



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](mailto: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