



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF

**EDUCATION**

## For LEAs: Administering the Home Language Survey

**Introduction:** As part of the enrollment process in DC public and public charter schools for grades pre-K to 12, all parents and guardians are asked to complete the OSSE Home Language Survey on the following page.

LEAs serving students in grades pre-K to 12 must administer the OSSE Home Language Survey to families who are enrolling their child in any District of Columbia school for the **first** time.

It is **not** necessary to administer this survey to families who are *re*-enrolling their child in a District of Columbia school, including students who are transferring from one LEA to another.

**Purpose:** The Home Language Survey is used to determine if the student is eligible to take an English language proficiency screener. If a student's guardian responds "Yes" to either question 1 or question 2, the student must be referred to the appropriate LEA staff (i.e., English Learner [EL] Coordinator) for English language proficiency screening. Please see OSSE's [Delivering Education Services to English Learners](#) for a list of state-approved screeners. Based on the screener score, the student may be eligible to participate in the English language instructional program at his/her school. Federal law requires schools to offer eligible students an English language instructional program so they may attain English language proficiency and achieve academic success.

The Home Language Survey is **not** used to determine:

- a family's immigration status;
- a family's residency status; or
- if the student is an English learner (this is determined by the English language proficiency screener).

## Instructions:

- Ensure that families who are enrolling their child in a District of Columbia school for the **first** time are given the OSSE Home Language Survey including the cover sheet “For Families.” Include the survey and cover sheet “For Families” in the enrollment packet given to new students.
  - It is **not** necessary to give this survey to families who are *re*-enrolling their child in a District of Columbia school.
- Reasonable efforts should be made to help the family understand the purpose of the survey and how to complete it. Provide the “For Families” cover sheet to the family and, if needed, provide language support to families who may not be able to read or understand it.
- Skilled interpreters should be made available for families who need language assistance in order to complete the survey. This includes illiterate families and families who need sign language or braille to complete the survey. The Language Line, a telephonic interpreting service where an interpreter participates in the conversation between the school and the family over the telephone, is one resource schools can use. More information about the Language Line is available online at the DC Office of Human Rights’ Language Access Portal found here:  
<https://ohr.dc.gov/page/LAportal/coveredentity##interpretation>.
- Ensure the survey has been completed, signed, and dated by the parent or guardian. If a family refuses to complete the survey, make a reasonable effort to help the family understand the purpose of the survey and how to complete it; this effort should include providing language assistance, if necessary. If, after the aforementioned efforts have been made, the family still refuses to complete the survey, note the refusal and date on the survey and do not flag the student for English language proficiency screening.
- A school official, such as the registrar, must sign and date the bottom of the form upon receipt from the parent or guardian.
- If there is a “Yes” response to either question 1 or question 2, the student must be referred to the appropriate LEA staff (i.e., English Learner [EL] Coordinator) for English language proficiency screening. Please see OSSE’s [Delivering Education Services to English Learners](#) for a list of state-approved screeners.
- If the guardian responds “No” to both questions 1 and 2, the student is considered proficient and does not need to be screened.
- Enter the language(s) listed on questions 1 and/or 2 in your LEA’s School Information System (SIS) under the “native language” field. The language entered must correspond to the three-digit code for a valid language on the ISO (International Organization of Standardization) list. For more about the ISO, please visit <https://www.iso.org>.
- Keep the signed and dated survey in the student’s file.