



STATE OF NEW JERSEY
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

A Memo from the New Jersey Department of Education

Date: May 7, 2020
To: Chief School Administrators, Charter School and Renaissance School Project Leads
Route To: District Bilingual/ESL/ELS Leads, District Test Coordinators
From: Peggy McDonald, Ed. D., Assistant Commissioner
Division of Student Services

Identification and Parent Notification of English Language Learners during COVID-19

This notification provides specific information regarding the identification and parent notification of English language learners (ELLs) during the period of school closure due to Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The following strategies will assist with providing ELLs the services they need during this challenging time.

Identification of Newly Enrolled ELLs

All newly enrolled students in a school district must be:

1. Given a [Home Language Survey](#);
2. Evaluated for language services if the Home Language Survey indicates the need for testing; and
3. Provided with a language instructional educational program (LIEP), if identified.

During remote instruction, and in the absence of the ability to administer a state approved language proficiency screener, the district's certified language specialist should take the following steps to identify a student who may need an LIEP:

1. Interview parent(s)/guardian(s) and student(s) by telephone or virtually, consistent with the district's remote enrollment process, if feasible, when a language other than English is indicated;
2. Review past school records, if available, including past state test scores or district-administered assessments;
3. Assign an "informal" designation of ELL, if applicable. *Do not enter data into NJSMART in the `ELLIdentificationDate` field;* and
4. Provide a LIEP (e.g., ESL) consistent with a district's remote plan.

Upon return to school for in-person instruction, these students must be formally screened. At that point, if the student is identified, the identification date should be entered in NJSMART in the `ELLIdentificationDate` field consistent with the definition of the data element in the [SID Handbook](#), p. 64.

Parent Notification

Title I Parental Notification requirements, which describe the rationale for a child's identification as an ELL and the need for the child to be placed in a language instructional educational program, remain in effect during remote instruction. Consequently, parent(s)/guardian(s) of an ELL student must be informed in writing, no later than 30 days of the child's identification, that their child has been identified for participation in a language instructional educational program. The parent notification must be in an understandable and uniform format and, to the extent practicable, in a language parents understand. During remote learning, the [parental notification requirements](#) may be modified to include the results of the process detailed above to determine the child's level of English proficiency, rather than a test score.

Remote Learning Resources for English as a Second Language (ESL)

The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) has gathered multiple [resources for educators and families of English Language Learners](#), including a list of [digital resources for content areas](#), from local school districts in New Jersey. Be sure to follow your district's instructional plan and use these resources to supplement what your local district requires.

Contact information

If you have questions, contact the NJDOE's Office of Supplemental Educational Programs via email at ELL@doe.nj.gov. We look forward to our continued partnership to support New Jersey's ELLs.

c: Members, State Board of Education
Lamont O. Repollet, Ed.D., Commissioner
NJDOE Staff
Statewide Parent Advocacy Network
Garden State Coalition of Schools
NJ LEE Group