



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING

GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

MICHAEL F. RICE, Ph.D.
STATE SUPERINTENDENT

MEMORANDUM

DATE: August 18, 2020

TO: Local and Intermediate School District Superintendents
Public School Academy Directors

FROM: Venessa A. Keesler, Ph.D., Deputy Superintendent 
Division of Educator, Student, and School Supports

SUBJECT: Temporary Guidance for Identifying Potential English Learners During Remote Learning – MEMO #COVID-19-093

The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) is providing temporary guidance to support the identification of potential English learners (EL) and their appropriate placement into EL programs. This guidance provides expectations for the district and school staff for identifying students for EL programming while learning at a distance. Local educational agencies (LEA) are encouraged to review the [Temporary Guidance for Identifying Potential English Learners During Remote Learning](#) document while planning to implement the [MI Safe Schools: Michigan's 2020-21 Return to School Roadmap](#) and provisions in Governor Gretchen Whitmer's [Executive Order 2020-142](#).

During learning at a distance, LEAs must continue to identify the primary language, and the home language, of all newly enrolled students using Michigan's approved home language survey (HLS). Michigan's approved English language proficiency (ELP) screeners, the kindergarten WIDA ACCESS placement test, and the WIDA screener may not be administered in a student's home environment. Additionally, educators should not encourage students to participate in testing at a school or district building when it is not safe to do so.

The *Temporary Guidance for Identifying Potential English Learners During Remote Learning* document will be used during the period of learning at a distance. The document provides guidance for using the HLS, along with a family interview, to identify students for temporary EL programming during enrollment while learning at a distance. When in-person instruction resumes, an ELP screener should be administered. EL identification must take place within 14 calendar days of enrollment or 30 days from the beginning of the school year during the learning at a distance period.

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Note: This temporary guidance does not replace existing guidance for identifying ELs, nor does it replace existing guidance on student screening for ELP. When schools return to in-person instruction, this guidance is no longer valid. At that time, all LEAs must return to the standardized guidance for the identification of ELs, which includes timely identification and screening.

For assistance, please contact mde-el@michigan.gov or 517-241-6977.

cc: Michigan Education Alliance
Confederation of Michigan Tribal Education Directors