



Intake & Assessment to Identify LL SIFE for Bridges to Academic Success

ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

The following is an overview of NYSED- and Bridges-specific resources for identifying SIFE and LL SIFE.

- See addendum to this document for details on the following assessments.
- For more information on state assessments, please visit the NYSED website:

<http://www.nysed.gov/bilingual-ed/schools/students-interruptedinconsistent-formal-education-sife>

Assessment	Languages	Assessment Purpose
New York State Home Language Questionnaire and Interview (HLQ)	Languages: Please visit the state website in order to get the most updated list of languages in which the HLQ is available.	Determines whether there is another language spoken at home and represents the first step in the ELL identification process.
New York State Identification Test for English Language Learners (NYSITELL)	Languages: English Requires oral translation in student home language by designated staff.	Measures the English language proficiency of a student who may possibly be an ELL.
NYSED SIFE Oral Interview Questionnaire	Languages: English Requires oral translation in student home language by designated staff.	Gathers data about student family, educational and schooling background, and interests.

Home Language Literacy Assessments

For Bridges, home language literacy assessments are used to determine if a SIFE student is at 3rd grade or below in home language literacy. The following table lists a number of home language literacy assessments that schools can utilize, depending on the student population that needs to be assessed:

Assessment	Languages	Assessment Purpose
Multilingual Literacy SIFE Screener (MLS) <i>Used in New York State</i>	Languages: Arabic Bangla Chinese English Haitian Creole Maay Maay S'gaw Karen Spanish Urdu	Evaluates students home language literacy. Students who score below 3rd grade home language literacy are candidates for Bridges. The MLS will determine if a student is reading at 3rd grade or below in home language, but does not provide specific data on early literacy skills below the 3rd grade level. <i>Modules:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Comprehension in all languages • Vocabulary in four languages: Urdu, Spanish, English, Chinese • Early Literacy in Spanish and English
NYSED Writing Screener <i>Used in New York State</i>	Languages: Arabic Bangla Chinese English Haitian Creole Maay Maay S'gaw Karen Spanish Urdu	Evaluates writing proficiency in home language.
Bridges Alternative Assessments	Languages: Swahili French Bengali Haitian Creole Spanish Arabic	Screens for writing proficiency in home language. Evaluates reading comprehension.

Assessment Timeline and Administration

In addition to NYSED assessments and guidance on administration (see Figure 1 below), we recognize that schools may have:

- 1) Local assessments that help support identification of SIFE and LL SIFE
- 2) Students with complex linguistic repertoires that cannot all be assessed through available state assessments (e.g., low-incidence languages or languages not utilized in printed form)
- 3) Obstacles to implementing these assessments in order of the flow chart described

Therefore, we encourage schools to develop their own timeline of assessment administration that includes all assessments administered, designed strategically to understand the strengths and needs of their students.

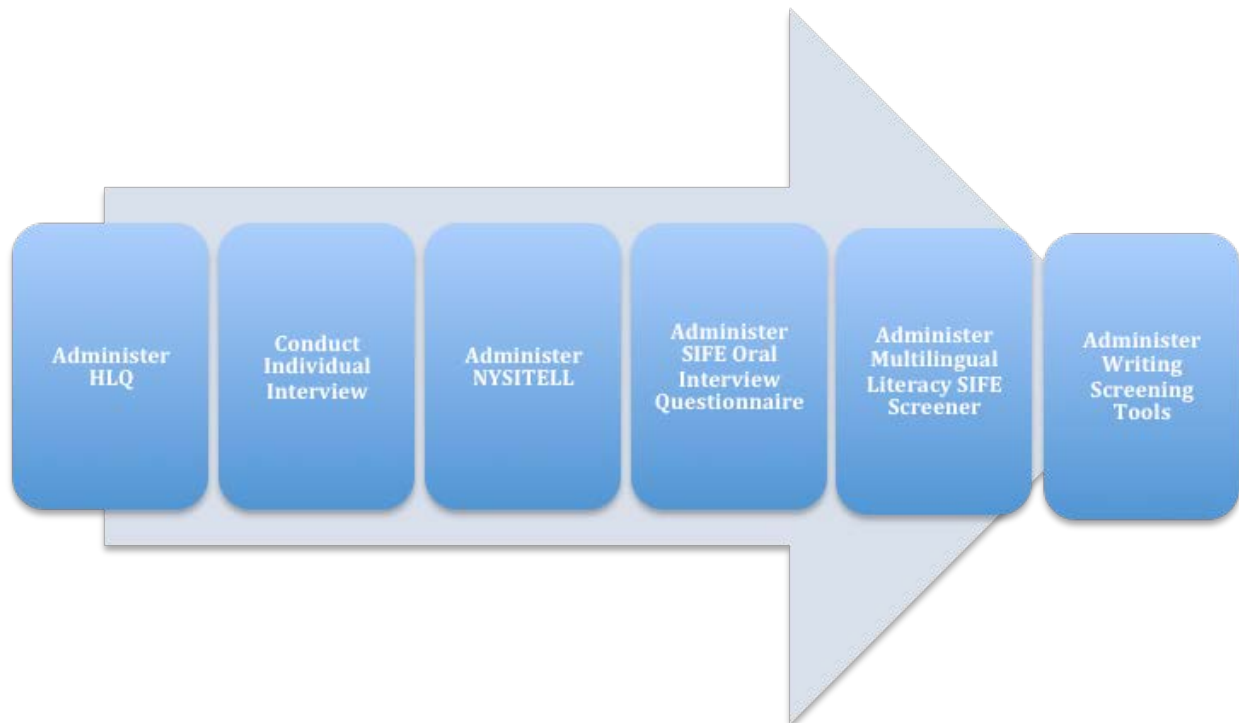


Figure 1: NYSED Flowchart of Assessment Administration

Some schools may administer the MLS prior to conducting the oral interview as a time-saving practice. This allows schools to identify a student's literacy level in home language and then utilize the SIFE Oral Interview Questionnaire to probe for more information about a students' literacy background and profile. Other schools may conduct these simultaneously, depending on human resources, and look at the data from both assessments together.

Addendum: Description of Key NYSED Assessments

(Excerpted from *Bridges to Academic Success Student Profiles and Program Manual*)

Intake and Identification: Understanding the Students

SIFE who arrive into classrooms in secondary school face some of the greatest obstacles to graduation and, among their ELL peers, are at highest risk of dropping out.

For this reason, it is incumbent on schools to assess SIFE students carefully and use the information they garner about students to make programming choices that accelerate SIFE access and meaningful participation in the secondary classroom. There is no time to waste, and schools cannot wait until students fail to identify more targeted interventions.

The New York State Education Department has offered guidance on the procedure for identifying SIFE. Combined with careful observation of students and conversations with families with home-language support, these tools work together to provide a snapshot of each student. Schools can then make immediate, informed choices about programming. Here we provide specific information about the diagnostics and screeners available in 2016-17. In addition, to understanding the sequence of administration that will be more widely available on the NYSED OBEWL (Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages) website, it is important to understand the purposes of each diagnostic and/or screener.

The NYSED resources include:

- NYS Home Language Questionnaire and Interview (HLQ): Identifies if student understands a language other than English.
- The New York State Identification Test for English Language Learners (NYSITELL): Measures English language proficiency.
- SIFE Oral Interview Questionnaire: Seeks information about previous schooling in home country and family background.
- Multilingual SIFE Screener (MLSS): Assesses home language literacy. This shows the NYSED 2016-17 diagnostics flowchart to support the identification and programming of SIFE.

1. NYS Home Language Questionnaire

The HLQ is administered to determine whether there is another language spoken at home and represents the first step in the identification process. The HLQ must be completed by the parent or guardian of each new entrant at the time of the student's initial enrollment in a New York State school. Schools must provide the HLQ in the language the parent or guardian best understands. If the responses on the HLQ indicate that a language other than English is spoken at home or that the student understands a language other than English, then an informal interview in the home language and English must be conducted. If the informal interview indicates that the student is possibly an ELL, the assessment of the student's level of English language proficiency must be conducted using the NYSITELL (see below). Please visit the state website in order to get the most updated list of languages in which the HLQ is available.

2. NYSITELL

The New York State Identification Test for English Language Learners (NYSITELL) replaced the NYSESLAT and measures the English language proficiency of a student who may possibly be an ELL. A student's score in English proficiency can begin to give us insight into an instructional program that might best serve a student's needs. Based on their score, students receive a designation of:

- Entering
- Emerging
- Transitioning
- Expanding
- Commanding

Students' NYSITELL scores and any information about their transcripts or educational history can be used as a way to distinguish LL SIFE from the larger pool of newcomer ELLs, with higher levels of literacy in the home language. We suggest that you review the tests of student tests who score *Entering* on the NYSITELL for any clues that might indicate that they are SIFE. It can be helpful to review each of the domains of a student's results on the NYSITELL to ascertain whether there are significant differences in scores across domains. One indicator could be high oral language scores and significantly lower scores in reading and writing. A home-language writing sample can often reveal whether students are new to print or have emergent levels of literacy in home language. A review of transcript information or information that was shared in an initial conversation with school or district staff might also shed light on a student's previous schooling.

We also encourage you to work with community-based organizations that might lend insight into the home contexts. Valuable information can also be learned from refugee resettlement organizations. You will use this information to decide who might be SIFE. Those students and their families will be interviewed in more depth, and students will be assessed to ascertain their literacy in home language. Keep in mind that an *Entering* level does not mean SIFE. English language proficiency is distinct from home language literacy.

3. SIFE Oral Interview Questionnaire¹

The SIFE Oral Interview Questionnaire can provide valuable insight into a student's educational background, which can play an important role in programming and instruction for schools. It is administered in order to gain a more complete picture of student educational history as well as information on family and home background. We urge school districts and schools to hire staff who are proficient in students' languages and who have the cultural proficiency to work with refugee and immigrant students and families. This requires that the staff are well-trained. Staff conducting interviews must be mindful that this conversation often happens within weeks of a student's enrollment in school. Families' lack of familiarity with the school system and the implications connected to the information they share may mean that they choose not to fully disclose information. This might be because they believe it is prudent to tell school staff what they believe they want to hear. We encourage school staff to make each encounter with students an opportunity to continue to understand their experiences and to get to know them. It is important to set up structures in schools where, when appropriate, this information can be shared with other staff members and compiled into a student profile that is developed throughout a student's schooling.

¹ This can be administered before or after the MLS/LENS.

4. Multilingual Literacy SIFE Screener – New York State 15

The MLSS is a multilingual suite of diagnostics designed to assess students' literacy in their home language. This is an invaluable tool. Where the NYSITELL evaluates proficiency in the English language, it cannot help educators distinguish newcomers who bring high levels of literacy in their home language—which is likely to transfer to their literacy practices in English—from students who need more targeted instruction to build literacy skills that are assumed in secondary classrooms. The MLSS is a semi-adaptive online diagnostic that assesses reading comprehension in nine languages, vocabulary in four languages, and early literacy in Spanish and English. This assessment reflects current literature-based curricula and didactic principles from students' home countries for grades 3 through 9. Culturally and age-appropriate reading passages are authentic, original texts written by native speaker experts. Passages were created carefully to avoid region-specific vocabulary. Text types and topics were selected according to popular home language literary traditions and genres that newcomer students would have previously been exposed to in their home classrooms. Question types differ by language to match home-country testing conventions.

Please note: The MLSS is a useful tool to understand the home language literacy levels of students who are 4th grade and above. The screener does not provide any data for students' whose home language literacy is below 3rd grade. In other words, the screener can help you decide where to program SIFE with varied levels of home language literacy. Students who score at 3rd grade or below are appropriate candidates for Bridges.

Overview of Assessment Modules

- The Reading Comprehension module presents passages of various types: literary, informational, functional, and persuasive. Students read and answer both Initial Understanding and Interpretation questions. The text types differ by language. It is available in Arabic, Bangla, Chinese, English, Haitian Creole, Maay Maay, S'gaw Karen, Spanish, and Urdu.²
- The Vocabulary module, which is an optional module, tests students' knowledge of words in context and synonyms. For some languages, the MLSS Vocabulary section also includes compound words and multiple-meaning words. In some languages, vocabulary is embedded in the Reading Comprehension section. It is available in Chinese, Urdu, Spanish, and English.
- The Early Literacy module asks students to identify same and different sounds, syllables and sound-to-symbol correspondences. Beyond the word level, it examines basic sentence comprehension. It is available in Spanish and English. The Vocabulary and Reading Comprehension assess literacy above the advanced 3rd grade level. Modules begin on the computer with a practice section, and are followed by a series of questions that are scored. The subsequent MLSS passages and questions increase in grade and difficulty if they are answered correctly, and decrease in grade and difficulty if they are answered incorrectly. Students with home language literacy below advanced 3rd grade will complete the screener quickly, as it is likely they will not have the literacy to respond to the questions accurately.

The presentation for the MLS Early Literacy varies slightly. Each section begins with a practice session. However, students see every question in each section at once. The MLS's Literacy Skills and Abilities

² Much of this information is taken from the Multilingual Diagnostic User Guide, produced by RISLUS, the Research Institute for the Study of Language in Urban Education, February 2016.



Teacher Report is a detailed description of a student's skills and abilities in reading, vocabulary, and early literacy. The report also identifies grade level (grades 3 advanced through 9) according to literacy skills and abilities standards of the home country. For students whose literacy is below grade 3 in home language, there is no information provided about their literacy skills.