

The Public Schools of Brookline  
Office of English Language Education  
**PARENT/GUARDIAN NOTIFICATION LETTER**  
State and Federal Title III Requirements  
**English Proficiency Screening FAQs**

### **Top Things to Know about Brookline's English Proficiency Screenings**

1. There is no pass or fail on the English proficiency assessment. Students receive an English proficiency level that helps determine the right amount (if any) support they will receive.
2. Students do not need to prepare for this assessment.
3. English proficiency assessments do not determine admission to the Public School of Brookline or to a student's neighborhood school. Students are only scheduled for screenings once the Office of Registration and Enrollment (in accordance with School Committee policy) has determined their eligibility to attend Brookline schools.
4. The terms "screening", "assessment", and "test" are used interchangeably throughout this document.

### **What is ELE?**

ELE stands for English Language Education. Our office is responsible for identifying and supporting students who may need support in developing English language skills. Additionally, we support instructional programs, coordinate annual assessments, and create family and community engagement opportunities for our English learners and their families. We also arrange translation and interpretation services for families that need it, provide professional learning opportunities for Brookline educators and staff, and ensure the compliance with state and federal regulations.

### **Why does my child need an English proficiency screening?**

Under federal and state laws, districts must take appropriate steps to identify English Learners (ELs) so they can receive instruction that is designed to assist them in learning the English language and subject matter content. When a new student enrolls in a school district, it is the district's obligation to determine whether the student is an EL (603 CMR 14.02).

During registration appointments, all families are required to answer a series of questions regarding their child(ren)'s language exposure - this questionnaire is called a Home Language Survey. Every student whose Home Language Survey indicates exposure to a language other than or in addition to English must be assessed for English proficiency. In other words, students must have an English proficiency assessment when the answer to **any** question on the Home Language Survey is a language other than or in addition to English.

### **What happens during an English proficiency screening?**

The English proficiency screening looks different for different ages:

- Students in or entering **Brookline's Early Education Program (BEEP)**: the test administrator uses an activity board to play a game with the student in order to assess their oral language abilities.
- Students in or entering **first semester Kindergarten** the test administrator reads a short story to the student and then plays a series of games to determine the listening and speaking levels of the student.
- Students in **second semester Kindergarten and first semester Grade 1**: the test administrator also reads a short story to the student and plays a series of games, but assesses listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills.
- Students in **Grade 2 and above** participate in a series of computerized tasks to assess their speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills.

Generally, younger students are screened one on one while older students may be screened in small groups. After the student has completed the assessment, the test administrator scores it and the results are e-mailed to the family within 3 business days. Lastly, you have the opportunity to meet with a member of the ELE staff to discuss program options where applicable.

Beyond this, we desire that students feel comfortable during the appointment, so we may talk or play with your child prior to beginning. While we encourage parents/guardians to remain in the waiting room when possible, parents/guardians may join their younger students for the assessment. We ask that parents/guardians who join students for their screening do not provide assistance and be conscious of any potential distractions. We want to ensure that students are able to produce their best work.

### **How long does an English proficiency screening last?**

The length of a screening depends on the amount of English your child knows and their grade level. Students in Kindergarten through first semester grade 2 are scheduled for 45 minute appointments. Students in second semester grade 2 through grade 5 are scheduled for 1.5 hours. Students in grade 6 through grade 12 are scheduled for 2 hours. Please note that these times are approximate -- your child may take more or less time.

### **What should I do to prepare for this appointment?**

We recommend arriving about 10 minutes before your appointment time in order to find parking and to check in. We also encourage families to discuss what will happen during the assessment with their child (see above) in order to make students feel more comfortable. For younger students, we recommend that they bring a stuffed animal or other toy that will help them feel more at ease. We also recommend that all students visit the bathroom and have a snack/water beforehand.

For the actual assessment, no preparation is needed. Students do not need to study or bring any special materials (pens, pencils, etc) to the assessment.

### **What are the possible results of an English proficiency screening and how are the results used?**

Students receive a level (1.0-6.0) of their English proficiency and are determined to be English learners, fluent English speakers, or former English learners. Results are then shared with the student's new school and teacher(s), who use them to design an appropriate course of instruction for your child.

Completion of the English proficiency screening triggers the next step of the registration process which includes receiving the student's school assignment. Eligibility to enroll in a Brookline school is pre-determined by the Office of Registration and Enrollment (in accordance with School Committee policy) prior to the English proficiency assessment. A student will never be denied admission to the Public School of Brookline or their neighborhood school based on the results of an English proficiency screening. Please note that buffer zone decisions are made independent of a student's English proficiency assessment results. The primary purpose of the screening is to ensure that your child has access to the appropriate supports (if any) in their new school.

### **Who do I contact if I have other questions about the English proficiency assessment?**

Please contact Caitlin O'Neil, ELE Assessment and Enrollment Specialist, in the Office of English Language Education at 617-264-6431 and or [caitlin\\_oneil@psbma.org](mailto:caitlin_oneil@psbma.org)