

Project Deliverable

**The Use and Validity of Home Language Surveys in State English
Language Proficiency Assessment Systems:
A Review and Issues Perspective**

evea

Washington
Idaho
Indiana
Montana
Oregon



edCount, LLC
Center for Assessment
UCLA
Synergy Enterprises, Inc
PIRE

Alison L. Bailey*
and
Kimberly R. Kelly
UCLA

July, 2010

* Correspondence should be sent to Alison L. Bailey at Dept. of Education, Moore Hall Box 951521, UCLA, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1521. Email: abailey@gseis.ucla.edu.

Table of Contents

Preface..... iv

Introduction 1

The Law and Implementation of Home Language Surveys 1

A Brief History of the Home Language Survey..... 3

Description and Critique of Current HLS Practices around the Nation and in the Five EVEA States 4

 HLS question phrasing and content 4

 State regulations for HLS implementation and interpretation..... 6

Evidentiary Bases for HLS and Research Measures of Home Language Background 10

Summary of Concerns with Current Implementation of HLS to Initially Identify Students..... 15

 Construct relevance 15

 Accuracy of information 15

 Additional facets identified in the research base 16

Design Considerations for Future Validation Plans..... 16

 Study Design 1: Identifying hit rates, false positives and false negatives..... 16

 Study Design 2: Comparing the efficacy of existing HLS forms 17

 Study Design 3: Enhancing the HLS..... 17

 Study Design 4: Oral administrations..... 17

 Study Design 5: Use of additional or alternate measures of student language background..... 18

Recommendations and Conclusions 19

 Federal-Level Recommendations..... 19

 Recommendation One: Providing state guidance 19

 Recommendation Two: Transparency in the Office of Civil Rights efforts..... 20

 State-Level Recommendations..... 20

 Recommendation One: Transparency in initial identification..... 20

 Recommendation Two: Conducting validation studies..... 21

Acknowledgments..... 23

References 24

List of Appendices

Appendix A: Links to HLS forms of the EVEA states 28
Appendix B: Links to HLS forms of additional non-EVEA states 29
Appendix C: Summaries of cited studies of measures of home language background 41
Appendix D: Additional resources 45

Preface

This paper is a project deliverable for the U.S. Department of Education funded Enhanced Assessment Grant *Evaluating the Validity of English Language Proficiency Assessments* (EVEA; CFDA 84.368) that was awarded to the Office of the Superintendent for Public Instruction of the State of Washington. The project involves five states: Idaho, Indiana, Montana, Oregon, and Washington. These states currently do not belong to an existing English language proficiency assessment (ELPA) consortium; rather they have each worked with commercial test developers to create state-wide ELPAs that are aligned with their state English language development/proficiency standards. The main project goal is for each state to create a validity argument for its ELPA system. Project outcomes include building individual State Interpretive Arguments, as well as a more general Common Interpretive Argument; designing a set of studies and instruments to support and pilot test these arguments; and making instruments publicly available at the close of the project for the wider education community to access.

This paper is focused on the different Home Language Surveys (HLS) used across states as a means of initially identifying those students who may be eligible for language services. It grew out of conversations that took place at EVEA project meetings in January 2010, when a number of the project states recognized that the role of an HLS in their ELPA systems necessitated its further scrutiny as part of the validation process. Their main concern was a lack of evidence for the validity of an HLS as an initial identifying instrument.

Working to address this common validity concern across the five project states is exactly the kind of collaborative activity EVEA set out to support. We expect to produce more white papers of this kind in the future, as states identify additional common validity concerns with subsequent aspects of their ELPA systems (e.g., impact of exit criteria from English language services).

Introduction

Current state practices with Home Language Surveys (HLS) pose a serious threat to the validity of a state's entire English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA) system. The *Evaluating the Validity of English Language Proficiency Assessments* (EVEA) project treats HLS practices as a critical component of the validity arguments being developed for the ELPA systems of the five participating EVEA project states (Idaho, Indiana, Montana, Oregon and Washington). Validity arguments are designed to make transparent the claims or assumptions upon which an assessment is built by documenting evidence that an assessment accurately measures the construct it purports to measure, and that results are interpreted appropriately. Kane (2006) suggests that "validation involves an appraisal of the coherence of this argument and of the plausibility of its inferences and assumptions" (p. 17). Clearly, an important challenge for states is to convincingly argue that they possess a fair and valid way in which to initially identify the population of K-12 students within the general student population. These are students who will need further screening or assessment to ensure they receive the necessary language support for succeeding in school (Bailey, 2010).¹

With this challenge in mind, the primary purpose of this paper is to inform the five EVEA states about current practices with HLS used to identify which students should be further screened or assessed with a state-selected and federally-approved ELPA. A secondary purpose is to inform the fields of practice (other states, the federal government, educators) and research (measurement and language scholars) in order to bring wider attention to concerns with the validity of the various HLS currently in use. We begin with education law as it currently impacts the implementation of HLS, followed by a brief history of the use of HLS in U.S. education. We then describe and critique current practices with elaborated examples from four selected states and the five EVEA states. We then examine what evidentiary bases exist for current HLS design and how findings from studies of HLS used as research instruments with English learner (EL) student populations might inform any future design and decisions on the continued use of HLS. Concluding sections summarize concerns with existing attempts to initially identify students, provide suggestions to states for designing validation plans for existing HLS and proposed alternate approaches, and make recommendations for improvement in guidance and validation at the federal and state levels.

The Law and Implementation of Home Language Surveys

In the United States, no federal law currently mandates the use of an HLS for the initial identification of the population of students who are learning English as an additional language. However, under Title III of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), all states must identify students who need language support services. The student who may need those services is currently termed "Limited English Proficient," and the law defines this in part to be an individual "*who comes from an environment where a language other than English has had a significant impact on the individual's level of English language proficiency*" or who "*comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant*" (115 STAT. 1961; Sec. 9109). Given this emphasis on the language environment, on the surface it appears to make sense that a survey of language knowledge and usage by students and other individuals

¹ Depending on the state, the selection of language services may include transitional bilingual education, dual-language or bilingual maintenance programs, and/or Structured English Immersion (see Forte and Faulkner-Bond, 2010 for a description of current English language programming and best practices).

in the home should play a key role in identification. The law, unfortunately, does not provide any guidance on *how* the identification of students can best be conducted, and thus a wide array of practices and instruments are currently in use across states (Durán, 2008).

While not quite universally mandated, all states at the very least recommend, if not require, the use of an HLS with the families of all students at the time of school enrollment in order to identify the pool of possible EL students.² States are obligated to screen or assess further all initially identified students within 30 days of school enrollment. However, there is no standard survey in use across the U.S., so the surveys currently include a variety of questions that may or may not reveal valid and reliable information about the English language exposure school-age children have accumulated, or their current English language abilities. Such information is deemed necessary in order to make meaningful decisions about further English language screening or assessment to determine the need for instruction of English, and is the cornerstone on which state ELPA systems are built. Unfortunately, the technical quality of this information is rarely scrutinized (Bailey, 2010). In the absence of reliable information, children who need further screening may initially be missed in the process and be placed in classrooms in which the teacher will then need to identify them as possible EL students and request further (delayed) assessment. Just as troubling, there are cases of students who are already proficient or even native-English speakers who are being identified as requiring further screening or assessment. This additional evaluation of these students' English language proficiency comes with costs to the school and state and with a personal impact on individual students and families.

Within some states, state education agencies (SEAs) may condone a variety of options available to local education agencies (LEAs) or school districts in order to meet the requirements of the law.³ For example, Montana's Office of Public Instruction (OPI, 2007) lists "acceptable practices" for its school districts in the identification of Limited English Proficient (LEP) students.⁴ These practices include, but are not limited to, the use of an HLS, an English language proficiency test, a reading score on the state assessment, an observation scale and a developmental reading assessment, but no single identification

² Wolf, Kao, Griffin, Herman, Bachman et al. (2008) identified Louisiana, Nebraska and South Dakota as three states that do not mandate the use of an HLS. In Louisiana, administration of an HLS to the parents of all students is *recommended* only. Nebraska recommends districts develop their own home language surveys conforming to requirements laid out by the OCR. South Dakota strongly encourages the use of an HLS. We additionally identified Montana as a state that does not mandate the use of an HLS; rather the state includes use of an HLS as one of several district options for initial identification.

³ The U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights *December 3, 1985 Memorandum* and *1991 OCR Policy* address the requirement to have a program in place for adequately identifying students in need of services, but recognize that this may differ widely due to student demographics. No wording in these memoranda obligates states to specifically enforce the use of an HLS in order to initially identify students.

⁴ We adopt a state's chosen terminology for students acquiring English as an additional language when referring to the policies of that state (e.g., LEP is used by Montana and used in this paper when referring to Montana's practices). In all other cases, we use English learner (EL) to refer to students acquiring English following current U.S. Department of Education nomenclature.

instrument is singled out as obligatory.⁵ While also allowing school district control, the Colorado Department of Education (CO DOE), in contrast, recommends at the suggestion of the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights (OCR) that school districts use at a minimum three specific question types on an HLS. These questions solicit (1) whether a language other than English is used in the home, (2) what the student's first language is, and (3) whether the student speaks a language other than English (CO DOE, 2008).

Recently, the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) went from a state-wide mandated three-question survey—determining (1) the primary language of the home, (2) the language most often spoken by the child and (3) the child's first language—down to just a single question. The current HLS asks parents “What is the primary language of the student?” and provides parenthetical instructions on how to interpret the term *primary* “(Answer with the language used most often by the student)” (ADE, 2009). Currently, if the child's primary language is English, no further assessment is required and a child is at least initially deemed not to need English language services. While a sole focus on the dominant language of students may seem most pertinent, such singularity of focus may lead to under-identification of students for English language services because some students, while more dominant in English than another language, may not have received extensive exposure to English nor reached a level of English proficiency sufficient for learning academic content in English. (See Zehr, 2010, for further discussion of the ADE policy).

A Brief History of the Home Language Survey

Surveys as a means to determine student language backgrounds have been in use by educators for nearly 80 years. Despite the longevity of HLS, few studies have subjected home language measures to rigorous validity testing in order to ensure the accurate and reliable measurement of operationalized definitions of the *home language* construct. In this section, we briefly trace the history of home language survey usage.

The Hoffman Schedule of Bilingual Background (Hoffman, 1934), the earliest example of an instrument developed to determine bilingual dominance, was designed to be administered through an interview. The assessment was validated with groups of Italian and Jewish children of Eastern-European backgrounds using the degree of bilingual exposure in their family and school backgrounds as its metric. In subsequent decades the Hoffman Schedule was widely-used in studies examining the strength of associations between language background and a number of outcomes, including writing and reading in English, verbal intelligence, school adjustment, and creative functioning (Kaufman, 1968; Landry, 1974; Lewis & Lewis, 1965; Pintner & Arsenia, 1937). The validity and feasibility of the Hoffman Schedule was criticized for relying on self-ratings from the language learner him- or herself and consists of equally-rated questions regarding language use with each family member (Mackey, 1972; Zirkel, 1976). Mackey (1972) questioned its validity especially among language learners under the age of eight for whom accurate answering of interview questions about language use is questionable. Zirkel (1976) raised concerns regarding the validity of the Hoffman Schedule with older children who might be susceptible to

⁵ While every attempt has been made to verify information from publicly available documents, states are urged to contact the authors with corrections or up-dates if any information in this paper misrepresents a state's current practices with an HLS or if content on a state website is outdated.

the influence of their peers. Nevertheless, the Hoffman Schedule of Bilingual Background was regularly adopted and adapted for use in determining language background.

Beginning in the 1970s, greater attention began to be paid to the challenges facing English learners in school. These students garnered more public attention due to the enactment of education and civil rights legislation and ensuing court cases that clarified requirements in federal laws mandating language minority considerations in instruction and assessment. The 1974 U.S. Supreme Court case *Lau vs. Nichols* upheld requirements of Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act that made provision of equal educational opportunity to language minority students necessary. The OCR sets out procedures and reviews the compliance of school districts in providing, as necessary, alternative programming (e.g., English instruction, instruction in the native language) to ensure “the effective participation of language minority students in the district’s program” (OCR, 1985). Such “affirmative steps” required of school districts to make sure language minority students access the school curriculum increased the need for valid and reliable measures of English language proficiency to determine if students needed further assessment and alternative program placement. As a result, a host of measurement strategies emerged to identify the target population of children with language backgrounds other than English, including surname surveys, parent interviews, HLS, teacher- or learner-rating scales of language dominance, learner-focused interview schedules, indirect measures of word association, word-naming, picture-naming, comprehension items and parallel testing of aural-oral capacities in both languages spoken by the student (see Zirkel, 1976, for a review during this earlier era).

During the 1990s, based on a survey of state education agency practices, the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) made a number of recommendations concerning the assessment of, and data collection with, EL students. Relevant to our efforts in the current report are CCSSO’s recommendations regarding the initial screening and identification of EL students. A CCSSO policy briefing states that schools should conduct an HLS for every student in the student’s native language at enrollment and that the SEAs should mandate the use of a uniform HLS across its districts as well as provide training to ensure information on the HLS is completed accurately (CCSSO, 1992). The CCSSO further recommended the survey should include items to determine the student’s place of birth, first language acquired, and if a language other than English is spoken in the home. Despite being created nearly two decades ago, these recommendations are still considered current and used for guidance by some states to their districts (e.g., Montana).

Description and Critique of Current HLS Practices around the Nation and in the Five EVEA States

Over the past 30 years, parent-reported surveys have become ubiquitous in the school setting. While the OCR ensures that states comply with NCLB by having some method for identifying and assessing English learners, as mentioned, an HLS is not specifically required for initial identification. We identified key areas in which state HLS practices can vary: (a) the phrasing and content of questions; and (b) state regulations for HLS implementation and interpretation of responses for further student screening or assessment.

HLS question phrasing and content

The variation in questionnaire items on HLS across states is great, both in the phrasing of requests for similar kinds of information and in the nature of the content requested from parents. Appendices A (EVEA states) and B (non-EVEA states) provide details of the various HLS forms available on-line. More

specifically, Exhibit 1 illustrates the contrast in question phrasing and content solicited as well as some similarities in survey items across four non-EVEA states. These states were chosen to represent states with large numbers of the Nation's EL population (California and Texas), states with a growing EL population (Colorado), and states with historically small EL populations (Vermont). For additional item examples of these and other states with HLS available on line, see Appendix B. As Exhibit 1 shows, all four states had relatively new or recently revised state-created HLS, state sample HLS, or guidelines for district-created HLS.

Exhibit 1. Item examples from Home Language Surveys in California, Colorado, Texas, and Vermont (See also Appendix B).

State & HLS month/year	Number of Items	Item Examples
California (Oct. 2005)	4	<p><i>Which language did your child learn when he/she first began to talk?</i></p> <p><i>Which language is most often spoken by adults in the home? (parents, guardians, grandparents, or any other adults)</i></p>
Colorado (Guidelines and samples only, April 2008)	Min. 3 (Varies by district)	<p><i>What was the first language that this student spoke?</i></p> <p><i>Is there a language other than English spoken in the home?</i></p>
Texas (Aug. 2004)	2	<p><i>What language is spoken in your home most of the time?</i></p> <p><i>What language does your child (do you) speak most of the time?</i></p>
Vermont (Jan. 2010)	6	<p><i>What is the native language of each parent/guardian?</i></p> <p><i>What language(s) are spoken in your home?</i></p>

Several states have items that focus on the *first* or *native* language of the child, which may not be relevant if he or she has subsequently learned English sufficiently well to be a balanced bilingual or to have become more proficient in English than the first-acquired language or mother tongue (referred to as L1 by linguists). Some items focus on *where* another language is spoken or *what* languages other than English are spoken, neither of which yield any information about the child's proficiency in those languages, nor about whether he or she speaks English. Other items focus on the *frequency* with which a student speaks English or is *exposed* to English by adults. The frequency with which English is used (i.e., the degree of language dominance) and amount of exposure to English are likely to be more pertinent factors in a child's current English language proficiency than the simple order in which the child acquired English and another language. However, language *dominance*, while likely to be

positively correlated with language proficiency, is not necessarily measuring the same construct as proficiency. Dominance describes the most commonly used (and perhaps preferred) language of the child across various settings, whereas proficiency refers to the child's competence in the range of language skills necessary to be fully functional in school and wider society. Thus it is possible to have a dominant language without being fully proficient in it. Moreover, parents may interpret language dominance as oral language dominance and yet proficiency in English print skills will also be critical for accessing the school curriculum.

Exposure or amount of time spent interacting with both spoken and printed English is also a logical prerequisite for the successful acquisition of English used in academic settings, but again, exposure is not the same construct as proficiency and so questions measuring the nature of a student's language exposure can only be suggestive of the student's English language abilities. The relationship between exposure and proficiency in a second language (L2) can be made complex by factors such as socioeconomic status and status of the minority language in wider society (e.g., Scheele, Leseman, & Mayo, 2010). Moreover, a threshold amount of exposure may be prerequisite to proficient acquisition (e.g., Pearson, Fernandez, Lewedeg, & Oller, 1997), and there may also be negative effects of competition between the L1 and L2 in terms of time spent in English interaction can take away from opportunities to continue learning L1, thus having a subtractive impact on L1 (e.g., Scheele, et al. 2010). As described in the section on Evidentiary Bases below, parent reported exposure was not always predictive of student English language proficiency in the research literature due, perhaps in part, to factors such as social desirability in providing responses. Moreover, studies have found that parents may not accurately report language exposure because they are not always aware of their own language behaviors with their families (e.g., Goodz, 1989).

State regulations for HLS implementation and interpretation

We can move beyond the phrasing of the survey questions and the nature of the solicited content to also focus on the regulations states create for HLS implementation, as well as how an HLS is interpreted and used by school district personnel. First, a review of HLS usage across all U.S. states suggests a typology of the different state-level regulations. At least four discernable state-level regulations governing HLS practices can be identified:

Practice A: the SEA created a single HLS form and mandates its use in schools statewide;

Practice B: the SEA mandates use of an HLS and has created an HLS form that it offers as a sample for districts to adopt or to substitute for their own version of an HLS;

Practice C: the SEA mandates use of an HLS but has created neither a required nor sample HLS, rather allows districts to create their own set of survey questions for the local context;

Practice D: the SEA does not mandate use of an HLS.

Examples of Practice A above are the practices of the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and the Vermont Department of Education (VDE). For a complete listing of identified practices in all U.S. states, see Appendix B. TEA has a two-question HLS that is administered to the parent/guardian of all K-12 Texan students at enrollment (see Exhibit 1). The survey is translated and available to parents in 23 different languages. If English is the response to both questions (the language spoken at home and by the student) the child is designated as non-LEP. If English and any other language are spoken in the home

and by the student or if any other language and no English is spoken, the student is designated LEP (presumably even if the parent responded to the second question with the option of “what language *do you* speak most of the time” rather than what language *the child* speaks most of the time). The Limited English Proficient Decision Chart provided by TEA to guide Texas educators (TEA, 2004) does not advise what to do if there is a reported difference between languages spoken in the home and by the child, or how Texas educators determine that parents responded to the HLS in terms of what language the parents spoke rather than the child. Regardless of these ambiguities in question responses and interpretation, all Pre-K through Grade 1 LEP designated students are then further tested with an Oral Language Proficiency Test (OLPT) such as the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) Listening and Speaking subsections and the higher grades with an OLPT plus the norm-referenced standardized achievement test.

Vermont has a six-question HLS that all districts in the state must use and give to the parents of all incoming K-12 students. The survey can be administered in the form of an interview with parents, and interpreter services must be provided to parents if necessary. The instructions to teachers on survey interpretation are vague; it is unclear whether a response to any of the six questions involving “a language other than English,” or an overall “survey” that suggests the child’s language is a language other than English, should result in a referral to “the ESL teacher for further screening to determine if the student is an English Language Learner (ELL)” (VDE, 2010). In other words, how the six questions are “weighted” is not clear from the written instructions that accompany the HLS.

California presents an example of Practice B above, with the state creating a 4-item HLS to serve as a sample questionnaire but which is ubiquitously adopted by districts in the state as if it were the official state HLS (California Department of Education [CDE], 2005) (See also Appendix B). Answering with a language other than English to any of the four questions triggers further assessment with the California English Language Development Test (CELDT). A drawback to this practice is that if parents report that the grandparents or “any other adult” in the home speak a language other than English this response will trigger evaluation with the CELDT, irrespective of whether the child speaks that language as well. Students are administered this full-scale test of four language domains (Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing) because CDE does not use a separate screening test nor is there a placement version of the CELDT. Consequently, students who are misidentified by the HLS are administered a relatively lengthy and costly assessment.⁶

Colorado is an example of a state which has adopted Practice C above. As mentioned in the section on The Law above, the state allows districts to construct their own HLS to determine the dominant

⁶ Predating NCLB, California has traditionally given the CELDT in the fall of the school year so it can be used for program placement. However, with the requirements of NCLB, the CELDT also serves as the state’s annual ELPA used for federal accountability purposes (reporting the three Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives) despite the fact that it is still administered in fall rather than spring of the school year when learning could more reasonably be expected to have occurred.

language spoken. The Colorado Department of Education (CO DOE) offers educators examples of surveys in use around the state in their extensive guidelines and offers teachers training in how to interpret responses to an HLS (CO DOE, 2008). If any answers on an HLS suggest the language spoken by the child or individuals in their home is not English then a school is required to assess the child with the Colorado English Language Assessment (CELA) to “confirm” the findings of the HLS (as in California, there is no separate state-level screening instrument).

In terms of the five EVEA states (see Exhibit 2) Idaho’s policy doesn’t fit as neatly into one of the three categories. It is perhaps most compatible with Practice B above (a state-created HLS sample) but with strong requirements for the content of the district-created surveys: the 10-items on the state sample HLS have to be included by districts at a minimum, and if a district enrolls Native American students, more questions are required to cover topics such as tribal language exposure. These requirements make the Idaho surveys among the most extensive in the nation. In addition to the now familiar first language learned and frequency of language use questions, the Idaho HLS “sample” includes a question about the country of birth for the child, the relevance of which we question for the purposes of identifying a population of students for English language services.

Indiana’s policy is characterized by Practice A above; the three-question survey is mandatory state-wide and covers the child’s first (native) language, current dominant usage and their usage at home—in effect, covering all of the dimensions of language discussed in the HLS items of Exhibit 1 above. As mentioned in the section on The Law above, Montana does not mandate the use of an HLS and lists the HLS as one of many acceptable practices for individual school districts making the initial determination of LEP status—Practice D. Montana not only has students learning English-as-a-second-language whose families have immigrant backgrounds, but also large numbers of Native American students who come from oral language traditions and may only have exposure to spoken English rather than the print form of the language. Moreover, families may be reluctant to report usage of a Native American language in the home given the troubled history of Indian education. An HLS may therefore not be suited to the complexities in language backgrounds nor be sensitive to sociological factors impacting many families in the state.

Oregon’s policy is characterized by Practice C above allowing each school district to maintain its independence and create its own HLS for the local context. This situation leads to great variation in the content of HLS in use in the state.

Exhibit 2. Item examples from Home Language Surveys in use in the EVEA Project states.

State & HLS month/year	Number of Items	Item Examples
Idaho (n.d.)	Min. 10 (Varies by district)	<i>What was the first language learned by the child?</i> <i>What language does the child use most often in the home?</i> <i>What country was your child born?[sic]</i>
Indiana (n.d.)	3	<i>What is the native language of the student?</i> <i>What is the predominant language of the student?</i> <i>What language is most often spoken by the student at home?</i>
Montana (n/a)	Varies by district	Not publically available
Oregon (n/a)	Varies by district	North Bend District 13: <i>Languages most often used for communication at home. (Fill in the blank)</i> <i>Do the mother and father communicate with their child in their native language? (Circle one: Always; Usually; Not Usually; Never)</i> Sweet Home District 55: <i>Which language did your child learn when he or she first began to talk?</i> <i>Was your child ever placed in a bilingual/ESL program in a U.S. school? (Circle one: Yes; No)</i>
Washington (Aug. 2006)	2	<i>Is a language other than English spoken in the home?</i> <i>Is your child's first language a language other than English?</i>

In Washington, the state-created HLS is mandated statewide, best characterized by Practice A above, and translated into nine languages corresponding to the most frequently spoken additional languages in the state (e.g., Spanish, Russian, Vietnamese, Tagalog, and Somali). An affirmative response to the second item focused on the child's *first* language being other than English triggers further evaluation with the Washington Language Proficiency Test-II (WLPT-II) placement test version. However, the use of

the term *first* language in this question is ambiguous. One interpretation of the term is that it means the student's native language, the first-acquired language—that is their L1, in contrast with the L2. However, some educators and parents in the State of Washington interpret the term to mean first in order of dominance (Joe Willhoft, personal communication, June 22, 2010). *First* was adopted in this instance because terminology like *dominant* or *primary* to refer to the student's most proficient language was thought to be misunderstood by parents. But the ambiguity of *first* to mean either first-acquired language or the most dominant current language means that parents could also be interpreting the question in one of two different ways, and educators using the Washington HLS responses have no way of knowing which interpretation a parent has made. This is a questionnaire item that cannot yield meaningful and reliable responses as it is currently worded. Note that other states we have discussed so far use additional wording to disambiguate the word *first* to make it clear the HLS means chronological order of acquisition and not current dominance (e.g., Idaho: "*first language learned by the child*," Oregon Sweet Home District 55: "*Language...when he or she first began to talk*").

The Washington parents who interpret *first* to mean their child's L1 (i.e., a child's first-acquired or *native* language), could respond affirmatively referring to a language other than English that the child simply no longer speaks or in which he/she is no longer dominant or that the child is equally dominant in that language *and* English. Parents may even be struck by the fact that the question is simply unanswerable if they consider their child to be a fluent bilingual. Full bilingualism occurs when a child has acquired two languages simultaneously or in close succession before the end of toddlerhood (e.g., bilingual first language acquisition, de Houwer, 1995,) or becomes equally dominant in two languages later in life. An HLS that cannot take account of these linguistic situations is likely to over-identify the population of EL students in Washington State—possibly costing the state time and money with further assessment to establish that such students may be proficient English speakers already.⁷

Evidentiary Bases for HLS and Research Measures of Home Language Background

In this section we describe the relatively modest amount of research that has been conducted on the HLS as an instrument for gauging proficiency in English and/or the L1 of school-age children. We also include here questionnaires of student language abilities used in educational research not only because of the dearth of information about the validity of state-created or -used HLS, but in order to identify additional pertinent factors that might be considered for inclusion in future HLS design or that might inform decisions on the continued use of HLS. For those readers who wish to simply acquire a general sense of this research base, Appendix C provides an annotated summary of many of the studies we discuss in greater detail in this section; in addition Appendix C lists example items from the surveys used in the research studies if provided.

⁷ OSPI staff are considering the following modification to the second item on the current HLS, whereby parents choose one of three options in answering a question such as "What language does your child speak?" These options are a) Child speaks English; b) Child speaks a language other than English but does not speak (fluent) English; c) Child speaks **both** English and one or more language (fluently). Only parents who choose option "b" would be further tested with the WLPT-II Placement test.

There was an upsurge of specialized assessments in the 1980s to test discrete Spanish language skills (i.e., vocabulary, grammar, spelling, and responses to directions) and serve as a primary determiner of language dominance in school-age children (Beringer, 1976; Bernard Cohen, 1980; James, 1974; Trudeau-Gerard, 1985); however, home usage surveys and interviews were still widely-used. The Home Bilingual Usage Estimate (Skoczylas, 1971), an interview schedule, estimates an individual's home language usage and classifies the individual as English monolingual, English dominant, apparent bilingual, Spanish dominant, or Spanish monolingual. Validity for the measure was determined by correlating 25 students' classifications obtained on the Home Bilingual Usage Estimate with an experienced bilingual educator's rating of the students' home language usage. The resulting Pearson Product-Moment correlation was $r = .95, p < .001$. The Home Bilingual Usage Estimate's re-test reliability was $r = .97, p < .001$.

Amid critique of interviews for determining language dominance solely by focusing on the learner's (or the parent's) self-report, Spolsky and colleagues (1972) developed the Spanish-English Language Dominance Assessment, which paired self-report with tests of language knowledge such as word-naming and picture-naming tasks. The measure was intended to be used with six- and seven-year-old children, and validity was tested using teacher judgments of assessment ratings. The authors reported that teachers tended to agree with students' ratings on the assessment. However, no statistics or other validity studies were provided. Similarly, following Mackey's (1972) concerns regarding the accuracy of self-report from children under eight-years-old, Merino (1976) developed a language background survey that relied on parent-report when assessing young children and learner-report when assessing older children. More recently, Townsend and Collins (2008) utilized self-report with confirmation of English learner status through official school reports from the CELDT.

Littlejohn (1998) and Abedi (2008) have raised concerns regarding the validity of HLS forms currently used by states, suggesting that parents may give conflicting information due to concerns of citizenship issues, lack of comprehension of the survey, and worries about equal opportunities for their children. Additionally, Littlejohn cited cases when the English learner classification was applied too broadly (e.g., a child being identified as limited English proficient based on a speaker of a language other than English having been present in the home for a short time). Abedi (2008) compared the ratings supplied by parents on his researcher-developed Language Background Questionnaire (Abedi, Lord, & Plummer, 1997) to school rosters reporting students' official primary (dominant) language as identified by the district's HLS and English learner classifications on standardized testing. Significant discrepancies were found between parent ratings on the Language Background Questionnaire and official school reporting of the HLS results. Abedi (2008) concluded that using a single source to obtain language background is unlikely to produce a valid measure of home language background. Indeed, an earlier qualitative study by Gonzalez, Bauerle, and Felix-Holt (1996) made the case for using multiple measures and informants in determining language proficiency and dominance to ensure construct validity.

While HLS forms are primarily used in the school setting to identify students for further screening and assessment, educational researchers have utilized HLS instruments to examine cultural and linguistic background characteristics influencing various language and academic outcomes. A review of this broader literature can allow for greater exploration of what types of information in an HLS might prove most useful for states in terms of accurately identifying students' current language abilities and English language service needs. For example, Gonzalez (1991) developed an HLS to be used in conjunction with teacher ratings and standardized measures of language proficiency in a stepwise multiple linear regression model of language development and conceptual development in L1 and L2. Gonzalez

proposed entering multiple continuous variables measuring language *dominance* on the HLS to determine their relative contribution to a model predicting language and conceptual development. She argued this method would counter validity problems faced when otherwise attempting to group students by standardized measures. Gonzalez found that ratings on the HLS better predicted children's verbal than non-verbal conceptual development, and better predicted children's performance in Spanish than in English. Although other measures of language proficiency were used in this study, there are no reported comparisons of dominance ratings on the HLS to those obtained from the teacher ratings or standardized tests.

Gutiérrez-Clellen and Kreiter (2003) developed a parent questionnaire to determine the extent to which the child's *years of exposure to a language, language(s) spoken in the home, as well as language(s) spoken in other settings*, are related to a child's grammatical performance on spontaneous narrative samples using a wordless picture book. Results revealed the parent-reported exposure variables combined significantly to predict grammatical performance in Spanish. Percentage of overall exposure to Spanish at home accounted for 26% of the variance in grammatical utterances. However, none of the exposure variables were significant predictors of performance in English.

The authors also related *parents' ratings of their child's language proficiency* with the child's grammatical performance in English and in Spanish to determine the extent to which parents can aid in identifying their child's language status. Results revealed a high correlation between parent ratings of the child's Spanish and the child's actual use of grammatical Spanish utterances in the narrative task ($r = .75, p < .0001$). A moderate correlation was also found between parent ratings of the child's English and the child's actual grammatical performance in English ($r = .32, p < .05$). The authors concluded that parent ratings can be used to accurately determine the child's language status. However, given the context of this paper, we caution that the ratings and exposure reports were not especially successful at determining proficiency with English—the children's second language—compared with Spanish, the children's first language.

A parent survey was recently developed by Reese, Thompson, and Goldenberg (2008) to collect information about *the language used with the child in specific contexts* (e.g., parent speaking to the child, literacy activities) as well as *child language use with other adults in the home*. The authors also conducted parent interviews during which parents were asked to indicate the *language heard by the child in various contexts* (e.g., at the park; by the babysitter) in addition to the *language most commonly heard* by the child. Validity and reliability information was not reported. Nevertheless, parent reports from the surveys and interviews provided a rich description of the children's language environment and showed a great deal of variability within and across the 14 communities in the sample. Findings indicated while children primarily used Spanish with adults, they spoke much more English among themselves than with adults.

In a follow-up study, Reese and Goldenberg (2008) related the variability found in the reports of children's home language environment with their literacy development. The authors focused their investigation on links between *literacy-related language background variables* (i.e., *frequency of reading in English and in Spanish with the child, the child's reading language, and the parents' reading language*) and the Woodcock Language Proficiency Battery-Revised in English and Spanish (WLPB-R; Woodcock, 1991; Woodcock & Muñoz-Sandoval, 1995). Results that revealed English as the child's reported reading language and English as the parents' reported reading language were each associated with higher Basic

Reading and Passage Comprehension scores on the WLPB-R. Furthermore, reported frequency of reading to children in English was associated with higher WLPB-R Passage Comprehension scores.

Of the literature surveyed for the present review, only two studies provided information regarding validity or reliability testing of the survey instrument or both (Duursma, Romero-Contreras, Szuber, Proctor, & Snow et al., 2007; Leseman & de Jong, 1998). Given that Leseman and de Jong (1998) studied Dutch, Surinamese and Turkish families in inner-cities in the Netherlands, the language background questionnaire they developed reflected the majority language of the Netherlands—Dutch. The study report focused on the internal consistency of items on the language background questionnaire and the re-test reliability of the measures administered at three separate home visits. Cronbach's alpha was .95 for the measure at the first visit, .91 for the second visit, and .93 for the final visit. The intercorrelations between measures at each visit were about .90, suggesting the language background measure maintained re-test reliability. In this sample, reported *home language* was related to a number of background characteristics including socioeconomic status, parents' informational and recreational literacy and children's vocabulary development at ages 4 and 7, as well as decoding and reading comprehension at age 7.

Duursma et al. (2007) used the Parent Interview and Response Questionnaire (PIRQ; developed in conjunction with the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development and the Center for Applied Linguistics) to elicit information from the parents of 5th grade English language learners about *home language use and exposure* as well as *literacy practices in English and in Spanish*. Items on the PIRQ loaded on two factors: *home language* and *parental help* (support for oral discourse, literacy and school-related tasks). These two scales were then tested for internal consistency; Cronbach's alpha for the home language scale was .93. To test validity of the PIRQ, the authors examined correlations between items on the home language scale and children's English and Spanish WLPB-R letter word identification and picture vocabulary. Relevant for this review, home language was correlated with both letter-word identification ($r = .36, p < .01$) and picture vocabulary ($r = .67, p < .01$) in English; the authors concluded that the PIRQ is a valid instrument for examining the influence of language background on students' vocabulary. Subtleties emerged when looking across groups of students receiving instruction in English versus instruction in Spanish, with English vocabulary best predicted by support for English literacy by parents for those instructed in English, and by the combination of paternal preference for English and student gender for those instructed in Spanish.

The *amount of Spanish and English used in the home* was also studied by Lindholm-Leary and Hernandez (2009) as part of a study of the range of background factors impacting dual-language, grade 4-8 student achievement in English and Spanish language arts. Their results were disaggregated by student language status provided by the schools (presumably based on the state ELPA) and show the relationship between language(s) spoken in the home and classification of students into EL, Reclassified Fluent English Proficient (RFEP) and (Initial Fluent) English Proficient (EP). The findings suggest that there is no simple association between the language(s) spoken in the home and a students' language status in school. While 26% of EL students hear only Spanish in the home, perhaps contrary to expectations and stereotypes, students hearing mostly Spanish are not overwhelmingly the EL students (51%) rather they are the RFEP students (61% of them) and even 16% of EP students hear mostly Spanish in the home. What characterized the EP students from the other students is the fact that they never hear only Spanish in the home, and certainly hear mostly English, although very few heard only English (16%).

To summarize, the studies above reveal that the home language construct measured by HLS instruments can be operationalized in different ways; the results that correlate the construct with student language proficiency paint a complex picture and in several instances suggest a lack of connection between home language background and student proficiency in English. A number of factors emerge in the research base that are overlapping with the construct as it was seen to be articulated in many state HLS items reviewed above, as well as revealing of additional facets and concerns about the construct. In both state HLS forms and the research base, there was a very strong emphasis placed on current language *dominance* of the student and/or parents, also operationalized as the *amount of Spanish and English used in the home*, the *language preference* of parents, or the *language most commonly heard*. The research base further refined this dominance construct to take account of differences in oral and literate forms of language dominance with questions probing the *frequency of reading in English and in Spanish with the child*, the *child's reading language*, and the *parents' reading language*.

Both state-created HLS and several studies emphasized amount of language exposure (e.g., *years of exposure to a language, language(s) spoken in the home*) and with whom the home language exposure occurred (e.g., *language use with other adults in the home*). However, the research studies also additionally included items that required parents to elaborate on the details of the language exposure with questions about *language(s) spoken in other settings* and the *language used with the child and heard by the child in specific contexts* (e.g., oral versus literacy-related activities, language chosen for use at the park; language used by the babysitter, etc.).

Unlike the nine state HLS items we reviewed in detail here, at least one research study used *parents' ratings of their child's language proficiency* in its HLS instrument. Moreover, these ratings were reported to be accurate measures of student grammatical language skills in the L1 but to a lesser degree in English (Gutiérrez-Clellen & Kreiter, 2003). No research study relied on information about the order of acquisition of the student's L1 and L2 as a means to identifying the current home language, while some HLS in current use by states did so.

The research yields contradictory findings in terms of the strength and nature of the relationship between home language variables and independent measures of student English language abilities. Some studies suggest positive (occasionally even strong) associations between the two (Duursma et al., 2007; Reese & Goldenberg, 2008; Skoczylas, 1971; Townsend & Collins, 2008), whereas others found discrepant, weak, or no associations (Abedi et al. 1997; Lindholm-Leary & Hernandez, 2009; See also Duursma et al, 2007 for how the relationship appears to differ by language of instruction for students already within U.S. schools). Yet other studies revealed that parent reports are more concordant with independent language proficiency measures in their reports of Spanish language dominance, exposure, and even proficiency, than in their reports of English language dominance, exposure and proficiency (Gonzalez, 1991; Gutiérrez-Clellen & Kreiter, 2003). Unfortunately, however, it is the accuracy of parent report of English language practices that is arguably the most critical for the validity of the role played by the HLS in initial identification of the EL population.

Finally, some studies noted limitations in their designs, namely the often exclusive focus on the relationship between home language background and children's vocabulary abilities, whereas children's proficiency across all language domains will be critical for accessing the school curriculum (e.g., grammar, oral fluency, and discourse level skills). In addition, some studies recommended future use of observations in the home to either verify or complement the home background instruments they had relied on (e.g., Duursma et al., 2007; Scheele, et al., 2010). This highlights the current uncertainty

around HLS approaches and the imperative for determining the accuracy of the information parents report about their own and their children's language behaviors.

Summary of Concerns with Current Implementation of HLS to Initially Identify Students

Construct relevance

As mentioned above, a number of surveys created by states or districts for use in initial identification of the EL population included items that focus on the order of acquisition of the student's L1 and L2. On the one hand, we question the relevance of this construct in identifying students' language status. The order of a student's two (or more) languages is not necessarily an obstacle for English proficiency by the time the student is in school. Even the youngest students at age five have had the time to become a balanced bilingual in both their L1 and English, or they have acquired English-as-a-second-language to a greater degree than even their L1. This may especially be the case if students have been previously enrolled in a predominantly English-language preschool environment. Thus several current HLS we reviewed lacked a focus on the evidentiary bases related to the more relevant facets of the home language construct for identification of students who likely need services in order to achieve English language proficiency; namely, current language dominance and the degree of exposure to English. On the other hand, this particular concern may be a moot point, because conflicting results in the review of existing studies of home language measures and student English language proficiency cast serious doubt on the ability to determine English language proficiency from parent reported language usage and preferences. Furthermore, as mentioned already, Littlejohn (1998) and Abedi (2008) caution that parents, particularly those in vulnerable societal positions such as undocumented immigrants and Native Americans may be reluctant to complete an HLS accurately if at all. These factors all impact the ability to meaningfully measure the home language construct and call into question the continued use of HLS as an effective instrument of initial identification and prompt proposed alternatives for possible validation in a later section of the paper.

Accuracy of information

A poorly constructed HLS can lead to low technical quality (i.e., inability to discriminate between potential EL and non-EL students) resulting in the under- or over-identification of students requiring English language services. Under-identification is costly for students, in terms of lost instructional time both in classes where, ideally, content is made accessible, and in classes in which English language development (ELD) is taught. Even just a few months of lost time for ELD instruction can jeopardize a student's achievement of greater English proficiency; three months' time is invaluable especially at the youngest grades or at the very earliest stages of acquisition.

Over-identification is also costly. This can lead to additional testing before it becomes clear that a student should never have been in the EL "pool" to begin with. Our review suggests at least two ways in which an HLS' poor construction may lead to this outcome: 1) some HLS have ambiguous wording; and 2) some HLS may have too few items to be meaningful for decision-making purposes, particularly if the questions do not focus on current language dominance and degree of English exposure information. For example, we reported on the fact that *first* language can mean either a student's current *dominant* language or their *first-acquired* language. Even if the SEA or LEA intended it to be interpreted as the dominant language, parents and teachers may infer the alternative meaning and thus not answer or interpret the HLS in the manner it was intended.

Additional facets identified in the research base

The research base revealed additional facets of the home language construct that could play a role in future HLS used by districts and states. These included information on literacy-related practices at home and the broad range of settings and activities that may support a student's language development. Such facets also suggest the importance of including items soliciting information about additional forms of exposure to English such as a student's preschool attendance. There is indeed a positive impact on the early English literacy skills of young children of immigrant families who utilize preschools in the U.S. (Magnuson, Lahaic, & Waldfogel, 2006) and the inclusion of a question about English-language preschool attendance may alone prove useful in ameliorating the initial under-/over-identification of large numbers of students by a state's existing HLS.

Design Considerations for Future Validation Plans

In this section, we provide concrete suggestions for the validation plans of existing forms of HLS, as well as propose some new approaches to identifying students in need of English language support services. These plans and proposed approaches are articulated in five study designs that include: efforts to establish the efficacy of existing HLS, major revisions to the home language construct and its enhanced measurement, and consideration of abandoning the HLS in favor of a universal screening instrument.

Study Design 1: Identifying hit rates, false positives and false negatives

At a very minimum, all states can collect basic data about the efficacy of their current HLS for accurately identifying students in need of English language of services. This efficacy should be part of the validity argument that the EVEA states will articulate for their overall ELPA systems. A validity argument should be built on a body of evidence that an assessment yields what it was intended to yield so that defensible interpretations of the assessment can be drawn (Kane, 2006). Specifically, efficacy of an HLS can be addressed by conducting studies of the "hit rate" data, the number of "false positives" and the number of "false negatives" in identifications made. States can determine how accurately they identified students (hits) by determining how many students receive English language services overall and then subtracting the number of students they may have over-identified (false positives) and under-identified (false negatives) at some meaningful point during the school year (i.e., the hit rate being the concordance between the original interpretations of the HLS responses and student performance on the ELPA used as a criterion test). (See also Speece & Cooper, 2004, for discussion of a range of indices options used in hit rate analyses in the screening and prevention literature).

The operational definition of the number of false positives can thus be the number of students who immediately exit English language services at the next ELPA administration. In terms of determining false negatives, the situation may be a little more complicated because these students are, in a sense, invisible at the initial stages of the assessment system. If a student is later identified by a teacher as struggling with English language proficiency, referred for further screening or assessment, and then proves to be an EL student on these assessments, will it ever be known that the interpretation of the HLS responses failed to initially identify them as needing English language services? Moreover, we must then rely on a teacher to accurately identify the student for further screening or assessment, and different teachers may have different practices about referring students. The operational definition for the number of false negatives must therefore be a more tentative calculation using the number of students who are referred for screening and English language services by a selected point based on typical teacher practices for making judgments and referrals (e.g., 3-4 months after the HLS was administered).

Study Design 2: Comparing the efficacy of existing HLS forms

We can utilize the variation across districts within certain states (namely those states that follow Practice C and allow districts to construct their own HLS) to conduct natural experiments of the efficacy of certain items on HLS forms. This will require controlling for potentially confounding variables such as EL student population demographics, district size, etc. but it will allow us to look at certain types of HLS items, particularly those items that focus on different aspects of the home language construct (e.g., order of language versus degree of exposure, or degree of exposure versus current dominant language). We suggest analyzing these data using clusters of districts with similar item types on their HLS forms in order to avoid singling out any one district and to have a greater degree of certainty in the analyses with the larger number of districts in the cluster.

Given that states are required to conduct further screening or assessment of initially identified students using a state-wide instrument, the number of over-identified students (false positives) should be proportionately similar across the different clusters of districts unless the district HLS forms have different hit rates and are identifying different kinds of students in different numbers (all else being equal). There should not be large differences in hit rates if the HLS forms are comparable. With under-identification, the clusters of districts with comparable student demographics and referral practices (if they can be carefully matched), but which differ in terms of the focus of their HLS items, can be compared for the proportion of students who test as EL students on referral after having initially been identified as not needing services on the basis of the parents' HLS responses. We hypothesize that HLS forms that focus on current dominance and/or degree of exposure to English will result in greater hit rates and fewer false negatives and false positives than those HLS forms that focus on other, arguably less relevant home language factors, such as order of language acquisition.

Study Design 3: Enhancing the HLS

States can create "Enhanced" HLS forms by adding new questions in areas identified in the review of the research studies. For example, items can supplement existing HLS forms that focus on a student's current language dominance by focusing on the degree of English language exposure. English language exposure items could focus on the range of oral language/literacy practices and activities in the home and other out-of-school contexts (e.g., after-school programs, summer camps, etc.) that provide students with informal opportunities to learn English.

These "Enhanced" surveys should be piloted. A validation study can conduct within-students analyses to compare decisions made for students based on the standard state HLS form(s) with decisions that would be made based on the additional HLS items of the "Enhanced" HLS. Comparisons can be disaggregated by variables such as L1 background, ethnicity, parent education, etc., to demonstrate the impact of the additional items not only on the information and decisions the HLS may yield but also on implementation (i.e., the extra demand/burden placed on parent reading comprehension). To further validate the Enhanced HLS, a state can also conduct analyses comparable to Study Design 2 by examining differences in hit rates (all things being equal) for school/districts implementing a pilot "Enhanced" HLS and those implementing the state's standard HLS (preferably in a randomized study design).

Study Design 4: Oral administrations

As an extension of Study Design 3, an "Enhanced" HLS can also include an oral administration. In addition to translated printed copies already available in some states for the families speaking the most

dominant L2, an oral version of the “Enhanced” HLS can be piloted. This oral version could be deliberately targeted to speech communities where parents are known from experience to frequently not be literate in their L1 and largely non-fluent in English (e.g., families with recent refugee status). Moreover, with utilization of an oral version of an “Enhanced” HLS, the services of an interpreter can be offered to families (interpreters are already recommended by some states like Vermont). Validation studies can be carried out with the oral language administration of the “Enhanced” HLS in ways comparable to those described above for Study Design 3.

Study Design 5: Use of additional or alternate measures of student language background

Abedi (2008) and Gonzalez et al., (1996) argue the need for multiple measures of student language background rather than reliance on an HLS alone. Therefore, we suggest that states consider the inclusion of additional measures of student language background to determine if the use of combined measures increases their current hit rates (i.e., decreasing the number of students who exit English language services at the immediate next ELPA administration or who need referral to English language services by classroom teachers in the months immediately following the HLS). For example, information about kindergarten and first grade students’ preschool experiences might be considered, particularly since the number of EL students is vastly growing among the preschool population (Mathews & Ewen, 2006) and most K-12 EL students are in the very earliest grades. Where students have attended preschool, data might be gathered in the form of a separate questionnaire completed by preschool staff and can be based on their first-hand observations and ratings of such factors as (1) opportunities for student exposure to and usage of English and their L1, and (2) the degree of student engagement with English-speaking students and adults. In addition, preschool staff could provide informal ratings of English language proficiency (for example observation and rating protocols see Bailey, Huang, Osipova, & Beauregard, 2010). The validation of these additional measures alongside either the state’s standard HLS or an “Enhanced” HLS can also be carried out much like that described in Study Design 2 above.

Unfortunately, implementing multiple preschool language observations and assessments to pass on to kindergarten staff may currently be outside the scope of the many private preschool programs that do not receive state or federal funding and are not mandated to assess. Also having school districts administer multiple assessments or interviews with newly enrolled students in the higher grades is also likely to be impractical given current limitations placed on school budgets and staffing. We recognize that despite compelling reasons to include multiple measures such as those made by Abedi (2008) and Gonzalez et al. (1996), there remains a strong impetus for a *single* measure to initially determine the language dominance of students.

Therefore, we hark back to the beginning of this paper and again point out that federal regulations as well as the OCR memorandum and policy do NOT mandate state use of an HLS for initial identification of students even as almost all states do mandate such a policy for their districts. One reading of the disparate practices around the nation and the conflicts in the research findings suggests an alternative study design involving the abandonment of the HLS entirely and trying out in its stead a short, incisive screening tool for all in-coming students.

The field of education should be in a position to now figure out a way to quickly target some key language competencies for such an initial screener. Specifically, the screener should include age appropriate oral language skills and possibly both oral language and literacy skills for older students first enrolling in U.S. schools in the higher grades—skills that have been found to be predictive of later language proficiency and/or academic success (e.g., recognition of derived word forms, ability to give

formal definitions). Such a screener should capitalize on digital technology to make the assessment quick and uniform to administer (e.g., computer-based or hand-held devices for teachers and older students) and the results immediately available to a data management system (e.g., a web-based, data-driven system). The validation plan described in Study Design 1 or even an experimental design with randomization of families to HLS or the initial screening tool can be used to determine if hit rates differ (all things being equal) across the two instruments, thus testing the comparative efficacy of such a universal screening tool.⁸

Recommendations and Conclusions

The focus of this review has been primarily on the question phrasing and content, and the implementation and interpretation of existing HLS across EVEA states and around the nation that may impact the validity and reliability of the information yielded. However, we wish to stress that the local administration of an HLS is another critical area that needs careful attention and investigation by states as administration practices also impact the quality of the validity of the information garnered with an HLS. Anecdotal information about local practices in HLS administration suggests the completion of the HLS can easily be open for abuse with, for instance, reports of school staff responding to the surveys for families they think speak little or no English rather than allowing families the chance to complete the survey themselves (e.g., providing translated versions of the HLS).

We have several recommendations for improvement in current state practices with measures of the home language construct, including two areas of recommendation at the level of the federal government, and two areas of recommendation at the state level.

Federal-Level Recommendations

Recommendation One: Providing state guidance

The U.S. Department of Education must provide greater guidance on the use of HLS including the possibility of encouraging a universal screening tool as a viable alternative. By funding or conducting a more comprehensive analysis of state practices than the one we were able to conduct here, a report from the Department can offer concrete information about the kinds of HLS question phrasing and solicited content that states should avoid in state-created HLS or in their own guidance to school districts. From our own limited analyses, we predict that survey items that are ambiguously worded or focus on a child's first-acquired language will fail to yield pertinent information on student's current language dominance and exposure, two areas that are important for current language proficiency. The Department can also provide information about reported best practices across states for the procedures used in survey implementation and interpretation (including how to judge and/or give weight to certain question responses). Finally, the Department can disseminate validation studies that have been

⁸ With a universal screening tool, native-English-speaking students may also be identified as needing further assessment for English language services. It is outside the scope of the current paper to discuss the possibility that these cases may not be false positives but rather students with genuine language needs, particularly in the area of academic uses of language. At the very least, a universal screening tool as described here may prove useful in kindergarten by also serving as an early indicator of the need for further speech-language-hearing evaluation. This additional purpose would of course necessitate its own validity argument and validation plan.

conducted with HLS and alternative screeners to encourage the empirical validation of future practices by all states.

Recommendation Two: Transparency in the Office of Civil Rights efforts

Where the OCR has provided memoranda and policy to guide state interpretation of educational laws, we recommend that potentially confusing sections be further clarified. Specifically, the *December 3, 1985 OCR Memorandum*, reissued without change in April 1990, states “many school districts screen students using information such as a language assessment test, information from parents, or structured interviews, to determine *which language minority students* may need further assessment and possible placement into an alternative program” (Italics added by the current authors). However, the states must initially try to determine *which students within the general student population are most likely to be language minority students* needing further screening and assessment to confirm identification, rather than “*which language minority students may need further assessment...*” Furthermore, even if we interpret the language of the memorandum to apply to the initial identification process that states are faced with, the memorandum refers only to “using information such as a language assessment test, information from parents, or structured interviews” rather than giving any guidance on a specific approach to gathering information using an HLS. No memoranda appear to operationalize the home language construct to guide states. The OCR personnel at regional sites work with individual SEAs to make sure they interpret the laws on identification accurately, but the origins of specific OCR suggestions that show up in state guidelines (e.g., CO DOE, 2008) do not appear to be documented. As a result, we do not know how varied this guidance was across states nor how it might have differed in content. We therefore recommend that the OCR make efforts to document the guidance they have given to individual states and consider greater coordination across regional sites and states to help ensure the equitable interpretation of federal law. Such efforts would be helpful for making transparent OCR dealings with SEAs on fair and valid practices with HLS and any alternate screener a state might consider in the future.

State-Level Recommendations

Recommendation One: Transparency in initial identification

We recommend that states work toward a transparent system for initial identification practices in the areas of HLS content, administration, interpretation, ramifications for students’ further screening/assessment, and alternatives to the use of HLS. Specifically, this transparency should come in the form of a thorough description that includes the following:⁹

- (i) clear advisement on whether any state-created HLS is the single mandatory form of the survey, or merely a sample for districts that may also create their own;
- (ii) a statement about the kinds of information the HLS is expected to yield and a defensible reason why this information is thought to be linguistically and pedagogically meaningful. For example, states can explain to parents and educators that the purpose of survey items asking

⁹ Note that this set of recommendations largely echoes the guidelines to SEAs proposed by CCSSO in 1992, but still bears restating today.

for family language and literacy practices can provide valuable information about a student's current exposure to oral and printed English which may be related to proficiency;

(iii) clear guidelines for administrators and teachers on the implementation of the HLS. There should be strict enforcement by district and school personnel that the HLS is completed by families, including clarification of availability of any translated versions of the HLS, or interpreter services; and

(iv) clear decision rules for interpreting and acting on the information yielded by the HLS need to be made available for educators as well as families. The decision-rules for how items determine identification (e.g., either just a single answer carries all the weight if it indicates a language other than English is used in the home, or a combination of answers to several questions is needed to establish language dominance). We suggest as a straightforward start that all states create a flow chart comparable to the readily accessible charts created by Forte and Faulkner-Bond (2010, p. 89; Fig.5.1) or by the States of Texas (TEA, 2004) and Colorado (CO DOE, 2008). Such a chart should also make clear the ramifications for students at each step of the identification process (e.g., dropped from the potential pool of EL students, retained in the pool for further screening, identified for placement into services, etc.).

Recommendation Two: Conducting validation studies

We also recommend that states adopt a validation plan or series of plans for their existing initial identification practices and begin the process of learning more about the information their HLS can realistically yield. At the very least, states can begin to take note of the data that come from comparing the number of IFEP students to the number of students who are identified by an HLS as EL and require English language services. Such data can address initial questions about the efficacy of existing HLS and initial identification practices more broadly, such as:

- Is the state over-identifying students (e.g., the IFEP rate is high compared to other states with comparable populations of EL students)?
- Is the state missing students who are later referred for screening or assessment by classroom teachers?
- What characteristics do these over- and under-identified students have? Is the HLS systematically doing a poor job of identifying students for further screening/assessment who come from certain language, socioeconomic or ethnic backgrounds?
- How quickly do adjustments occur for the students who are under-identified and missing potentially several months of English language services?
- Can a universal screening tool make a more accurate identification of students' language abilities and thus provide a more fair and valid practice for initial identification?

Generating answers to these and similar questions is fundamental to knowing how comparable states are in terms of their accuracy in the initial identification of EL students. As the situation stands, a student's initial identification and early receipt of crucial English language programming may depend on which state or, in some instances, which district within a state he/she was born in or where his/her

family chose to reside. Characterizing what is practiced across states and what works best will be the first critical steps in creating a more valid, uniform and equitable system of access to English language services for all students in the Nation.

Acknowledgments

We would like to acknowledge funding for this paper from the Enhanced Assessment Grant (CFDA 84.368) awarded by the U.S. Department of Education to the OSPI of the State of Washington and Co-PIs Ellen Forte, (edCount, LLC), Marianne Perie (Center for Assessment) and Alison Bailey (UCLA). All opinions expressed are our own and do not represent those of the U.S. Department of Education, OSPI, edCount, the Center for Assessment or UCLA. We thank Frances Butler, Ellen Forte, Marianne Perie, Margaret Heritage, Liz Towles-Reeves, Sara Waring, Joe Willhoft, and Frank Ziolkowski for their helpful comments and suggestions on earlier drafts of this paper. We also thank Barbara Merino (UC Davis), Kathleen McNickle (the OCR – Region VIII), Alice Goodman-Shah (New York DOE), Gloria Maria Grimsley (Maryland DOE), Kimberly Hayes (Washington OSPI), Nancy Rowch (Nebraska DOE), Staff of the ELL Offices (West Virginia DOE), and Lily Roberts, Tavi Papp and Kristen Brown (California DE) for their technical assistance and patience with all our queries about states’ HLS practices. All errors, of course, remain our own.

References

- Abedi, J. (2008). Classification systems for English Language Learners: Issues and recommendations. *Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice*, 27(3), 17-31.
- Abedi, J., Lord, C., & Plummer, J. (1997). Language background as a variable in NAEP mathematics performance (CSE Tech. Rep. No. 429). Los Angeles: University of California, National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing.
- Arizona Department of Education (2010). *Home language survey*. Retrieved July 2, 2010 from <http://www.ade.state.az.us/oelas/ELLForms-StudentFiles/HomeLanguageSurvey.pdf>
- Bailey, A.L. (2010). Implications for Instruction and Assessment. (pp. 222-247). In M. Shatz & L. Wilkinson (Eds.). *The Education of English Language Learners*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Bailey, A.L., Huang, Y., Osipova, A., & Beauregard, S. (March, 2010). *A Teacher Researcher Collaboration for the Academic Language and Science Learning of Young English Language Learners: Facilitating the Transition from Pre-Kindergarten to Kindergarten*. The California Association of Latino Superintendents and Administrators Conclave, Los Angeles, CA. Retrieved June 23, 2010 from http://calsa.schoolfusion.us/modules/groups/homepagefiles/cms/1411120/File/UCLA%20Conclave/Allison%20Bailey%20CALSA%202010_Bailey_et_al__2_1_2010.pdf?sessionId=04eb47d5411dcd6ae6d50f49780ad283.
- Beringer, M.L. (1976). *Ber-Sil Spanish Test, Revised Edition*. Rancho Palos Verdes, CA: The Ber-Sil Company.
- Bernard Cohen Research and Development Inc. (1980). *Language Assessment Umpire*. Compton, CA: Santillana Publishing.
- California Department of Education. (2005). *Home Language Survey English Version*. Retrieved June 8, 2010 from <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/cr/el/documents/hlsform.doc>.
- Colorado Department of Education (2008). *Guidebook on Designing, Delivering, and Evaluating Services for English Language Learners*. Denver, CO: English Language Acquisition Unit, Colorado State Board of Education.
- Council of Chief State School Officers. (1992). *Recommendations for improving the assessment and monitoring of students with limited English proficiency*. Retrieved July 8, 2010 from http://www.ccsso.org/About_the_Council/policy_statements/1559.cfm
- De Houwer, A. (1995). Bilingual language acquisition. In P. Fletcher & B. MacWhinney (Eds.), *The Handbook of Child Language* (pp. 219-250). Oxford: Blackwell.
- Durán R. P. (2008). Assessing English-language learners' achievement. *Review of Research in Education*, 32, 292-327.

- Duursma, E., Romero-Contreras, S., Szuber, A., Proctor, P., Snow, C., August, D., & Calderón, M. (2007). The role of home literacy and language environment on bilinguals' English and Spanish vocabulary development. *Applied Psycholinguistics, 28*(1), 171-190.
- Forte, E., & Faulkner-Bond, M. (2010). *The Administrator's Guide to Federal Programs for English Learners*. Washington, DC: Thompson Publishing.
- Goodz, N. S., (1989). Parental language mixing in bilingual families. *Infant Mental Health Journal, 10*(1), 25-44
- Gonzalez, V. (1991). A model of cognitive, cultural, and linguistic variables affecting bilingual Spanish/English children's development of concepts and language. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Austin, Texas: The University of Texas at Austin.
- Gonzalez, V., Bauerle, P., & Felix-Holt, M. (1996). Theoretical and practical implications of assessing cognitive and language development in bilingual children with qualitative methods. *The Bilingual Research Journal, 20*(1), 93-131.
- Gutiérrez-Clellen, V F., & Kreiter, J. (2003). Understanding child bilingual acquisition using parent and teacher reports. *Applied Psycholinguistics, 24*(2), 267-288.
- Hoffman, N.H.M. (1934). *The measurement of bilingual background*. New York: Columbia Teachers College.
- James, P. (1974). *James Language Dominance Test*. Austin, Texas: Learning Concepts.
- Kane, M. (2006). Content-related validity evidence in test development. (pp. 131-152). In T. M. Haladyna & S. Downing (Eds.), *Handbook on test development*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Kaufman, M. (1968). Will instruction in reading Spanish affect ability in reading English? *Journal of Reading, 11*, 521-527.
- Landry, R.G. (1974). A comparison of second language learners and monolinguals on divergent thinking tasks at the elementary school level. *Modern Language Journal, 58*(1/2), 10-15.
- Lewis, H.P., & Lewis, E.R. (1965). Written language performance of sixth-grade children of low socioeconomic status from bilingual and monolingual backgrounds. *Journal of Experimental Education, 33*, 237-242.
- Leseman, P.P.M., & de Jong, P.F. (1998). Home literacy: Opportunity, instruction, cooperation, and social-emotional quality predicting early reading achievement. *Reading Research Quarterly, 33*(3), 294-318.

- Littlejohn, J. (1998). *Federal control out of control: The Office for Civil Rights' hidden policies on bilingual education*. Sterling, VA: Center for Equal Opportunity. Retrieved July 13, 2010 from <http://eric.ed.gov/PDFS/ED426598.pdf>.
- Lindholm-Leary, K., & Hernandez, A. (2009, April). *Disaggregating Background Factors in the Achievement and Attitudes of Hispanic Students in Dual Language Programs*. Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting, San Diego, CA.
- Mackey, W. F. (1972). *Bilingual education in a binational school*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House.
- Magnuson, K., Lahaic, C. & Waldfogel, J. (2006). Preschool and school readiness in children of immigrants. *Social Science Quarterly*, 87 (5), 169-196.
- Mathews, H. & Ewen, D. (2006). *Reaching All Children? Understanding Early Care and Education Participation Among Immigrant Families*. Washington, DC: Center for Law and Social Policy.
- Merino, B.J. (1976). *Language acquisition in bilingual children: Aspects of syntactic development in English and Spanish by Chicano children in grades K-4*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Stanford University, Stanford, CA.
- No Child Left Behind Act (2001). *Title III: Language Instruction for Limited English Proficient and Immigrant Students*. 107th Congress, 1st Session, December 13, 2001. (Printed version prepared by the National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education). Washington, DC: George Washington University, National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education.
- Office for Public Instruction. (2007). *Criteria for the Identification of Limited English Proficiency*. Helena, MT: Author.
- Pearson, B.Z. Fernandez, S.C. Lewedeg, V., & Oller, D.K. (1997). The relation of input factors to lexical learning by bilingual infants. *Applied Psycholinguistics*, 18, 41-58.
- Pintner, R., & Arsenia, S. (1937). The relation of bilingualism to verbal intelligence and school adjustment. *Journal of Educational Research*, 31(4), 255-263.
- Reese, L. & Goldenberg, C. (2008). Community literacy resources and home literacy practices among immigrant Latino families. *Marriage and Family Review*, 43, 109-139.
- Reese, L., Thompson, S.L., & Goldenberg, C. (2008). Variability in Community Characteristics and Spanish-Speaking Children's Home Language and Literacy Opportunities. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 29(4), 271-290.
- Scheele, A.F., Leseman, P. P.M., & Mayo, A. Y. (2010). The home language environment of monolingual and bilingual children and their language proficiency. *Applied Psycholinguistics* 31 (2010), 117–140.

- Skoczylas, R. (1971). *Home Bilingual Usage Estimate*. Gilroy, California: R. Skoczylas.
- Speece, D. L. & Cooper, D. H. (2004). Methodological issues in research on language and early literacy from the perspective of early identification and instruction. (pp. 82-94). In C. A. Stone, E. R. Silliman, B. J. Ehren, & K. Apel. (Eds.). *The Handbook of Language and Literacy: Development and Disorders*. London: Guilford Press.
- Spolsky, B., Murphy, P., Holm, W., & Ferrel, A. (1972). Three functional tests of oral proficiency. *TESOL Quarterly*, 6(3), 221-235.
- The U.S. Dept. of Education, Office for Civil Rights. (1985). *December 3, 1985 Memorandum, reissued April 6, 1990*. Retrieved July 1, 2010 http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/lau1990_and_1985.html
- The U. S. Dept. of Education, Office for Civil Rights. (1991). *1991 OCR policy*. Retrieved July 1, 2010 <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/lau1991.html>
- Texas Education Agency (2004). *Limited English Proficient Decision Chart*. Retrieved June 8, 2010 from http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/curriculum/biling/p78_LEPDecisionChart_0804.pdf.
- Townsend, D., & Collins, P. (2008). English or Spanish? Assessing Latino/a children in the home and school languages for risk of reading disabilities. *Topics in Language Disorders*, 28(1), 61-83.
- Trudeau-Gerard. (1985). *Multicultural Vocabulary Test - Spanish*. San Diego, CA: Los Amigos Research Associates.
- Vermont Department of Education (2010). *Primary home language survey*. Retrieved July 2, 2010 from http://education.vermont.gov/new/pdfdoc/pgm_esl/educ_ell_primary_home_language_surve.pdf
- Wolf, M.K., Kao, J., Griffin, N., Herman, J., Bachman, P.L., Chang, S., & Farnsworth, T. (2008). *Issues in Assessing English Language Learners: English Language Proficiency Measures and Accommodation Uses--Practice Review*. [CRESST Report 732, 2008](#).
- Woodcock, R. J. (1991) *Woodcock Language Proficiency Battery--Revised*. Chicago, IL: Riverside Publishing Company.
- Woodcock, R. W., & Muñoz-Sandoval, A. F. (1995). *Woodcock Language Proficiency Battery-Revised, Spanish form: Supplemental manual*. Itasca, IL: Riverside.
- Zehr, M. A. (2010). *Home-Language Surveys for ELLs Under Fire*. Ed Week blog: Learning the Language. Retrieved February 16, 2010 from http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2010/02/16/22homelanguage_ep.h29.html?tkn=POLFZ/PSWLFT5/UXkwYJ2FJYWJYImD4uagUF&cmp=clp-edweek
- Zirkel, P.A. (1976). The whys and ways of testing bilinguality before teaching bilingually. *Elementary School Journal*, 76(6), 323-330.

Appendix A: Links to HLS forms of the EVEA states

State Instrument	State Regulations*	SEA Mandated HLS or District Examples (if available)	Other Information
Idaho HLS	B (?)	http://www.sde.idaho.gov/site/lep/docs/forms/HomeLanguageSurvey_000.doc	
Indiana HLS	A	http://www.doe.in.gov/lmmp/docs/homelanguagesurvey.pdf	Guidelines for Identification of ELLs and Use of HLS: http://www.doe.in.gov/lmmp/useofhome_languagesurvey.html
Montana HLS (varies by district)	D	Not publically available	Criteria for Identification of English Proficiency (HLS amongst many other instruments): http://opi.mt.gov/pdf/bilingual/CriteriaLEP_arch.pdf CCSSO Policy briefing used for guidelines to districts: http://www.ccsso.org/About_the_Council/policy_statements/1559.cfm
Oregon HLS (varies by district)	C	LEA Examples: North Bend District 13: http://www.nwresd.k12.or.us/instrserv/flash/Microsoft%20Word%20-%20Homelanguage_survey-English.swf Sweet Home District 55: http://www.sweethome.k12.or.us/9_district_info_page/pdfs/SHSD%20Home%20Language%20Survey.pdf	Typical questions (recommended by ODE) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Student’s first/primary/native language ▪ Language(s) most often used for communication at home ▪ Mother’s/father’s first language ▪ Do the parents communicate with their child in their native language?
Washington HLS	A	http://www.k12.wa.us/MigrantBilingual/Forms.aspx	Guidelines for Identification of ELLs: http://apps.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=392-160-015

* See the section on Description and Critique of Current HLS Practices for descriptions of state regulations

Appendix B: Links to HLS forms of additional non-EVEA states

State Instrument Name	State Regulations	Number of Items	SEA Mandated HLS or Sample (if available)	Item Examples
Alabama HLS	A	2	http://alex.state.al.us/ell/node/59	Is a language other than English spoken at home? Is your child's first language a language other than English?
Alaska Parent Language Questionnaire	B	10	SEA sample: http://www.eed.state.ak.us/nclb/parent_language_questionnaire.doc	What is the first language learned by the student? What language(s) does the student currently use in the home? How long has the student attended school in the U.S.A.? Languages spoken to the student (by mother, father, other significant adult) Language the student speaks to family
Arizona Primary Home Language Other Than English (PHLOTE) Home Language Survey	A	1	http://www.ade.state.az.us/oelas/ELLForms-StudentFiles/HomeLanguageSurvey.pdf	What is the primary language of the student?

State Instrument Name	State Regulations	Number of Items	SEA Mandated HLS or Sample (if available)	Item Examples
Arkansas* HLS	C	varies by district	[SEA sample not provided or not publicly available]	<p>LEA example items:</p> <p>What language is spoken in your home most of the time?</p> <p>What language does the student speak most of the time?</p> <p>What language do the parents speak to the student most of the time?</p> <p>What was the first language spoken by the student?</p>
California HLS	B	varies by district	<p>SEA sample:</p> <p>http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/cr/el/documents/hlsform.doc</p>	<p>Which language did your child learn when he/she first began to talk?</p> <p>Which language does your child most frequently speak at home? Which language do you (the parents or guardians) most frequently use when speaking with your child?</p> <p>Which language is most often spoken by adults in the home? (parents, guardians, grandparents, or any other adults)</p>
Colorado HLS	A	3	http://www.cde.state.co.us/cde_english/download/TitleIII/HOMELANGUAGESURVEY.pdf	<p>What was the first language that this student spoke?</p> <p>Is there a language other than English spoken in the home?</p> <p>Does the student speak a language other than English?</p>

State Instrument Name	State Regulations	Number of Items	SEA Mandated HLS or Sample (if available)	Item Examples
Connecticut HLS	A	3	http://www.ctserc.org/initiatives/iss/Guidelines.zip	What is the first language you learned to speak? What language is spoken most by other persons in your home? What language do you speak the most at home?
Delaware* HLS	B	varies by district	[SEA sample not provided or not publicly available]	SEA recommended items: Student's first acquired language Language(s) spoken in the student's home Language(s) spoken by the student
Florida* HLS	B	varies by district	[SEA sample not provided or not publicly available]	SEA recommended item: Is a language other than English used in the home?
Georgia HLS	A	3	http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/DMGetDocument.aspx/Chapter%208%20Section%208.2%20ESOL%20and%20RTI.pdf?p=6CC6799F8C1371F6244231976B8A0456F266C577B47729379C875642C0660146&Type=D (p. 3)	What was the language(s) the student first learned to speak? What language(s) does the student speak at home? What language(s) does the student speak most often?
Hawaii HLS	A	unknown	[SEA sample not publicly available]	[LEA example not publicly available]
Illinois HLS	A	2	http://www.isbe.state.il.us/bilingual/TPETPILetters/English_Translation/hls_english.pdf	Is a language other than English spoken in your home? Does your child speak a language other than English?

State Instrument Name	State Regulations	Number of Items	SEA Mandated HLS or Sample (if available)	Item Examples
Iowa HLS	A	11	http://www.iowa.gov/educate/index2.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_view&gid=3120&Itemid=99999	<p>Was your child born in the United States?</p> <p>What language is spoken by you and your family most of the time at home?</p> <p>Is your child's first-learned or home language anything other than English?</p>
Kansas HLS	A	4	http://www.ksde.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=DMnt0I_3pSs%3d&tabid=359&mid=886&forcedownload=true	<p>What language did your child first learn to speak/use?</p> <p>What language does your child most often speak/use at home?</p> <p>What language do you most often speak/use with your child?</p>
Kentucky HLS	A	4	http://www.education.ky.gov/KDE/Instructional+Resources/High+School/Language+Learning/English+Language+Learning/Home+Language+Survey.htm	<p>What is the language most frequently spoken at home?</p> <p>Which language did your child learn when he/she first began to talk?</p> <p>What language does your child most frequently speak at home?</p> <p>What language do you most frequently speak to your child?</p>

State Instrument Name	State Regulations	Number of Items	SEA Mandated HLS or Sample (if available)	Item Examples
Louisiana* HLS	D	Non-mandated	[SEA sample not provided or not publicly available]	<p>LEA example criteria:</p> <p>Student's first acquired language is NOT English</p> <p>Language spoken most often by the student is NOT English</p> <p>Dominant language spoken in the home is NOT English, regardless of the language spoken by the student</p>
Maine HLS	A	5	http://www.maine.gov/education/esl/home_language_survey_parents.htm	<p>What language do you MOST OFTEN use when speaking to your child?</p> <p>What language does your child MOST OFTEN use when speaking to brothers, sisters, and other children at home?</p>
Maryland* HLS	C	varies by district	[SEA sample not provided or not publicly available]	<p>SEA recommended items:</p> <p>Students who communicate in a language other than English</p> <p>Students whose families use a primary language other than English in the home</p> <p>Students who use a language other than English in daily non-school surroundings</p>

State Instrument Name	State Regulations	Number of Items	SEA Mandated HLS or Sample (if available)	Item Examples
Massachusetts HLS	B	varies by district	SEA sample: http://www.doe.mass.edu/ell/sei/homelangsurvey.pdf	<p>What language did your child first understand or speak?</p> <p>What language do you use when speaking to your child?</p> <p>What language does your child use when speaking to you?</p>
Michigan HLS	B	2	http://www.michigan.gov/documents/Home_language_survey_52531_7.dot	<p>Is your child's native tongue a language other than English?</p> <p>Is the primary language used in your child's home environment a language other than English?</p> <p>What country was your child born in?</p> <p>When did your child enter the United States?</p>
Minnesota Home Language Questionnaire	A	3	http://www.bemidji.k12.mn.us/pdf/registration/bemidji_home_lang_for_m.pdf	<p>Which language did your child learn first?</p> <p>Which language is most often spoken in your home?</p> <p>Which language does your child usually speak?</p>
Mississippi HLS	B	varies by district	SEA model: http://board.mde.k12.ms.us/SBE_May_2005/Tab%2033-B%20-%20back-up%20-%20ELL%20Guidelines%20-%20Draft.pdf (p. 10)	<p>Does your child speak any language other than English?</p> <p>What was the first language your child learned to speak?</p> <p>What language does your child speak most often?</p> <p>What language is most often spoken in your home?</p>

State Instrument Name	State Regulations	Number of Items	SEA Mandated HLS or Sample (if available)	Item Examples
Missouri HLS	B	varies by district	SEA sample: http://dese.mo.gov/divimprove/fedprog/discretionarygrants/bilingual-esol/svngundocell.pdf (p. 4)	Do you use a language other than English? Is a language other than English used at home?
Nebraska HLS	D	Non-mandated (varies by district)	No SEA sample but guidance available: http://www.education.ne.gov/poverlyandlep/Images/ResourceGuides/LEP%20Plan%20Resource%20Guide%20Modified%20Sept.pdf	[LEA example not publicly available]
Nevada HLS	B	varies by district	SEA sample: http://nde.doe.nv.gov/SpecialEdResources/Bulletin_05-1.doc	SEA recommended items: What was the first language learned by the student? What language does the student use with friends? What language is used in the home?
New Hampshire HLS	A	5	http://www.education.nh.gov/instruction/integrated/documents/nh_home_lang.sur.doc	Please list all languages spoken in your home. Which language did your child first hear or speak? Which language(s) do you speak to your child? Which language(s) does your child speak at home with adults?

State Instrument Name	State Regulations	Number of Items	SEA Mandated HLS or Sample (if available)	Item Examples
New Jersey HLS	B	varies by district	SEA sample: http://www.state.nj.us/education/njpep/pd/ell_mainstream/worddocs/home_language_survey.doc	What language did the child learn when he/she first began to talk? What language does the family speak at home most of the time? What language does the parent [guardian] speak to the child most of the time?
New Mexico HLS	C	varies by district	[SEA sample not provided or not publicly available]	[LEA example not publicly available]
New York Home Language Identification Survey	A	12	http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/0C11683B-D763-4764-9F31-0577F07B77F8/48052/HLS_5_24_07_ENGLISH.pdf	What language does your child understand? What language does your child speak? What language is spoken in the child's home or residence most of the time?
North Carolina HLS	B	varies by district	SEA sample: http://esl.ncwiseowl.org/UserFiles/Servers/Server_4502383/File/SAMPLE%20North%20Carolina%20Home%20Language%20Survey%20Form.doc	What is the first language the student learned to speak? What language does the student speak most often? What language is most often spoken in the home?
North Dakota HLS	B	varies by district	SEA sample: http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/bilingul/tech/survey.pdf	Is a language other than English spoken in your home or extended family by you or anyone else? Does your child speak this language at home or elsewhere? Is your child Native American?

State Instrument Name	State Regulations	Number of Items	SEA Mandated HLS or Sample (if available)	Item Examples
Ohio HLS	B	varies by district	SEA sample: https://ccip.ode.state.oh.us/DocumentLibrary/ViewDocument.aspx?DocumentKey=1090	What language did your son/daughter speak when he/she first learned to talk? What language does your son/daughter use most frequently at home? What language do you use most frequently to your son/daughter?
Oklahoma HLS	A	5	http://sde.state.ok.us/Curriculum/Bilingual/pdf/HomeLangSurvey.pdf	Is a language other than English used in your home? What was the first (1st) language your child learned to speak?
Pennsylvania HLS	A	4	http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt?open=18&objID=357807&mode=2	What is/was the student's first language? Does the student speak a language(s) other than English? What language(s) is/are spoken in your home? Has the student attended any United States school in any 3 years during his/her lifetime?
Rhode Island HLS	A	6	http://www.ride.ri.gov/applications/ell/content/Home-Language-Survey-June-2009_Eng.pdf	What language do you use most often when speaking to your child? What language did your child first learn to speak? What language does your child use most often when speaking to you? What language does your child use most often when speaking to siblings or other children in the home?

State Instrument Name	State Regulations	Number of Items	SEA Mandated HLS or Sample (if available)	Item Examples
South Carolina* HLS	C	varies by district	[SEA sample not provided or not publicly available]	<p>LEA example items:</p> <p>Was the first language your child learned to speak ENGLISH?</p> <p>Can your child speak another language other than English?</p> <p>What language do you use most often when you talk to your child?</p> <p>Does anyone in your home speak English?</p>
South Dakota HLS	D	Non-mandated (varies by district)	SEA sample: http://doe.sd.gov/octa/assessment/ell/documents/HomeLangSurveyquestions.doc	<p>Four sample questions:</p> <p>What is the language most frequently spoken at home?</p> <p>Which language did your child learn when he/she first began to talk?</p> <p>What language does your child most frequently speak at home?</p> <p>What language do you most frequently speak to your child?</p>
Tennessee HLS	B	varies by district	SEA sample: http://state.tn.us/education/fedprog/doc/ESLPolguide_7_10.doc	<p>What is the first language your child learned to speak?</p> <p>What language does your child speak most often outside of school?</p> <p>What language do people usually speak in your child's home?</p>

State Instrument Name	State Regulations	Number of Items	SEA Mandated HLS or Sample (if available)	Item Examples
Texas HLS	A	2	http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/curriculum/biling/homelangsurveys.html	What language is spoken in your home most of the time? What language does your child (do you) speak most of the time?
Utah HLS	A	4	http://www.schools.utah.gov/charterschools/resources/HomeLanguageSurveyEnglish.pdf	What was the first language that the student learned to speak? Which language is used most by the student? What is the language used most often at home? What language do you prefer for school to home communication?
Vermont Primary Home Language Survey	A	6	http://education.vermont.gov/new/pdfdoc/pgm_esl/educ_ell_primary_home_language_survey.pdf	What is the native language of each parent/guardian? What language(s) are spoken in your home? Which language does your child use most frequently at home?
Virginia HLS	B	varies by district	SEA sample: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/esl/standards_resources/resources/handbook_teacher_admin.pdf (p. D-1)	Was the first language you learned English? Can you speak languages other than English? Which language do you use most often when you speak to your friends?
West Virginia	B	varies by district	[SEA sample not publicly available]	[LEA example not publicly available]

State Instrument Name	State Regulations	Number of Items	SEA Mandated HLS or Sample (if available)	Item Examples
Wisconsin HLS	B	varies by district	SEA sample: http://dpi.wi.gov/ell/pdf/homelang.pdf	What language did the child learn when she or he first began to talk? What language does the child hear and understand in the home? Can an adult family member or extended family member speak/read English?
Wyoming* HLS	B	varies by district	SEA guidelines: http://www.k12.wy.us/FP/congrant/congrant_manual.pdf (p. 105)	SEA recommended items: The first language spoken by the child The language(s) spoken in the home The language(s) spoken or understood by the child

Note: State regulations are reported in the section on Description and Critique of Current HLS Practices above describing the home language survey practices of each state as: Practice A: the SEA created a single HLS and mandates its use in schools state-wide; Practice B: the SEA mandates the use of an HLS and created an HLS that is offered as a sample for districts to adopt or to substitute for their own version of an HLS; Practice C: the SEA mandates use of an HLS but allows districts to create their own set of survey questions for the local context; and Practice D: the SEA does not mandate the use of an HLS. Where possible, website links to SEA mandated or sample HLS are provided.

*In the case that no SEA sample HLS was provided or publicly available, we included either SEA recommended criteria from various state documents or LEA mandated HLS where available.

Appendix C: Summaries of cited studies of measures of home language background

Authors	Title	Measure	Validity Information	Examples Items
Abedi (2008)	Classification systems for English language learners: Issues and recommendations.	Language Background Questionnaire (LBQ, originally created by Abedi et al, 1997)	- none provided in this or the Abedi et al, 1997 report) - however, concerns raised about the discrepancies between LBQ and school roster reporting of students' official primary language	- none provided
Duursma, Romero-Contreras, Szuber, Proctor, Snow, August & Calderón (2007)	The role of home literacy and language environment on bilinguals' English and Spanish vocabulary development.	Parent Interview and Response Questionnaire (developed in conjunction with NICHD and the Center for Applied Linguistics	Validity: - Low to moderate correlations between the Parent Questionnaire and WLPB-R letter word identification and picture vocabulary subtests - Highest correlation between parent income and WLPB-R letter word indent. - Highest correlation between English as a home language and WLPB-R picture vocabulary Reliability: - Factor analysis resulted in items loading on two factors: "home language" and "parent help" - Cronbach's $\alpha = .93$ for home language and $.68$ for parent help	<i>English version</i> What language does the MOTHER/FATHER use when she/he speaks to this child? What language do children in this household use when they speak to your child? What language does your child use when he/she speaks to his/her MOTHER/FATHER at home? What language does your child use when he/she speaks to his/her friends outside of the home? (Scored on 5-point scale of "only Spanish" (1) to "only English" (5).

Authors	Title	Measure	Validity Information	Examples Items
Gonzalez (1991)	A model of cognitive, cultural, and linguistic variables affecting bilingual Spanish/English children's development of concepts and language.	Home Language Survey	- none provided	<p><i>English and Spanish versions</i></p> <p>What language or languages do you speak at home?</p> <p>Which language does your child use most frequently at home?</p> <p>Which language do you (parent) and other members of your family use more frequently at home?</p> <p>Has school affected the way your child communicates at home?</p> <p>If you compare your child with other children of his/her age, who speak English in your community, How would you judge your child's ability to speak and understand Spanish/English?</p>
Gonzalez, Bauerle, & Felix-Holt (1996)	Theoretical and practical implications of assessing cognitive and language development in bilingual children with qualitative methods.	Home Language Survey (developed by Gonzalez, 1991)	- none provided	none provided

Authors	Title	Measure	Validity Information	Examples Items
Gutiérrez-Clellen, & Kreiter (2003)	Understanding child bilingual acquisition using parent and teacher reports.	Parent questionnaire (developed by Restrepo, 1988)	- none provided	<i>Questions administered as interview</i> Which language does _____ speak to the child in? Which language does the child respond in? Rate each person (in the household) on how well and how much they speak each language.
Leseman, & de Jong (1998)	Home literacy: Opportunity, instruction, cooperation, and social-emotional quality predicting early reading achievement.	Home language measure	- validity not provided - the language measure was administered at all 3 home visits - Cronbach's α for answers to items at each visit (visits 1-3) were .95, .91, and .03, respectively - Intercorrelation between measures at each visit was .90, therefore the average home language score between all 3 measures was used	- none provided directly, but described as a 3-point likert scale (1 Dutch, .5 a mixture of Dutch and their own [first] language, and 0 their own language) for language used in seven family-life settings.
Lindholm-Leary & Hernandez (2009)	Disaggregating background factors in the achievement and attitudes of Hispanic students in dual language programs	student questionnaire	- none provided	- none provided

Authors	Title	Measure	Validity Information	Examples Items
Reese, & Goldenberg (2008)	Community literacy resources and home literacy practices among immigrant Latino families.	written parent survey	- none provided	- none provided
Reese, Thompson, & Goldenberg (2008)	Variability in community characteristics and Spanish-speaking children's home language and literacy opportunities.	written parent survey	- none provided	- none provided
Townsend & Collins (2008)	English or Spanish? Assessing Latino/a children in the home and school languages for risk of reading disabilities.	CELDT scores	- home language status derived from CELDT scores, where ELLs were considered as having Spanish as their home language - no other validity info provided	- none provided

Appendix D: Additional resources

Colorín Colorado: <http://www.colorincolorado.org/article/14316#home>

Council of Chief State Schools Officers:

http://www.ccsso.org/About_the_Council/policy_statements/1559.cfm

EVEA Project Website: <http://www.eveaproject.org>

MC3: The Mid-Continent Comprehensive Center:

<http://www.mc3edsupport.org/community/knowledgebases/identification-guidelines-1612.html>

The Office of Civil Rights: <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/ellresources.html>

Teaching Diverse Learners (The Education Alliance): <http://www.alliance.brown.edu/tdl/assessment/initassess-resources.shtml#homlangsurveys>