designed training module • HLS administrators should assess the needs of respondents in regard to need for written translations of the HLS or verbal interpretation support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If parent appears in person to register, the first point of contact should determine if the parent speaks and reads enough English to be able to complete on own • If parent needs language assistance, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provide form translated into parents’ preferred language, if available; or ○ Provide for oral interpretation • HLS administrators should provide the HLS in the appropriate written or oral form • HLS administrators should read the script accompanying the HLS and answer any questions parents have; use translated script as needed • HLS administrators should know what to do with completed forms: who to send them to, who to notify
1.6 Online registration systems minimum recommendations for HLS administration	The system needs to include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructions: the oral script should be supplied in written form for online systems; • The HLS questions must be asked; <p>The online system should provide access to written translations of the HLS questions in guardians’ preferred language, to the extent possible; The online system should have a system in place for parents/guardians who either do not have access to the web or who need support with completing the HLS because of language/literacy needs (see flowchart below).</p>
1.7 Recommended HLS questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) What is the primary language used in the home, regardless of the language spoken by the student? 2) What is the language most often spoken by the student? 3) What is the language that the student first acquired?
1.8 Optional additional questions (districts may add their own)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) What language do you prefer for written communication from the school? 2) Will you require interpretation/translation at Parent-Teacher meetings?
1.9 Translations	The district is responsible for providing the HLS survey in the preferred

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	<p>languages of parents/guardians. Oral scripts should also be translated whenever possible.</p> <p>The state website provides the recommended HLS in English as well as other commonly used languages. Districts that translate the state HLS in other languages are encouraged to share those translations across districts.</p>
1.10 Documentation and record-keeping	<p>Document all HLS responses and store electronically in a district central data system tied to the individual student. Responses should be part of the student’s permanent data record.</p> <p>Districts may use the HLS results to identify student’s dominant language for use in calculation of numbers of language in the district.</p>
Step 2	Review of HLS Results
2.1 Review of results	<p>In the majority of cases, the appropriate next steps will be clear:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the parent/guardian lists English for all questions and demonstrates facility with English either through completion of other forms or conversation with HLS administrator, then no further action is necessary. • If any of the responses indicate a language other than English, the HLS should automatically go to the EL specialist, the person in the district responsible for making the determination of potential eligibility (e.g., district EL coordinator/director). The EL specialist will determine the next steps. • If there is a question about the accuracy and/or reliability of the responses on an HLS, that HLS should be reviewed by the EL specialist responsible for making the determination of potential eligibility. A next step may be an interview with the parent.
2.2 Review of data anomalies	<p>Provide clear administrative procedures for further review if HLS data seem questionable such as when there are contradictory answers within a form, multiple forms completed with contradictory information; or if there is any other evidence indicating the possibility that the student is an English learner (e.g., false negative).</p>
2.3 Coordination with other district programs	<p>Coordinate with any screening for students with disabilities (SWD) or gifted & talented identification; if possible, this should occur concurrently with or before ELP screening (to avoid false positives).</p>
2.4 Review of student records	<p>For students who are entering district from a district within the US, the ELL specialist should seek records of previous testing, and only administer the English proficiency assessment if no results are available.</p>
Step 3	Screening: English Language Proficiency Assessment
3.1 Screening	<p>See Figure C2 below, <i>English Learner Identification Flowchart – HLS, English Proficiency Assessment, Instructional Decisions</i></p>
Step 4	Placement
4.1 Parental choice	<p>Parents should be informed of the service options for their child and opt in to the service that the student will receive.</p> <p>Each district should have a written placement policy that can be shared with parents.</p>

References

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US Department of Education (2015). English Learner Toolkit for State and Local Education Agencies (SEAs and LEAs). <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/index.html>.

US Department of Education and US Department of Justice (2015). Dear Colleague Letter: English Learner Students and Limited English Proficient Parents. <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-el-201501.pdf>.