ELL Students with Interrupted/Inconsistent Formal Education (SIFE)

The SIFE Oral Interview Questionnaire
The Multilingual Literacy SIFE Screener (MLS)
SIFE Writing Screener

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Bilingual Resource Specialist
L.I. RBERN
Students with Inconsistent/Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE) shall mean English Language Learners who have attended schools in the United States (the 50 States and the District of Columbia) for less than twelve months and who, upon initial enrollment in such schools are two or more years below grade level in literacy in their home language and/or two or more years below grade level in Math due to inconsistent or interrupted schooling prior to arrival in the United States (the 50 States and the District of Columbia).
152.2-3(n): SIFE Status.

- Students identified as a Student with Inconsistent/Interrupted Formal Education as defined in section 154-2.3(a) of this Subpart shall continue to be identified as such until they are performing at the transitioning/intermediate level on the annual English language proficiency assessment.

- Once a student is performing at or above the transitioning level on the annual English language proficiency assessment, the student's status as a Student with Inconsistent/Interrupted Formal Education shall be removed by the school district, even though the student may continue to be identified as an English Language Learner.

- Upon exiting a student from SIFE status, the school district must maintain records that the student was once identified as a SIFE.
WELCOME TO ENL/BILINGUAL PROGRAMS AT EASTERN SUFFOLK BOCES!

The ENL/Bilingual Programs Office at Eastern Suffolk BOCES is comprised of the following programs:

- The Long Island Regional Bilingual Education Resource Network (L.I. RBE-RN)
- The Intensive Teacher Institute in Bilingual Special Education (ITI-BSE)
- The Nassau NCLB Title III Consortium
- The Suffolk NCLB Title III Consortium

The staff of ENL/Bilingual Programs stands ready to assist Long Island and New York State educators in a variety of ways, all of which aim to enhance educational opportunities and achievement of the English language learner (ELL) population. Please feel free to browse and use any of the information on our website, or to contact the staff in any of our programs for assistance.

http://www.esboces.org/Page/81
NYSED Resources for SIFE Students

NYS defines SIFE as ELLs who have attended schools in the U.S. for less than twelve months and who, upon initial enrollment in schools, are two or more years below grade level in literacy in their home language and/or two or more years below grade level in math due to inconsistent or interrupted schooling prior to arrival in the U.S. In NYS, SIFE make up 8.7% of the total ELL population according to 2014-2015 NYSED data.

Currently, schools and districts across NYS are utilizing a variety of methods for SIFE identification and placement. In order to develop a cohesive state-wide SIFE protocol and to support schools and districts in serving SIFE, NYS has established a statewide SIFE Workgroup, composed of teachers of ELLs, administrators, researchers, and other stakeholders in order to design appropriate resources to address the needs of this population.

Below are links to the resources that have been developed for identifying SIFE/ELLs.

**SIFE Screening, Identification and Placement Flowchart**

**SIFE Questions and Answers**

The SIFE Oral Interview Questionnaire and Guidance Document to be used in school districts to support instruction by collecting information about a student’s family and home, background, educational history, and literacy practices.

**SIFE Oral Interview Questionnaire Guidance Document**

*Arabic Questionnaire*
*Arabic Guidance Document*

*Bengali Questionnaire*
*Bengali Guidance Document*

*English Questionnaire*
*English Guidance Document*
## STUDENTS WITH INTERRUPTED/INCONSISTENT FORMAL EDUCATION (SIFE) SCREENING, IDENTIFICATION, AND PLACEMENT

English Language Learner (ELL) Screening, Identification, and Placement must be completed within 10 school days from the enrollment date. Follow initial steps for identifying a student as an ELL. Student must first be identified as an ELL before being identified as a SIFE.

### 1. SCREENING - HOME LANGUAGE QUESTIONNAIRE (HLQ)
Administer the HLQ to all new students, which is to be maintained in each student’s cumulative record. **Students must be enrolled in school upon registration.**

- HLQ indicates student’s home or primary language is other than English. **CONTINUE TO STEP 2. SCREENING – INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW.**

### 2. SCREENING - INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW
An Individual Interview is conducted with the student in English and in the student’s home or primary language by qualified personnel. This includes reviewing documents, prior assessments, and academic experience. An assessment of abilities and work samples determines the literacy and math level in the home or primary language. **The interview and all future oral and written communications must be conducted with a qualified translator/interpreter provided by a school/district.**

- Results of the individual interview confirm that the student speaks and/or understands a language other than English. Review of student’s abilities and work in English and in the home language obtained during the individual interview may assist in SIFE determination in Steps 4 & 5. **IF STUDENT DOES NOT HAVE AN IEP, PROCEED TO STEP 3. IF STUDENT HAS AN IEP FOLLOW STEPS FOR STUDENTS WITH AN IEP BEFORE PROCEEDING TO STEP 3 (see ELL ID Process chart).**

### 3. INITIAL ELL IDENTIFICATION ASSESSMENT
Qualified personnel administer the New York State Identification Test for English Language Learners (NYSITELL). **For students with disabilities, provide approved testing accommodations per the student’s IEP, as indicated in CR section 154-3.3(a)(7). Originals or copies of NYSITELL score sheets and results must be maintained in each student’s cumulative record.**

- If student scores below the COMMANDING level on the NYSITELL, student is an ELL. Follow procedures for parent notification of ELL Identification and proceed with parent orientation and program placement **(see ELL ID Process chart).** **IF A STUDENT WAS IDENTIFIED AS A POTENTIAL SIFE DURING STEP 2, CONTINUE TO STEP 4: DETERMINATION OF ELL STUDENT WITH SIFE STATUS.**
**SIFE SCREENING AND IDENTIFICATION PROCESS**

(continued)

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The above steps apply to all ELLs. The following steps apply to potential ELL/SIFE only.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><strong>DETERMINATION OF POTENTIAL SIFE STATUS:</strong> Qualified Personnel Administer SIFE Oral Interview Questionnaire. This interview must be conducted in English and in the student’s home language by qualified personnel. <em>The interview and all future oral and written communications must be conducted with a qualified translator/interpreter provided by a school/district.</em></td>
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<td>Results of the SIFE Oral Interview Questionnaire indicate student is a potential SIFE. <strong>PROCEED TO STEP 5: ADMINISTER MULTILINGUAL LITERACY SIFE SCREENER (MLS) IN THE HOME LANGUAGE</strong></td>
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<td>5</td>
<td><strong>ADMINISTER MLS:</strong> Qualified personnel administer the MLS. Interview notes, academic and assessment history, and work samples are to be collected and maintained in the student’s cumulative record. Results of the MLS indicate student is a SIFE. <strong>PROCEED TO STEP 6: ADMINISTER THE WRITING SCREENER.</strong></td>
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<td>6</td>
<td><strong>ADMINISTER WRITING SCREENER</strong> to determine the student’s basic writing skills in his or her home or primary language.</td>
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Qualified Personnel

(1) a bilingual or English to Speakers of Other Languages teacher, certified pursuant to Part 80 of this Title, who is fluent in the home language of the student and parent or person in parental relation, or uses a qualified interpreter/translator of the language or mode of communication the student or parent or person in parental relation best understands, or

(2) a teacher who is certified pursuant to Part 80 of this Title, and has been trained in cultural competency, language development and the needs of English Language Learners, and who is proficient in the home language of the student or parent or person in parental relation or uses a qualified interpreter/translator of the language or mode of communication the student or parent or person in parental relation best understands.

CR Part 154-2.1(u)
## Students with Interrupted/Inconsistent Formal Education (SIFE)

**Oral Interview Questionnaire**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student’s Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>Student’s Date of Birth</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interviewer's Name</td>
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<td>Interviewer’s Title</td>
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<td>Location of Interview</td>
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<td>Student’s School</td>
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<td>Date</td>
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</table>
1. Gender: [ ] Male  [ ] Female

2. a. What is your first name?  
   b. What is your last name?

3. a. How old are you?  
   b. What is your date of birth?

4. In what country were you born?

5. [If different] In what country were you raised?

6. In what city, town, or village were you raised?

7. What was the first language that you learned in your home as a child?

8. a. What other languages, if any, have you learned?  
   b. Which language are you most comfortable using?

9. What language(s) did you learn at school?
1. What do you do when you are not in school?

2. What do you like about living in a new country/or about where you live now?
SIFE Oral Interview Questionnaire

Benchmarks:

1. Family and Home Background
2. Education History
3. Language and Literacy Practices
4. Other Questions
5. Performance Questions
Benchmark 1:
Family and Home Background

- Social, cultural, and economic circumstances
- Family and Work Obligations
- Support Structures
Benchmark 1: Family and Home Background

1. Who do you live with? [check all that apply]
   - [ ] Mother
   - [ ] Father
   - [ ] Sibling(s)
   - [ ] Aunt(s)
   - [ ] Uncle(s)
   - [ ] Cousin(s)
   - [ ] Grandparent(s)
   - [ ] Other __________________________

2. a. Do any of the people you live with now speak English? [check one]
   - [ ] Yes
   - [ ] No
   - [ ] I don't know
   b. Do they speak your language? [check one]
      - [ ] Yes
      - [ ] No
      - [ ] I don't know

3. a. Of all the people that you live with now, who has the highest level of education?
   - [ ] Primary School
   - [ ] Secondary School
   - [ ] College or University
   - [ ] Graduate School
   - [ ] I Don’t Know

4. In what languages do you speak to your parents/guardians?

5. a. Did you work in your home country? [check one]
   - [ ] Yes
   - [ ] No
   b. What type of work did you do?

6. a. Do you work now? [check one]
   - [ ] Yes
   - [ ] No
   b. [if yes] What type of work do you do?

7. Do you have anyone at home who can help with homework? [check one]
   - [ ] Yes
   - [ ] No
Benchmark 2: Education History

- Interruptions or Inconsistencies
- Provides a prompt: “When you were [age]...”
- Column provided to indicate length and time spent in school (full academic year, partial academic year, months or hours)
Benchmark 2: Education History

Now I'd like to ask you some questions about your experiences going to school up until this year. I'll be repeating some of the questions for each year that you've been in school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade level</th>
<th>When you were...</th>
<th>In what country were you living?</th>
<th>Did you go to school for most of that school year?</th>
<th>How much time did you spend in school?</th>
<th>Was your school in a city or town?</th>
<th>In what language(s) were the lessons given?</th>
<th>Did you study outside of school that year?</th>
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Benchmark 2: Education History

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At what age did you begin kindergarten in your country?</td>
<td>______</td>
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<tr>
<td>[If kindergarten not attended] At what age did you begin first grade?</td>
<td>______</td>
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Additional Information:

Now I am going to ask you questions about your school in your home country.

1. Tell me about your experiences at school. What was a typical school day in your country?

2. What do you feel that you do very well in school?

3. What was your favorite school subject?
Benchmark 3: Language & Literacy Practices

- Language use outside of a school setting
- Literacy experience
- Computer Technology and other media experiences
### Benchmark 3: Language & Literacy Practices

Next I am going to ask you some questions about the language(s) you use now.

1. **Do you like to read in your spare time?**
   - Yes
   - No
   - [check one]
   - [if yes] What do you read? [check all that apply]
   - Magazines
   - Books
   - Comics
   - Newspapers
   - Other
   - Sports
   - Fashion
   - Music
   - Entertainment
   - News
   - Science Fiction
   - Mystery
   - Other

2. **In which language(s) do you read?**
   - Primary Language
   - English
   - Other

3. **Do you like to write in your spare time?**
   - Yes
   - No
   - [check one]
   - [if yes] What do you like to write? [check all that apply]
   - Poetry
   - Emails
   - Letters
   - Music Lyrics
   - Stories
   - Notes to family
   - Reports
   - Journal
   - Notes to friends
   - Other

   - Primary Language
   - English
   - Other
Now I am going to ask you about some other activities outside of school.

3. When you talk to your friends in person or on the phone, which language(s) do you use? [check all that apply]
   - Primary Language
   - English
   - Other

4. a. Do you use: (check all that apply)
   - The Internet
   - Computers
   - Video-games
   - Telephone
   - Other
   - None of these

   b. [if yes] In which language(s)? (check all that apply)
   - Primary Language
   - English
   - Other

5. a. Do you watch TV? [check one]
   - Yes
   - No

   b. [if yes] In which language(s)? [check all that apply]
   - Primary Language
   - English
   - Other

6. Do you use a cell or smart phone? [check one]
   - Yes
   - No

7. a. Do you use your smart/cell phone to search the internet?
   - Yes
   - No

   b. [if yes] In which language(s)? (check all that apply)
   - Primary Language
   - English
   - Other
Future goals

Adapted for younger students

Benchmark 4: Other Questions

What career do you want to have in the future? What are your plans when you finish school?
Benchmark 5: Performance Questions

- Evaluate ability to understand and perform basic tasks
- Map or globe and an analog clock needed
- Option to rephrase prompt

(See instructions in the SIFE Oral Questionnaire Guidance)

1. Have the student look at a world globe or a map and find their home country and the capital.
   Comments:

2. Have the student read an analog clock
   Comments:
We strive to ensure that all students' individual educational paths and socio-emotional needs are met in multiple languages leading them to college and career readiness. NYSED believes that all teachers are teachers of ELLs/MLLs. Our goal is to provide guidance, technical assistance, and support to NY State Districts, Charter Schools, Non-public Schools, and other organizations (Universities, State Educational Organizations) in the development of programs for English Language Learners/Multilingual Learners and World Language students. OBEWL serves over 700 Local Education Agencies and over 300,000 ELLs/MLLs from over 200 language programs.

Direct link to OBEWL web site:
http://www.nysed.gov/program-offices/office-bilingual-education-and-world-languages-obewl
Direct link to OBEWL this web page: http://www.nysed.gov/bilingual-ed
Multilingual Literacy SIFE Screener (MLS) Portal

(note: you must refer to the User Quicksheet before accessing the portal and administering the MLS)

The MLS is a multilingual set of diagnostics designed to inform teachers and administrators of the home-language literacy skills their students bring with them when they begin schooling in New York State. The MLS is also a semi-adaptive online diagnostic that reflects current literature-based curricula and didactic principles from students’ home countries for grades three through nine. The tool is currently available in Arabic, Bangla, Chinese, English, Haitian Creole, Karen, Maay Maay, and Spanish and may be available in more languages in the future as needed. All sections have been produced by literacy experts, writers, and editors who are native speakers of the above languages. In conjunction with the New York State SIFE Oral Interview Questionnaire as well as the Writing Screener, the MLS is an additional tool to be used in determining if a newly arrived English Language Learner is designated as SIFE. For more information about the MLS, read the MLS User Manual.

If you need assistance with your password or with any technical issues related to the MLS, please contact the Helpdesk at mls.email.server@gmail.com

NEW WEBINAR: Introduction to the MLS for the Identification of SIFE
Multilingual Literacy SIFE Screener (MLS) User Quicksheet
Multilingual Literacy SIFE Screener (MLS) User Manual
Introduction to the Multilingual Literacy SIFE Screener (Powerpoint)

Direct link to OBEWL this web page:
http://www.nysed.gov/bilingual-ed/schools/students-interruptedinconsistent-formal-education-sife
Step 1: Before Administering the MLS

1. Open Chrome or Firefox (Do not use Internet Explorer or Safari) and navigate to mls.gc.cuny.edu
2. Enter the master password mlsnyised
3. Apply for credentials by selecting Apply for an account from the homepage. This will take you to the registration page.

You will need:

✓ Your school’s BEDS code
✓ A proctor password of your own creation (this will be used by all educators at your school site)
✓ An administrator password of your own creation to view reports (this should be different than the proctor password)
Step Two: Administering an Assessment Using the MLS

1. Open Chrome or Firefox (Do not use Internet Explorer or Safari)
2. Visit mls.gc.cuny.edu
3. Enter the master password mlsnyse$ to access the homepage
4. Administer an exam by selecting either Vocabulary or Reading Comprehension from the homepage
5. Then, using your proctor or administrator credentials, complete the exam login and select the appropriate language:

   - Reading Comprehension: Arabic, Bangla, English, Haitian Creole, Maay Maay, Simplified Mandarin Chinese, S’gaw Karen, Spanish, Urdu
   - Vocabulary: English, Simplified Mandarin Chinese, Spanish, Urdu

You must have the proctor login and password entered correctly to select the language of the exam. All fields must be filled out in order to start the MLS.
The purpose of this tool is to quickly identify students’ basic writing skills as another data point to assist with the screening of potential SIFE. This tool can be administered to a group, and students should be given a maximum of 15 minutes to complete their writing. Writing Screeners are available in the following languages: Arabic, Bengali/Bangla, Chinese-Simplified, English, Haitian-Creole, S’gaw Karen, Maay Maay, Spanish, and Urdu.
Writing Assessment Screening Instructions for SIFE Students

1. If a student is able to write in a language that is not listed above, the student may write in that language using the English prompt (with home or primary language oral instructions). If a student has no written language, they should be encouraged to draw their response using the ‘drawn response’ prompt. A drawn response will not be able to be graded but it will allow the student to actively participate.

2. The instructor may fill in the basic student details fields (name, date of arrival, admit date etc.) Any oral instructions should be given in the student’s home or primary language.

3. Tell the students they will write a story in their home or primary language. Tell them this is not a test, but we would like to see them do the best that they can, writing as much as possible.

4. You may answer basic questions about the task, but refrain from explaining, suggesting ideas, or otherwise explicitly assisting the student.

5. Students should not use a dictionary or solicit help from teachers or other students to complete their writing.

6. Students should be encouraged to write as much as possible and be provided with additional paper if needed.
Writing Assessment Screening for SIFE Students

Name: 
Age: 

Date: 
Home Language: 

Date Arrived in USA: 
Home Country: 

Title of your writing: ________________________________

Sample prompt

For this activity, write about your favorite holiday/celebration in your home country. Include/think about:

- all details about the holiday/celebration
- what makes the holiday/celebration enjoyable
- any memories you may have about the holiday/celebration

Use the following space to write one or two paragraphs about your favorite holiday:

Remember to include in your writing:
- [ ] The name of the holiday/celebration people enjoy in your country
- [ ] What people do for the holiday/celebration
- [ ] What kind of food people eat
- [ ] Why the holiday/celebration is your favorite
Orientation to the Bridges ELA/ENL Curriculum for LL SIFE

Wednesday January 11th, 2017
CUNY Graduate Center, 365 5th Avenue at 34th Street

Please contact PD Director Annie Smith if you are interested in attending: annie@bridges-sifeproject.com