



**RIDE** Rhode Island  
Department  
of Education

**Rhode Island Multilingual Learners (MLLs) /  
English Learners (ELs)**

**Home Language Survey**

**Q&A**

Updated June 2020

# Home Language Survey

## Q&A

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Translations of the HLS are available in the following languages:

- Arabic,
- Chinese,
- Cape Verdean Creole,
- French,
- Haitian Creole,
- Khmer,
- Lao,
- Portuguese,
- Spanish,
- Swahili,
- Wolof,
- Yoruba.

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# Q&A – Use of HLS for All Students

## Q1. When should LEAs begin to use the new revised HLS?

The new HLS came into effect upon public release with the Commissioner’s Field Memo of May 22, 2020. The new HLS is expected to be in full implementation for all new enrolling students for the 2020-21 school year.

## Q2. For whom is the HLS intended?

The HLS should be part of the enrollment packet of any new student registering in a new district, school, or charter school. The HLS explicitly asks questions regarding language use, special education services, and time the student has been enrolled in a U.S. school.

## Q3. Who needs to complete the HLS, and when?

The HLS should be completed by the adult, parent or guardian enrolling the student, in a language they understand. The timeline of completion remains within the most efficient and necessary timeline for documents and paperwork completion to register a new student.

## Q4. How should the HLS be completed?

LEAs have the options to use a hardcopy of the document, or embed the HLS and questions within an electronic registration system in use by the LEA. Note that in both formats, the HLS provides a space to indicate the name and signature of the adult completing the survey and the date of completion. It is recommended to maintain in the student’s permanent file a hardcopy of the survey signed by the parents/guardian.

## Q5. Which questions of the HLS should be included in an electronic registration system?

The HLS should include questions 1-7 on the first page, and 1-5 on the second page intended for the family, as shown in the pictures below:

**State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations**  
**DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION**  
 Shepley Building  
 255 Westminster Street  
 Providence, Rhode Island 02903-3400

**Home Language Survey (HLS)**

*To be completed by Parent or Guardian*

Dear Parent or Guardian,  
 The information requested on this form is necessary for the most appropriate school placement of your child, and will not be used for any other purposes.  
 Thank you for your collaboration.

**Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_  
 Last First Middle Initial  
**Date of Birth:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Place of Birth:** \_\_\_\_\_  
 Month Day Year  
**Parent or Guardian Relationship to student:**  
 Mother  Father  Other  
**Home Language Code:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Language Background**  
*(Please check all that apply)*

1. What is the primary language used in the home, regardless of the language spoken by the student?  English  Other \_\_\_\_\_ *Specify*
2. What is the language most often spoken by the student?  English  Other \_\_\_\_\_ *Specify*
3. What is the language that the student first acquired?  English  Other \_\_\_\_\_ *Specify*
4. What language(s) does your child understand?  English  Other \_\_\_\_\_ *Specify*
5. What language(s) does your child speak?  English  Other \_\_\_\_\_  Does not speak *Specify*
6. What language(s) does your child read?  English  Other \_\_\_\_\_  Does not read *Specify*
7. What language(s) does your child write?  English  Other \_\_\_\_\_  Does not write *Specify*

**Family Interview – Educational History**

1. Do you think your child may have any difficulties or conditions that affect his or her ability to understand, speak, read or write in English or any other language? If yes, please describe them.  
 Yes\* No\* Not sure  
 If yes, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_  
 How severe do you think these difficulties are?  Minor  Somewhat severe  Very severe
2. Has your child ever been referred for a special education evaluation in the past?  No  Yes\*  
 \*If referred for an evaluation, has your child been identified?  No  Yes  
 If referred for an evaluation, and identified has your child ever received any special education services in the past?  
 No  Yes – Type of services received: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Age at which services received. (Please check all that apply):  
 Birth to 3 years (Early Intervention)  4 to 5 years (Special Education)  6 years or older (Special Education)
- 3c. Does your child have an Individualized Education Program (IEP), or IEP plan?  No  Yes
4. In which language do you prefer to receive oral communications from the school or district?  English  Other \_\_\_\_\_ *Specify*
4. In which language do you prefer to receive written communications from the school or district?  English  Other \_\_\_\_\_ *Specify*
5. Indicate date first enrolled in ANY U.S. school: \_\_\_\_\_ (mm/yy/yyyy)
6. Is there anything else you think is important for the school to know about your child? (e.g., special talents, health concerns, etc.)  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Parent or Guardian \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Print Parent/Guardian Name \_\_\_\_\_

The bottom of page 2 is dedicated to Official Entry from the school administration office.

<b>OFFICIAL ENTRY ONLY - NAME/POSITION OF PERSONNEL ADMINISTERING HLS</b>		
Name:	Position:	
IF AN INTERPRETER IS PROVIDED, LIST NAME, POSITION AND CREDENTIALS:		
<b>NAME/POSITION OF QUALIFIED PERSONNEL REVIEWING HLS AND CONDUCTING INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW</b>		
Name:	Position:	
IF AN INTERPRETER IS PROVIDED, LIST NAME, POSITION AND CREDENTIALS:		
Oral Interview Necessary: <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Date of individual Interview: _____ Month Day Year	
<b>NAME/POSITION OF QUALIFIED PERSONNEL ADMINISTERING THE LANGUAGE SCREENING ASSESSMENT</b>		
Name:	Position:	
IF AN INTERPRETER IS PROVIDED, LIST NAME, POSITION AND CREDENTIALS:		
<b>NAME/POSITION OF QUALIFIED PERSONNEL REPORTING THE LANGUAGE SCREENING SCORES</b>		
Name:	Position:	
Date of Screener: _____ Month Day Year	Name of the Language Screening Assessment:	Score achieved:
Proficiency Level Achieved: Entering 1 <input type="checkbox"/> / Beginning 2 <input type="checkbox"/> / Developing 3 <input type="checkbox"/> / Expanding 4 <input type="checkbox"/> / Bridging 5 <input type="checkbox"/> / Reaching 6 <input type="checkbox"/>		
FOR STUDENTS WITH AN IEP OR 504 PLAN, LIST ACCOMMODATIONS, IF ANY, ADMINISTERED:		

**Q6. Can LEAs change the questions on the survey?**

No. The HLS has been revised to account for the minimum necessary questions an LEA should collect for any new enrolling student. The HLS is the official document that initiates any successive language screening and identification processes for MLL/EL students.

**Q7. Who in the LEA should ask the questions on the HLS, or administer the HLS?**

LEAs have different practices and systems in place for this to occur. It would be at the LEA discretion to train and provide supports to the personnel who will be doing the interview upon enrollment. Regarding the identification process, a qualified personnel/assessor must be available to determine if a language other than English is spoken at home.

Qualified assessor means: “a person who has been WIDA certified to administer prescribed MLL/EL assessment tools and who is qualified to evaluate the results of these assessments. This person must have knowledge concerning the ways English Language Learners acquire English as a second language.”<sup>1</sup>

**Q8. Why is the HLS including the question “Indicate date first enrolled in ANY U.S. school”?**

Question n. 5, page 2 (Family Interview – Educational History), is required to determine whether students are “immigrants” for purposes of the Title III immigrant children and youth grant program. Schools and/or districts should pose the same question of all students and ensure that the information is not used to discriminate against students in any way.

In the Rhode Island enrollment system, the binary Y/N immigrant flag could apply to any students who satisfies the immigrant definition, regardless if the student is later identified as a MLL/EL student. For more details refer to Q17. in this document.

**Q9. Questions 5, page 2, does “Any schools in the U.S.” include pre-schools?**

Yes.

<sup>1</sup> Rhode Island Regulations and Guidance for English Language Learners Chapter 16-54 Regulation (200-RICR-20-30-3) - <https://www.ride.ri.gov/StudentsFamilies/EnglishLearners.aspx>

## Q&A – Use of HLS for Identification Purposes

### Q10. Does the parent interview section on the HLS take the place of any additional family or individual interview?

No. The questions on the HLS (Table 1) are intended to be asked to all parents enrolling their child in a Rhode Island school, although additional information is required for identification purposes (see [1b. Screening – Individual Interview](#) and [2b. Determination of MLL/EL Student with Interrupted/Inconsistent Formal Education \(SIFE\).](#))

### Q11. For identification purposes, when should the HLS be completed?

The HLS is part of any new student enrollment packet and should be completed upon enrollment in a language parents can understand. The information shared on the HLS might prompt a parent interview and language screening assessment. “Placement of English Language Learners in a specialized instructional program for English Language Learners shall be made within twenty (20) school days of the completion of the Home Language Survey. [See also: § 3.3\(D\) of this Part \[English Language Learners entitled to immediate tentative placement.\]](#)”

### Q12. What prompts a parent interview and student language screening process after the completion of the HLS?

Review the completed HLS (page 1 and 2) for answers with a language other than ‘English.’

- If the home language survey responses are “English” to the first three (3) questions, then the screening for MLL/EL Identification stops unless there is any other reason to believe the student is not proficient in English (e.g., the answers to questions four through seven indicate that the child may be an ELL or the parent requests written or oral communications in a language other than English on the home language survey, page 2, questions three and four.) The HLS is placed in the student’s cumulative record.
- If a home language survey response is other than “English” to any of the first three (3) questions, an individual interview should take place, and must be followed by a state approved language screening assessment. The HLS is placed in the student’s cumulative record.

For more guidance on the identification process, consult the [Rhode Island Multilingual Learners \(MLLs\) / English Learners \(ELs\) Screening, Identification, Placement, and Reclassification.](#)

**Table 1**

HLS - Family Interview – Educational History

1. Do you think your child may have any difficulties or conditions that affect his or her ability to understand, speak, read or write in English or any other language?
2. How severe do you think these difficulties are?
  - 2a. Has your child ever been referred for a special education evaluation in the past? If referred for an evaluation, has your child been identified? If referred for an evaluation, and identified has your child ever received any special education services in the past?
  - 2b. Age at which services received (Please check all that apply): Birth to 3 years (Early Intervention) 3 to 5 years (Special Education) 6 years or older (Special Education)
  - 2c. Does your child have an Individualized Education Program (IEP), or 504 plan?
3. In which language do you prefer to receive oral communications from the school or district?
4. In which language do you prefer to receive written communications from the school or district?
5. Indicate date first enrolled in ANY U.S. school (mm/dd/yyyy)
6. Is there anything else you think is important for the school to know about your child? (e.g., special talents, health concerns, etc.)

**Q13. Is there any difference between English and World English in the HLS and identification process?**

No. The HLS supports LEAs in determining if a student is eligible for additional language development supports. The difference in languages is binary between “English” and “other,” where “other” represents any world language that is not “English.”

**Q14. Should questions 2a, 2b, and 2c on page two be answered by all parents?**

Yes. Students coming from other countries might arrive with documentation regarding special education received in their country. The section below question 5 page two, "Is there any more....," could be used to add details on learning concerns in cases where a disability is suspected but not yet confirmed. Please collaborate with the special education office if concerns are raised.

**Q15. How should we support parents answering questions 1-2 on page two, who have no special education documentation and have raised disability concerns?**

For a student from another geographical area where there is no medical documentation, educational documentation of disability, or an IEP; record as much information as is needed to make good decisions about using administrative features and universal features, neither of which are accommodations required to be documented on an IEP, when administering the SCREENER. Make the appropriate referral to special education if a disability is suspected. Collaborate with that department before administering the SCREENER within the required timeline. Please utilize the ELSWD guidelines in our [MLL toolkit section 6](#) for considerations to document before, during and after screening for MLL.

The data collected on the family interview is the minimum necessary to meet appropriate MLL screening and placement considerations but would not be considered formal special education documentation in any way.

**Q16. Should the LEA screen a student with a language screening assessment if parent or guardian indicated a language “other” than “English” on the “Family Interview” questions 4 -5 page two, of the HLS?**

If a parent or guardian indicates a language “other” than English to any of the first three questions on the HLS, the LEA must proceed with a language screening assessment. If there is any other reason to believe the student is not proficient in English, for example, parents indicate “other” on the “Family Interview” questions 4-5 page two of the HLS, a language screening assessment should be administered.

**Q17. Should parents be informed that students will take a language screening assessment?**

LEAs should always keep parents informed in a language they can understand. It is not required that LEAs request permission to parents for the language screening assessment, yet parents must be informed in a language they understand of the outcomes of the screening assessments and educational options for the student. In addition, it is required that parents are informed in a language they can understand when students are reclassified.

**Q18. What are programmatic placement recommendations?**

Programmatic placement recommendations would be related to a student’s level of English language proficiency as shown by a language screening assessment or latest ACCESS scores available, choosing the data set that is most recent at the time of placement. Considerations might also include the preference for one instructional model over another, for example a student who was in a bilingual

setting might be placed to continue such program, yet the decision should be made in unison and agreement with the family.

**Q19. Who is considered an immigrant for Title III Immigrant Grant purposes?**

The definition of immigrant used by RIDE for status and data collection purposes is:

Immigrant children and youth means individuals who:

- (A) Are aged 3 through 21;
- (B) Were not born in any State; and
- (C) Have not been attending one or more schools in any one or more States for more than 3 full academic years.

When determining whether a student meets condition (C), the months in attendance do not need to be consecutive. For the definition above, "state" means the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, per Section 3201(5) of ESEA.

**Q20. Can a student be an immigrant and NOT an MLL/EL?**

Yes. For instance, a student aged 3 through 21, who enrolls in any US school for the first time and attended less than 3 academic years, with strong bilingual social and academic language, qualifies to be an immigrant, but is not necessarily a MLL/EL student. For this reason, question 5 on page 2 (Indicate date first enrolled in ANY U.S. school) should be collected for any new enrolling student.

**Case Scenario 1:**

Thomas is 5 years old and his family is moving from Australia to the US for work. Thomas is enrolling for the first time in a U.S. school, had prior school experience in his country in English, his HLS indicates 'English' only, and Thomas is not screened for MLL/EL identification purposes, yet Thomas is an immigrant.

**Case Scenario 2:**

Aiden is 12 years old and his family is moving from Singapore to the US for work. Aiden is enrolling for the first time in a U.S. school, has received prior schooling in his country in English only, his HLS indicates "English" and "other", in this case Malay. Aiden completes a language screening assessment and results confirm that Aiden is not an MLL/EL, yet Aiden is an immigrant.