



### **Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE)**

The NDDPI began collecting data on SLIFE in the 2017-18 enrollment report in the STARS. This data will help determine whether these students would benefit from modified testing requirements on the North Dakota State Assessment or other flexibility. SLIFE are identified by a checkbox in PowerSchool which will transfer to STARS if the district's vertical reporting is turned on. SLIFE is determined by the information provided by parents on the Home Language Survey and possibly interviews with students and/or parents.

Students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE) is an umbrella term used to describe a diverse subset of the English learner population who share several unifying characteristics. SLIFE students:

- Are identified English learners in grades 2-12
- Are new or returning to the U.S. school system from outside of the U.S.
- Have had interrupted or limited schooling opportunities equivalent to more than two cumulative years

They may also:

- Have limited backgrounds in reading and writing in their native language(s)
- Be below grade level in most academic skills as determined by district or state assessments.

Students who have these characteristics could be refugees, migrant students, or any EL student who experienced limited or interrupted access to school for a variety of reasons such as poverty, isolated geographic locales, limited transportation options, societal expectations for school attendance, a need to enter the workforce and contribute to the family income, natural disasters, war, or civil strife.

Additionally, the number of years of compulsory education varies from country to country (Short & Boyson, 2004). For example, students from Mexico may believe that they have completed their education upon finishing "la secundaria," the equivalent of ninth grade in the U.S. Upon immigrating to the U.S., these students may be unaware of the expectation to continue their education through grade twelve. The recent wave of unaccompanied minors coming to the U.S. from Central America also generally fit into the SLIFE category. The violence and poverty many of these young people experienced in their native countries have led to limited and interrupted educational opportunities. It is also important to note that the perception of age can vary from culture to culture. While in the U.S., a 16-year-old is considered a minor, a child of this age is considered an adult with adult responsibilities in many other countries.