Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education

Each year, Lawrence schools enroll an increasing and diverse number of English learners (ELs) with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE). Some of these students may be refugee children fleeing civil unrest or war, while others may have had inconsistent access to formal education in their home countries before coming to the United States. While SLIFE are diverse, with interruptions in schooling often due to factors like conflict, migration, economic hardship, or limited access to education in their home countries, the guidance and resources below aim to help districts identify additional supports these students may need beyond standard English learner education services.

To be identified as SLIFE in Massachusetts, a student must meet all the following criteria:

- The student is identified as an English learner.
- The student is 8 to 21 years old.
- The student enrolled in a school in the United States after grade 2 or exited the U.S. for 6 months or more and did not attend school during this time.
- Prior exposure to formal schooling is characterized by one of the following:
    - No formal schooling;
    - Significant interruptions in formal schooling;
    - Consistent but limited formal schooling (e.g., school days were significantly shorter - 3 hours or less a day).

In alignment with the June 2024 DESE SLIFE Guidance document, Lawrence Public Schools has established the following procedures for SLIFE Identification, Services, and Support. While DESE recommends that each school consider establishing a SLIFE Planning Team, the ML Department recommends that the Language Acquisition Team oversee the process and the LAT Facilitator and other school personnel collaborate with the ML Department to establish support and services.

Process

If school staff believes that an EL age 8 or above may have gaps in formal education…

Step 1: Pre-Screener

A. Communicate with the Language Acquisition Team Facilitator (LAT-F) to start the identification process.

B. Administer the SLIFE Pre-Screener. Complete as much of the SLIFE pre-screener as you can based on information already gathered through registration and the initial academic records review (if such records were available). If any pieces of information for the pre-screener are still missing, you may obtain them by talking with the student and/or caregiver.

C. Regardless of the Pre-Screener results, upload the results to the PLS Vault (instructions).

D. If the student is determined or suspected to be a SLIFE, submit a referral form.

Step 2: Interview & Step 3: Academic Screeners

The ML Department Assessment Specialist will…

A. Create a folder for the student in the school's ML folder. All records will be kept here for the school's reference.

B. Call the family to conduct the parent interview.

C. Make an appointment with the LAT-F to conduct the student interview and screeners.

    a. First Language Literacy (IPT)

    b. Numeracy: Math Diagnostic (Directions) (Tracker)

D. After completing the interview and screeners, the Assessment Specialist will file the interview notes and assessment results in the student folder and share with the LAT-F.

E. If the student is determined to be SLIFE, the Assessment Specialist will update PowerSchool and notify the LAT-F.

Step 4: SLIFE Services and Support

Upon SLIFE designation, the LAT-F, together with the LAT team and other relevant staff members, will…

A. Develop a student academic support plan to support the student's academic and linguistic goals, social-emotional well-being, and to monitor progress.

B. Communicate with the family to ensure they understand the SLIFE designation and the services that the student will receive.

C. Monitor the student's progress at least twice a year (February/June), although more intensive tracking and support may be required.

D. Upload all forms and documents to the PowerSchool Vault (instructions).