



Indiana Department of Education

Dr. Katie Jenner, Secretary of Education

Foreign Exchange Students and English Learner Status

Under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), a foreign exchange student is not exempt from any Title III required assessment, including English language proficiency assessments (i.e., WIDA assessments). The English learner (EL) identification and placement process must be completed within the 30 calendar days of enrollment for potential ELs. See the [Indiana EL Identification and Placement Guidance](#) for detailed information.

Local Education Agencies (LEAs) are required to administer a Home Language Survey (HLS) to all students enrolling in Indiana for the first time. Any student, including a foreign exchange student, with a non-English language indicated on the HLS must be administered the appropriate placement assessment (i.e., WIDA Screener) to determine EL status.

Please note that this policy applies even if the student's foreign exchange program requires an English language proficiency assessment apart from WIDA Screener. Under compliance with ESSA, as a part of the state's standardized entrance procedures, only WIDA Screener assessments can be utilized to identify ELs in Indiana. Other assessments do not align to the WIDA English Language Development Standards. Additionally, scores from other assessments that are considered proficient by a foreign exchange program do not correlate with Indiana's entrance criteria.

A foreign exchange student who scores an overall composite proficiency level of 4.9 or below on WIDA Screener is formally identified as an EL in Indiana, and the following must occur:

- An Individual Learning Plan (ILP) is created and implemented.
- The foreign exchange student begins receiving English language development services.
- The Annual Parent Notification Letter is sent to the host family and parent/guardian. The letter must be disseminated within 30 calendar days of the beginning of the school year, or within 14 calendar days of the EL identification date for students who enroll later in the school year.
- The foreign exchange student participates in the WIDA ACCESS assessment, if enrolled during the annual testing window.

All foreign exchange students enrolled on October 1 must be included in the Multilingual Learner report (DEX-LM) via Data Exchange for purposes of allocating funds under 3114(a) of the ESEA. Due to their immigrant status, this includes reporting foreign exchange students who are Native English Speakers (NES) and indicated English only on the HLS.

For more information, contact:

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