

## INITIAL IDENTIFICATION OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

A uniform initial identification procedure must be used with all students enrolling in a district. The recommended procedure to identify LEP/ELL students for language instruction educational programs is based on the following steps:

### Step 1. Identification of LEP Students: Home Language Survey

A *Home Language Survey* is a district-developed tool to be given to all entering students and used to identify students who may not be proficient in English.

The *Home Language Survey* is designed to identify, for possible further evaluation:

- Students who communicate in a language other than English; or
- Students whose families use a primary language other than English in the home; or
- Students who use a language other than English in daily non-school surroundings.

**Note:** Having another language spoken in the home or routinely used in other settings is *not* an automatic identification of a student as LEP/ELL. The preliminary evaluation conducted in the next step determines the students who should be referred for placement in a language instruction educational program.

### Step 2. Preliminary Evaluation: Academic History

The student's academic history should be thoroughly assessed including:

- Academic records from within or outside the United States
- Course grades which, in relation to the student's grade level, indicate that lack of progress is due to limited English language acquisition
- Information on everyday classroom performance

An academic assessment may be administered to support educator judgment (e.g., locally developed, commercially available assessments, and/or reading inventories).

### Step 3. Screener Evaluation for Instructional Placement

Students with limited English language skills who have recently arrived in the United States, or are newly enrolled in the school district and are potential ELLs, should be formally screened to help determine whether or not the student is in need of a language instruction educational program.

The *WIDA-ACCESS Placement Test™*, or W-APT is Wisconsin's initial English language "screener." The W-APT score should be used to determine the initial tier placement for English language assessment and assist in determining the student's initial English language proficiency (ELP) level.

In sum, the screener serves to identify ELLs, and assists in placement into an appropriate language instruction educational program that meets the needs of the student. In addition, screener scores provide an initial tier/level placement on the annual ELP assessment, *ACCESS for ELLs®*. Finally, the ELP level determined on the screener identifies students as ELLs in student enrollment systems.