

Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE)

Definition:

SIFE students are those who meet **at least one** of the following two categories:

1. Come from a home where a language other than English is spoken and enter a school in the US after grade two;
2. Are immigrant students who enter a school in the United States after grade 2

And meet the following conditions:

- a. Have had at least two years less schooling than their peers; **and**,
- b. Function at least two years below expected grade level in reading and in mathematics; **and**,
- c. May be pre-literate in their native language.

How to identify SIFE students?

Districts need to identify students who are Recent Arrivers to the US as part of the Recent arrivers data collection – questions have been added by districts to help with this report. The SIFE student is similar to the recent arriver, however the key for SIFE is after grade 2 arrival in US school. Any questions that a district uses to identify a student as SIFE would need to be given to all students enrolling in the school, like the recent arriver and home language questions.

Legal requirements

ESSA requires states to identify how recent arrivers will participate in state assessments. Oregon is part of a national workgroup looking at Recently Arrived English Learner (RAEL). We are looking at all aspects of RAEL (SIFE, SPED, etc.)

Guidance from US Office of Civil Rights requires the SEA and LEAs to address the linguistic and core content instructional needs for all students. SIFE students have additional academic needs, without collecting the number of SIFE students enrolled in Oregon LEAs, the state cannot ensure the student's civil rights are being met. (Title VI- provides students with additional protections and responsibilities for meeting educational needs – this data helps districts meet that requirement and is necessary for ODE to provide technical assistance to those districts.).

ODE is required by its EL State Plan to assist in replicating effective programs, not having the SIFE information at the state level makes it impossible to determine which districts are being successful with their SIFE students.

Data uses:

During a recent legislative work-group, it was proposed that Oregon create a new weighted funding for SIFE students, since ODE did not collect that data we were unable to move ahead with the proposal.

Other states have built in additional time for SIFE students to obtain English proficiency in their accountability formulas. Since Oregon did not have this data at the state level, we were unable to address this possibility.

Latest/Greatest

Districts are looking at their students who are refugees as potential SIFE students. Also we have had a group of students enrolling across the state from Guatemala. These questions may require an interpreter and culturally responsive communication with parents. Similar questions to determine educational background of the student would be helpful in determining if the student qualifies as SIFE.

Some questions you could consider include:

1. Did your student attend school in prior to coming to the US?, If so what grade was your student in?
2. Describe your student's school attendance prior to coming to the US? (look for frequency, instructional focus, grade progression, etc.)
3. Did your student learn to read prior to coming to the US?
4. Did your student do math prior to coming to the US?