



Appalachia IU8

ESL Newsletter

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OK, What is the *Exact* Procedure I Need to Follow for ESL from the Home Language Survey and Registration to Assessment?

The HLS, or Home Language Survey, is required by federal/state law for every child in the United States who registers with a charter school or public school district, including preschool. It is highly recommended that the parent/guardian complete the survey at registration in the presence of an employee of the district who can check the facts or answer questions about the HLS. This procedure avoids a lot of problems later as to what the parent or guardian wrote on the HLS.

For example, an HLS may indicate that French is spoken at home, when in fact it is just an academic course in French that was taken in public school and the student's first language is really not French, but English. In this situation the HLS should be redone properly, because it is now obvious that

the child is not a PHLOTE (Primary Home Language Other Than English).

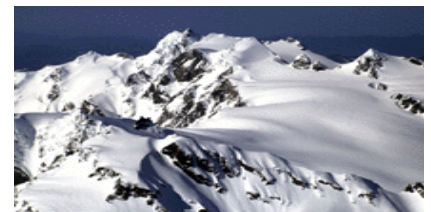
Occasionally, a parent or guardian cannot speak, read, or write English, and the parent must receive assistance from the district in the way of an interpretation or translation in the preferred language of the parent or guardian. If a language other than English appears on one of the three questions in the HLS, the student is then designated as a PHLOTE and **MUST** be tested for English language proficiency. All HLSs **MUST** include the following three questions:

1. What was the first language your child learned to speak?
2. What language(s) does your child speak most

3. What language(s) is/are spoken most often at home?

If ANY of these questions are answered with a language other than English, the child becomes a PHLOTE and **MUST** be assessed for English language proficiency within 30 days from the start of the school year or 14 days if the student registers at any time after the first day of school.

Additionally, the HLS is "cut and dried"—meaning one cannot "interpret" answers. For example, if the child's first language is English but a language other than English is spoken most often at home, the child is still considered a PHLOTE and **must be assessed**.



Mountain splendor—the Alps...Or winter in west-central PA?

One cannot say, "The student's first language is English, so there is no need for ESL services. The parents wrote that they speak another language, not the child." That isn't permissible, because one of the three mandated questions was answered with a language other than English; the student is a PHLOTE and must be assessed for English proficiency. If the student is not LEP (limited English proficient), ESL services are not required; if the student is LEP, ESL services must start immediately.

How Does Our District Register a Language Minority Student?

In the IU8 ESL Consortium, some districts still do not have any ESL students! Some districts have 10 or even 15 ESL students. No matter the perspective, we are a low ESL incidence community. However, as time has gone by, we are experiencing an increase in our ESL numbers, and this trend will continue, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

Since we know we will be registering students who are PHLOTES as identified by the HLS, please be aware that the parent needs to present only **two** registration documents.

The first and most important is the proof of immunization, and in this respect the parent and district must adhere to state law. However, please do not be surprised if the immunization papers are in another language! This may be your first challenge in translating a document.

Secondly, the district may ask for proof of residency, such as a rent or utility bill with the parent's name and address on it. That is all the district is permitted to request. As you may note, this is different from a typical registration. For proof of age, if there are no documents for age, the parent or guardian may sign a notarized document attesting to the age of the child.

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Feature Teacher Spotlight: North Star

Roxanne Buncich, an ESL (English as a second language) teacher at North Star School District, is our featured teacher for this issue. Roxanne received her ESL Program Specialist training through Appalachia Intermediate Unit 8, and received her PDE certification in July of 2004. Soon thereafter, she learned that North Star would be enrolling three new ESL students starting in the 2004-2005 school year.

With tremendous support from Dennis Leyman, North Star's superintendent, and Sam Romesberg, the principal at the elementary school, Roxanne has put together an excellent ESL program. She works with the three ESL students in the morning and assists with the Kid Writing program in the afternoon.

Roxanne has one student in kindergarten, one in first grade and one in fourth grade. The kindergarten and first grade students work well together in one Language Arts block. The two boys are always encouraging each other to do their best and each helps the other. Every day they write back and forth to each other on the message boards. They also pick a word they would like to learn for the week.

Roxanne utilizes her skills with Kid Writing to help the ELLs develop reading, writing, and speaking skills. She also likes a web program that she has found to be very useful, called Reading a-z, which can be found at Reading a-z.com. This website has been very useful to her and is arranged in grade/proficiency levels with printable books,

lessons, worksheets, and listening books. There is a charge for this program, but it is very reasonable because of the quality and accessibility, according to Roxanne. She can basically print out a ready-made lesson plan for every day.

Roxanne's program is a mix of push-in and pull-out ESL classes. Roxanne feels strongly that it is important to find the right "mix" for the student, the ESL teacher, and the content area teacher.

Roxanne and her husband Mike have two daughters, Mikella and Alexis. When not teaching school or enjoying her family, Roxanne works with the Southcentral PA Writing Project intended to help teachers teach writing.

I Need to Know More About Assessment and LEPs: The IPT, the Woodcock-Munoz, and the Harcourt!

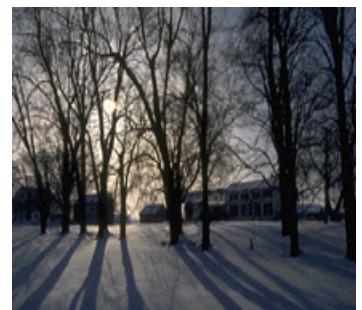
Once a student has been identified as a PHLOTE, he or she must be assessed for English language proficiency. The assessment to determine English language proficiency must be given in the English language, since, after all, we are trying to determine proficiency in the English language.

Occasionally the question will arise as to why the assessment is not given in the student's native, or first, language. That is not done, because that would assess the student's ability in *that* language and not English, and the law requires that we assess a student for English language proficiency.

However, there are benefits to assessing a student in the student's first language. Research has shown that the more proficient a student is in his or her first language, the faster the student will become proficient in English.

We have available two types of PDE-approved assessments: the Woodcock-Munoz English Language Survey and the IPT (Idea Proficiency Test). Both of these are excellent when assessing English language proficiency. Of course, there are many other types of English language assessments, but these are two of the most widely used and widely accepted. The Harcourt test is an assessment that is used by

PDE strictly for the purpose of meeting federal regulations in reporting the progress of LEP students. The districts are responsible for administering the Harcourt, but the districts may not use the results for entering students in or exiting students from an ESL program.



Yes, it is snow, but hey... there's no lawn to mow!