

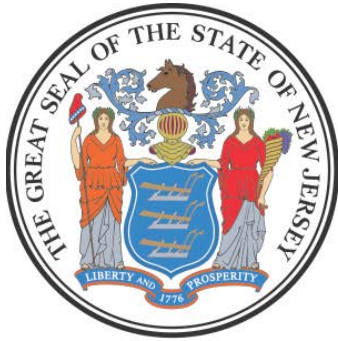
# ENROLLMENT for Newcomers

New Jersey Department of Education  
Office of Supplemental Educational Programs  
Bureau of Bilingual/ESL Education



*Aligning Credentials Across  
Academic Borders*

2018



STATE OF NEW JERSEY  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

New Jersey Department of Education  
Guidance for Enrollment of Newcomers  
*Aligning Credentials Across Academics Borders*

May 2018

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## Table of Contents

New Jersey Department of Education.....	2
Guidance for Enrollment of Newcomers .....	2
<i>Aligning Credentials Across Academics Borders</i> .....	2
Introduction .....	1
What Must LEAs Consider When Registering ELLs? .....	2
How Are English Language Learners Registered for School?.....	3
Making Registration and Enrollment Practices Accessible Strategies and Considerations .....	4
How Do I Review Foreign Transcripts and Transfer Credits?.....	5
Foreign Transcripts.....	5
Transfer Credits.....	10
Grade Level and Promotion Considerations .....	11
What Are the Current High School Graduation Requirements for New Jersey Students?.....	14
Multiple and Diverse Paths to Student Success.....	14
Standards (Credits) and Assessments Requirements .....	14
Appendices.....	16
Appendix A.....	16
Appendix B .....	17
Appendix C .....	21
Appendix D.....	22
Appendix E .....	24
Appendix F .....	25
Appendix G.....	33
References .....	35



# Introduction

A growing number of children are entering New Jersey schools with diverse educational and life experiences. In 2016, over 70,000 New Jersey students were identified as English language learners (ELLs), according to New Jersey Department of Education data. Some parents enroll their children in New Jersey schools with formal transcripts from school districts in the United States or their home country, while other parents may enroll students with little or no documentation of their child's prior schooling due to experiencing hardships, such as natural disasters, political or religious persecution, and personal afflictions.

No matter the circumstance, enrolling children into schools must be a priority for all New Jersey schools. Thus, school districts should work diligently to capture and assess students' prior academic proficiency to help with grade and program placement as well as to identify appropriate program and support services. The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) recognizes that for many school districts, it may present a challenge to access resources and tools to assist with the enrollment process of ELLs with prior academic experience in a country other than the U.S.

This guidance document is intended to assist New Jersey school personnel with the registration of ELLs from other countries, identify relevant federal and state policies applicable to students' and parents' educational and civil rights, and to set procedure for making the transition to a new school in a new country a smooth transition for educational success. To ensure these rights are met, this guidance offers information on appropriate grade-level placement, credit transfers, and translating foreign transcripts.

School districts throughout New Jersey use varying enrollment, transcript translation, and credit transfer policies to account for ELLs' prior educational experiences. The NJDOE acknowledges the rich experiences that ELLs bring from their home country, including background knowledge, linguistic skills, and academic achievements. While this guidance document is valuable for all school levels, it is geared toward high school personnel updating, creating, and/or implementing policies related to enrollment of ELLs. It is essential that school personnel follow the parameters for translating foreign transcripts that will most accurately identify and understand an ELL's prior academic background. This, in turn, will poise the student for graduation from New Jersey schools.

This document is organized by topic area. Reference the table of contents for the specific page number for each section: 1) *What Must LEAs Consider When Registering ELLs?* 2) *How Are ELLs Registered for School?* 3) *How do I Review Foreign Transcripts and Transfer Credits?* and 4) *What are the Current High School Graduation Requirements for New Jersey Students?* References and supplemental information may be found in the appendices, including a series of Frequently Asked Questions from the perspective of a parent enrolling his/her child into a New Jersey school, foreign credential evaluation service agencies, embassies and consulates in the U.S., and a country index with equivalent U.S. school system grades. This information will be helpful in guiding schools to register, enroll, and support ELLs in the entire K-12 community, particularly in grades 9-12.



# What Must LEAs Consider When Registering ELLs?

New Jersey has experienced a steady growth of immigrant students in the past several years. The ELL population has increased by 10,618 from school year 2012-13 to 2016-17 (NJDOE). Students come from varying circumstances that may impact school enrollment. Some students may be unaccompanied minors who arrive in New Jersey without parents or families to help navigate the school system, others may be experiencing homelessness or other hardships, and other students and/or parents may arrive in New Jersey undocumented.

Despite a student's or their parents' circumstances, under federal law all children in the United States are entitled to a free public elementary and secondary education regardless of their race, color, national origin, citizenship, or immigration status of their parents/guardian. The May 8, 2014, [Dear Colleague Letter On The Rights Of All Children To Enroll In Public Schools](#) reminds districts of their obligation to provide "equal educational opportunities to all children residing in their districts," including undocumented children ([Plyler v. Doe](#), 457 US 202 (1982)).

New Jersey Administrative Code (*N.J.A.C.* 6A:22-3.3) also prohibits the barring of any student from public elementary and secondary schools on the basis of immigration/visa status, except for students on F-1 visas. A student who may be experiencing homelessness or a student who is "kept in the home of a person other than the student's parent or guardian, and the person is domiciled in the school district and is supporting the student without remuneration as if the student were his or her own child" is eligible to be attend the school district (*N.J.A.C.* 6A:17-2.1 *et seq.*; *N.J.A.C.* 6A:22-3.2(a)). The [Federal McKinney-Vento Act](#) (Pub. L. 100-77, July 22, 1987, 101 Stat. 482, 42 U.S.C. § 11301 *et seq.*) provides examples of children that may fall under the federal definition who may be experiencing homelessness, including:

- a) Children sharing housing due to economic hardship or loss of housing;
- b) Children living in "motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative accommodations";
- c) Children living in "emergency or transitional shelters";
- d) Children whose primary nighttime residence is not ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation (e.g. park benches, etc.); and
- e) Children living in "cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings."

Districts should continue to enroll all students who are between the ages of 5 and 20 who are domiciled in the district or who are otherwise entitled to attend pursuant to *N.J.S.A.* 18A:38.1 and the implementing regulations, *N.J.A.C.* 6A:22-3.2, *et seq.*

Several resources are available to school districts to facilitate enrollment for all students. These include:

- The U.S. Department of Education [Newcomer Tool Kit](#)
- Resources about [unaccompanied immigrant children](#)
- NJDOE annual Broadcast: [Enrollment considerations for homeless and immigrant children](#)

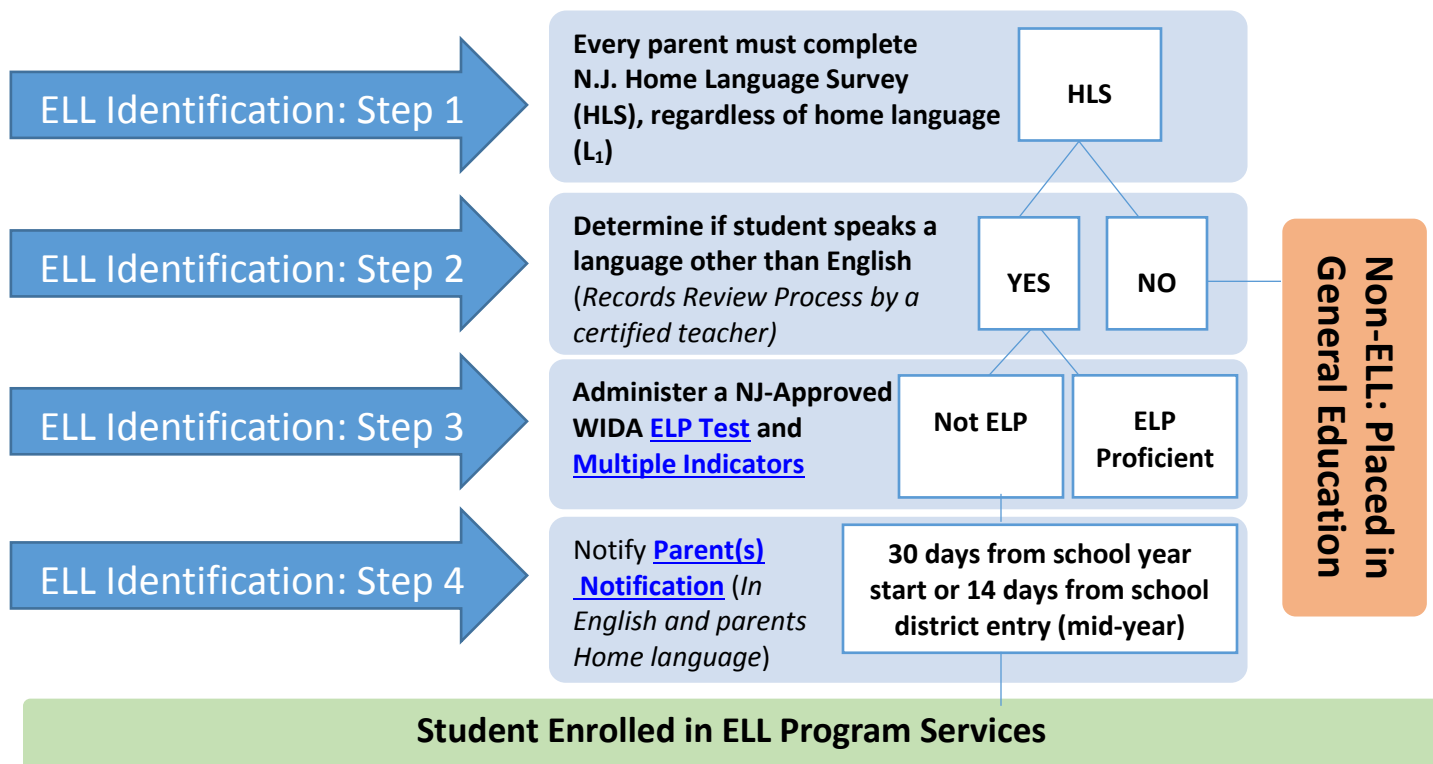


# How Are English Language Learners Registered for School?

To meet the federal and state enrollment requirements (See page 2), school districts must ensure registration and enrollment policies and practices are accessible to and understandable by all parents/guardians (See page 4). Students new to the country should be enrolled into school following the district's standard registration procedures. School districts are prohibited from: requesting any documents that may reveal a parent's or a family's immigration status; asking questions of students or parents that may expose their undocumented status; or engaging in any practices that may hinder or discourage parents from registering and enrolling their child in school. For more information see the NJDOE's statement on [Enrollment of Immigrant Students and/or Undocumented Students](#).

In addition, school districts must accurately identify any student who may be an ELL (See Figure 1). The identification of ELLs must be in compliance with New Jersey Regulations, *N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.4(f)*; *N.J.A.C. 6A:15-1.3(a)2*; *N.J.A.C. 6A:15-1.3(b)*; *N.J.A.C. 6A:15-1.3(b)*; P.L. 1995 c.327, and adhere to [federal regulatory guidance](#). For more information on identification of students, reference the [Implementing English Language Learner Program Services in New Jersey](#) document, pages 4-6, and the [N.J. ESSA State Plan](#) Appendix F, page 375.

**Figure 1: ELL Identification Process in New Jersey (For text version, See Appendix A)**



## Making Registration and Enrollment Practices Accessible Strategies and Considerations

- ✚ Employ personnel who have cultural competence (training).
- ✚ Provide registration staff with second language acquisition professional development or second language proficiency.
- ✚ Annually review state and federal regulations with registration and front office staff.
- ✚ Remind registration and front office staff to give each parent a N.J. Home Language Survey.
- ✚ Train registration staff on the process to identify students who may need English language services (and special needs services, if applicable).
- ✚ Assess native language literacy of students upon enrollment to determine if a student meets the requirements to be identified as an ELL.
- ✚ Coordinate identification of ELL students and program services with the district's Bilingual/ESL point of contact.
- ✚ Notify parent/guardians of their child's ELL program placement by mail within thirty days of identification. The notice must be dated and in English and in the language in which the parent-guardian possesses a primary speaking ability.





# How Do I Review Foreign Transcripts and Transfer Credits?

## Foreign Transcripts

Students new to the country may enter the New Jersey school system with academic credits earned from a country other than the U.S. Aligning courses from another country with content courses in New Jersey may present a challenge; however, several best practices should be employed to ensure students obtain credits for courses they have successfully completed. This is a critical step in the registration process as credits may count toward graduation requirements. A thorough review of transcripts ensures a student does not repeat coursework unnecessarily, which can preclude graduation in a timely manner.

Specific to *N.J.A.C. 6A:15-1.3(a-b)*, each district must have a process for enrolling ELLs, which includes the home language survey, a records review process, and multiple indicators for identification, that must include native language assessments to determine appropriate placement. Therefore, a district must have a process on academic records review which includes credit transfers, transcript translations, and appropriate grade placement and program service identification. ([Dear Colleague Letter on January 7, 2015](#)).

As part of implementing this process, a district must develop an evaluation procedure to translate foreign transcripts and apply earned credits to the entering student's academic record. The procedure must outline each step for translating and evaluating foreign transcripts, include guidelines for successful completion of evaluating transcripts, and detail resources for assisting school personnel with evaluating foreign transcripts. The information presented in this section and Appendix F is adapted from the Office of Youth Development and School-Community Services (OYDSCS) of the New York City Department of Education (NYC DOE) document, *Evaluating Foreign Transcripts: The A-Z Manual*.

Schools should create a written, standardized review procedure. The following steps can be used:

- Determine the person(s) responsible for evaluating foreign transcripts (evaluator);
- Establish a timeframe for the evaluation (consider state and federal timelines for identification of services, including ELL placement and special education);
- Develop specific steps and consideration for the evaluation;
  - Carefully examine all official documents for authenticity.
  - Ensure that translations are provided by a qualified source.
  - Contact the sending school, embassy, ministry of education, or other authorized agencies, when necessary.
- Interview entering students and their parents/guardians.

Once this procedure is developed, anyone charged with evaluating foreign transcripts should become familiar with it and apply it for each student who is new to the country.



### *Who is responsible for evaluating foreign transcripts?*

Schools should identify a person responsible for evaluating foreign transcripts. This person should have:

- Cultural capacity to work with families and students from another country;
- Experience with and/or knowledge of educational systems abroad, including grade levels, grades, and promotion equivalency; and
- Experience and/or knowledge of federal and state statutes and regulations, civil rights obligations, and local district policies.

Examples of an evaluator may include persons in a district or school role such as:

- Placement center staff
- School counselor
- Building administrator
- Bilingual/ESL staff
- Academic Supervisor

### *What is the timeframe for evaluation?*

School districts must not delay enrollment of any student (*N.J.A.C. 6A:22-3.3*). Timely evaluations must be conducted as to not deny any services for a student, including identification as an English language learner (ELL) and/or other needed services. Each district board of education shall notify by mail the parents of ELLs of the fact that their child is eligible for enrollment in language assistance program. *N.J.A.C. 6A:15-1.13* states, “The district board of education shall issue the notification within 30 days of the child’s identification.” The notice shall be in writing and in the language in which the parent(s) possesses a primary speaking ability, and in English.

### *What are the procedures to develop an evaluation?*

In general, the evaluator should make every effort to translate and evaluate foreign transcripts using the guidance in this resource, in addition to the procedures outlined in the district’s policy for evaluation of foreign transcripts.

The evaluator should examine the documents for authenticity. Professional credential evaluation agencies recommend considering multiple factors when verifying authenticity. First, the evaluator should look for signs of alterations such as white-outs, photo substitutions, and Photoshop qualities. Next, the evaluator should reference previously authenticated documents to compare the quality of the transcript submitted. For instance, the evaluator may check for security features such as watermarks or UV features that may be present on some transcript documents. The evaluator should also compare document size and texture. Finally, the evaluator may examine the document for inaccuracies such as fake institution, wrong or misspelled institution name, spelling mistakes, grade inconsistencies, and/or wrong rector’s signatures. Once the document is authenticated, the evaluator should maintain a copy with any notes as a reference for future authentications from the same country/school. It is important to note that some students may come from emergency situations (e.g., refugee camps) and may not have formalized documents. In these instances, the student’s prior educational context should also be considered as part of the evaluation process. A list of “Do’s and Don’ts” may help the evaluator follow the evaluation procedure (*See Figure 2*).



In addition, the evaluator should rely on the expertise of district/school personnel with the linguistic capacity to translate the information. If there is no available translator, or if the evaluator has questions about the authenticity of documents, a district may contact:

- a. A foreign credential evaluation service agency (See Appendix C). The agencies in Appendix C provide services for varying fees.
- b. A recognized community agency, embassy, or consulate, or certified private service (See Appendix D).

Appendices C and D do not represent exhaustive lists. Listing of an agency on either appendix does not represent endorsement by the NJDOE.

**Note:** Services requested from agencies should be limited to translation only and should not include evaluation of academic records. Previous academic records should be carefully evaluated based on the district's policy and standardized procedure and in accordance with New Jersey statutes and Administrative Code.

### Figure 2: Do's & Don'ts – Translating and evaluating foreign transcripts

#### Do:

- Examine documents for authenticity.
- Interview the student and parent/guardian to review the transcript and prior studies in order to obtain clarification.
- Determine eligibility for course equivalency.
- Update credit transfer on student's official transcripts.

#### Considerations

- Ensure transcripts in a language other than English are translated by a competent translator (See Appendix C and D for resources).
- Consult with Country Index (See Appendix F) to assist with conversion of grade levels.
- Notify and consult with receiving teachers and department supervisors.
- Establish a procedure for informing the student and parent of the results of the evaluation.

#### Don't:

- Accept documents with alterations not original to the document or inconsistencies. In these circumstances, further verify the authenticity of the documents.
- Use family members or students to translate documents.
- Accept paraphrased or interpretive translations or evaluation of information.
- Delay or deny grade and program placement.
- Use language as a reason for not communicating with parents.

An evaluator may also reference a grade equivalency chart. For example, Appendix F, the Country Index, lists foreign educational systems' grade levels, diploma awarded, grading system, academic year, and notes by country. This is not an exhaustive list and corresponds with Figure 3, the top 10 birth countries, other than the U.S., for ELLs enrolled in New Jersey schools K-12 (NJ SMART, SY 2016/2017). Grading

systems vary throughout one country; thus, the grading systems included in the Country index may not represent a comprehensive overview of all grading systems in a given country.

Pay close attention to the number of grade levels of schooling; some schools do not have twelve years of schooling. Close evaluation of transcripts is necessary.

If no transcripts or formal records are immediately available, temporary placement may be made using the 'Grade placement by age' chart (See Figure 4). These age/grade-level parameters help to ensure that students are not placed in a grade level far below their age, thereby minimizing the student's ability to meet grade-level standards and graduation requirements within a reasonable amount of time.

According to federal guidance outlined in the [Dear Colleague Letter on January 7, 2015](#) (page 18), careful consideration should be taken into account when determining grade placement for students with interrupted or limited formal education (SIFE/SLIFE). The Newcomer Toolkit released by the U.S. Department of Education defines a SIFE/SLIFE as "students in 4<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grades who have experienced disruptions in their education in their native countries and/or the United States such that they are one or more years behind their grade-level peers academically, and/or are unfamiliar with the ultra of schooling" (U.S. Department of Education, 2016).

**Figure 3: Number and percent of ELLs in N.J. by Birth Country (Top Ten); excluding U.S. and Puerto Rico**

Birth Country Name	Number of ELLs Enrolled (SY 16/17)	Percent of ELLs Enrolled
Dominican Republic	8854	12.7
El Salvador	2699	3.9
Honduras	2558	3.7
Guatemala	2239	3.2
India	1834	2.6
Ecuador	1797	2.6
Haiti	1374	2
Colombia	1301	1.9
Mexico	1044	1.5
Brazil	1004	1.4

**Figure 4: Grade placement by age**

Ages(s)	Level Assigned
5-10	Elementary school
11	Elementary school or middle school depending on grade level configuration of the foreign school
12-13	Middle school
14	Middle school or high school depending on grade level configuration of the foreign school
15 and older	High school

*Grade levels by age 1. Source: The District School Board of Pasco County. A Guide for the placement of students presenting foreign transcripts. (2016-2017).*

If there is conflicting information about student placement, after consultation with an interdisciplinary team, such as the guidance counselor, Bilingual/ESL Supervisor, and principal, registration staff should defer to the staff administrator (e.g., evaluator) for the final decision regarding student placement, according to the district's school board policy. Note that if the child presents with special needs, the child study team must be a part of the interdisciplinary team to ensure all requirements under the New Jersey Administrative Code for special education ([N.J.A.C. 6A:14](#)) and the federal *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004* (IDEA 2004) are met. Again, all persons should be familiar with the Office for Civil Rights guidance detailed in the [Dear Colleague Letter on January 7, 2015](#), regarding grade placement for high school-aged SIFEs. It would be inappropriate for a high-school aged student to be placed in middle school. In certain instances, additional information may be obtained from the sending school. Obtain contact information about the sending school during the parent/student interview or contact the school through the consulate office or directly from an online search.

### *What information can parents/guardians and students provide?*

Additional evaluation, including interviews with parents and students, may be necessary, particularly in the context where students come from emergency situations. Authenticating documents in the more traditional process may not be practical for some students arriving from refugee camps or other temporary locations. Interviews may help clarify which classes taken in the home country may align with courses in New Jersey. It is also an opportunity to get to know the student and the parent/guardian and understand additional needs and services that may impact program placement and services.

**Note:** An interview with parents/guardians should not be omitted because of a language barrier. Federal guidance outlined in the [Dear Colleague Letter on January 7, 2015](#) delineates a school district's obligation to ensure meaningful communication with "parent/guardians whose primary language is other than English and who have limited English proficiency in one of the four domains of language proficiency (speaking, listening, reading, or writing)" (p. 37). Communication must be in a language that is understandable to the limited English proficient (LEP) parent about any program, service, or activity of a school that is called to the attention of a non-LEP parent (*ESEA §1118(b)(1)*). If language is a barrier, the school district should enlist the assistance of a parent liaison who has command of the native language, a staff member who has additional duties as an interpreter, an outside agency, or a community agency with an established reputation for assisting families with school enrollment. In the latter option, a memorandum of agreement (MOA) may be necessary, depending on the district's policy regarding partnerships with outside agencies. Never use students as interpreters.



## Transfer Credits

Again, for students transferring from a school outside the United States, the evaluator must review the transcript or other records to award transfer credit for completed coursework in the student's home country. Refer to [pages 4 and 5](#) of this document for guidance on updating and/or developing the standardized operating procedure for evaluating foreign transcripts. Schools may use Appendix E to assist with documenting credit transfers from foreign transcripts. The decision to award transfer credit shall be based on whether the transcript and other records indicate that the work is consistent with New Jersey Student Learning Standards (NJSLS) and is of comparable scope and quality to the course content done in the district awarding the credit. Schools may also use Appendix E and F, in addition to their district policy, to determine conversion of grades and appropriate course and grade credit transfer for students with foreign transcripts. The person evaluating a foreign transcript must determine eligibility for course and/or exam waivers and transfer credits consistent with district and state policy.

### *Credit Eligibility Evaluation Examples*

In New Jersey, the teaching of world language is mandated in grades K-12 (*N.J.A.C. 6A:8-1.1(a)*). According to the standard, "all students will be able to use a world language in addition to English to engage in meaningful conversation, to understand and interpret spoken and written language, and to present information, concepts, and ideas, while also gaining an understanding of the perspectives of other cultures. Through language study, they will make connections with other content areas, compare the language and culture studied with their own, and participate in home and global communities." ([World Language Standard Learning Progressions](#)).

There is no exemption to meeting the expectation of the NJSLS for World Language. All students, including ELLs, must meet the expectation of the standard. However, a student identified as an ELL and participating in a bilingual or ESL program is able to meet the expectation of the world language standard through successful completion of their bilingual/ESL coursework. Several options may be considered with regard to [satisfying the five-credit high school graduation requirement](#) for world language, including: 1) electing to study a world language other than English; 2) using their native language to satisfy the requirement; or 3) developing or enhancing heritage language in an out-of-school program. In addition, academic proficiency in a foreign language may be assessed by administering a language proficiency test to determine appropriate placement. Under Option Two (discussed in more detail below), district boards of education shall choose from among the following assessment options to determine if students have achieved the level of language proficiency designated as Novice-High as defined by the ACTFL and recognized as fulfilling the world languages requirement of the NJSLS:

- A. The STAMP online assessment;
- B. The OPI or MOPI; or
- C. NJDOE-approved locally designed competency-based assessments. (*N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1(a)(2)(ii)(2)*).

**Note:** *N.J.A.C. 6A:8-1.1:* The NJSLS specify expectations in nine content areas, including world languages. The standards are further delineated by cumulative progress indicators that outline what students

should know and be able to do at benchmark grades four, eight, and twelve. *Reference:* [World Language Standard Learning Progressions](#).

**Individualized learning opportunities:** According to Administrative Code (*N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1(a)(2)(i)*), the 120-credit requirement may be met in whole or part through completion of individualized learning opportunities. Thus, a student may demonstrate eligibility for credits awarded through completion of a range of experiences.

Once credit transfers are determined, districts must:

- Follow established district procedures for ensuring that transfer credit is updated on the student’s official transcript;
- Establish a procedure for informing student and parent/guardians of the results of the foreign transcript evaluation;
- Maintain all documentation in the student’s official cumulative file; and
- Notify and consult with receiving teachers and department supervisors.

**Note:** It is important to consider all factors to avoid improper placement of students with foreign transcripts.

**Improper placement may result when school staff:**

- Rely solely on report cards and the transfer card;
- Receive inaccurate documentation of academic history;
- Disregard native language academic strengths and areas in need of improvement; and
- Disregard gaps in education.

**Some consequences of improper placement are:**

- Loss of instructional time;
- Unnecessary retention; and
- Erroneous referrals to Intervention and Referral Services (I&RS).

*Source: New Brunswick Public Schools, Office of Bilingual/ESL/World Language Education Placement Center.*

## Grade Level and Promotion Considerations

According to *N.J.A.C. 6A:8-1.1(b)*, “District boards of education shall ensure that standards, assessments, curriculum, instruction, and professional development are aligned in a local support system that enables all students to achieve 21st century outcomes through the establishment of student-centered learning environments that provide opportunities for academically diverse students.” District boards shall support students in staying on track to meet the indicators at benchmark grade levels delineated in the NJSLs (*N.J.A.C. 6A:8-1.1(a)(2)*). All students must receive the necessary instruction to learn the NJSLs. Promotions to the next grade are established by school district policy and aligned with state regulations. Additionally, promotions are based on credit accumulation and successful completion of course work (i.e., grades). The school district policy must set the minimum criteria for promotion from the student’s current grade to the next grade.

While grades demonstrate a student’s proficiency in the NJSLs, grades may not completely reflect the entire picture, particularly for students who primarily speak a language other than English. To meet *N.J.A.C. 6A:8-1.1(b)*, school districts may employ [Universal Design for Learning](#) (UDL) to give all individuals an opportunity to learn. UDL is a flexible approach that can be customized and adjusted for individual needs, including linguistic. In addition, schools may consider modified grading procedures for ELLs who are taking subject areas courses in English and who demonstrate understanding of the subject matter, in spite of language barrier. See Figures 5 and 5a for grading considerations and a district-level example of a modified grading policy that takes into consideration language.

Some school districts may also follow an “ungraded” approach, where students track progress based on credits earned and exams passed, but do not associate with particular grade levels. This may be particularly helpful for schools that establish newcomer programs. Newcomer programs support recent immigrants with little or no formal education in their native countries to orient to U.S. schools and, typically, build their English language skills as well as provide an emotional and social safe haven during the newcomer student’s adjustment period. Some districts use newcomer programs as a bridge to general education classrooms. The structure, curriculum, and length of newcomer programs may vary widely. In New Jersey, school districts may establish an alternative program, such as a newcomer program, for students who come from other countries over-aged and under-schooled. The process requires board approval according to *N.J.A.C. 6A:16-9.1(a)*; no application process by the district is necessary. New Jersey regulations also outline program and staff requirements, student placement, minimum enrollment period, and other criteria. For more information about newcomer students and SIFEs, visit the NJDOE’s webpage, [Resources for Newcomers and Students with an Interrupted Formal Education](#).

**Note:** The U.S. Department of Education offers guidance regarding newcomer programs. Specifically, the guidance warns districts operating newcomer programs or schools to take particular care to avoid unnecessary segregation ([Dear Colleague Letter on January 7, 2015](#), p. 23).

#### Figure 5: Considerations for English Language Learners Grading

These recommendations are for English language learners who are in classrooms where English is the predominant language.

- ELL student proficiency levels range from 1-6, beginning at the non-verbal and word level, and incrementally progressing toward grade-level proficiency. See the [“Can Do Descriptors”](#) for more information.
- When determining at which level to place a student, consider level of proficiency, grade-level expectations, native language skills, class placement, program structure, and other factors.
- Each student is different. What may work with one student may not work with another student. That is why there is overlap in the proficiency level bands.
- Content area teachers should work in consultation with ESL teachers to evaluate student performance.
- Research suggests that grade retention because of language proficiency and academic background can have negative effects on students (Eastern Stream Center on Resources and Training, 1994, p.26). Keep this in mind when grading English language learners.

For additional information regarding implementing these considerations in a sample grading policy, please visit a [Sample District English as a Second Language \(ESL\) Student Grading Recommendations Grades K – 12](#).





### Figure 5a: Example of School District Grading Procedures for English Language Learners

Grading policy is intended to define modifications in grading necessary for ELLs who are taking subject area courses in English. Students who are in a bilingual program are exempt.

- Students may need modified grading for some subjects such as health, science and social studies, but not for others such as art, music or physical education.
- At the elementary and middle school levels, a student's grade may be augmented by grades from the ESL teacher.
- If an ELL is capable of earning a "C" or better on the traditional grading scale, then the earned letter grade(s) should be issued to the ELL. Otherwise, an ELL should be issued a passing grade of "P" (instead of a "D") if the ELL demonstrates basic understanding of the subject matter, even if the student's ability to express that understanding in clear and accurate English is limited.
- If the student's limited English proficiency prevents even basic understanding of subject matter, then the student shall be issued a grade of "LB," representing "language barrier."
- While a grade of "LB" may be issued during any quarter, it may only be used as a final grade at the elementary and middle school levels. At the middle and high school levels, "LB" could also be used as a comment in conjunction with the grade issues or earned.
- A high school ELL who earns a final grade of "P" or better for a given course will earn credit toward graduation for that course, but courses for which an ELL earned a final grade of "P" shall not be included in tabulation of the ELL's grade point average or class rank.
- A high school ELL who has not demonstrated at least minimum understanding of a subject shall be issued a final grade of "AU," signifying that the student attended but audited the class, and therefore, earned no credit. In such case, the ELL would have to repeat the audited class in order to earn credit.
- Elementary or middle school ELLs who do not demonstrate at least minimal understanding of a subject should be issued a final grade of "LB."

Any modifications in grading should only be made after consultation between the ELL's subject area teacher(s) and the ESL teacher. Teachers shall base their estimation of a student's effort and understanding of the subject matter based on the WIDA Can-Do indicators for the appropriate grade level cluster, as well as the WIDA speaking and writing rubrics (For more information, see [WIDA](#)). Consultation should occur at least once per marking period.

**Note:** Figure 5a includes excerpts from a district grading policy and does not constitute the entirety of the Grading Procedures for ELLs. Source: Vineland Board of Education. R2624 grading system policy. Revised September 28, 2015.

Students transferring to a New Jersey high school from a non-New Jersey school are assigned an initial grade level by the district's enrollment office. Upon receiving a transfer student, high schools should carefully evaluate transcripts and other academic records and award high school transfer course and exam credits according to the guidelines in the section on Credit Transfer. This evaluation should be conducted in a timely manner to ensure that the student is scheduled for needed courses and timeline requirements are met (e.g., ELL placement services, SPED identification). Upon evaluating the transcript and awarding credit transfer, a school may change grade level to meet student needs, as appropriate.

# What Are the Current High School Graduation Requirements for New Jersey Students?

## Multiple and Diverse Paths to Student Success

In New Jersey, the graduation requirement includes participation in a program of study of not fewer than 120 credit courses designed to meet all of the New Jersey's standards (*N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1*). The NJDOE recognizes the diverse trajectory students may require to earn a high school diploma (See Figure 6). The goal is for every New Jersey student to graduate with a high school diploma. In 2016, New Jersey passed the [N.J. State Seal of Biliteracy](#) to recognize high school graduates who have demonstrated linguistic proficiency in one or more languages in addition to English. For students who may need a nontraditional route, a state-issued diploma such as GED, Hi-Set, and TASC are also available.

Figure 6: Diploma Options

Diploma Type/Recognition	Student Eligibility	Description/Additional Information
High School Diploma	Any student who meets the graduation requirements ( <i>N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1</i> )	<i>Standards and Assessments, Portfolio Appeals, Option Two</i>
High School Diploma with Seal of Biliteracy	World language and English language learner students who meet the <a href="#">criteria</a>	Information about <a href="#">how students may demonstrate proficiency in English and one or more additional languages</a>
State-Issued High School Diploma (GED, Hi-Set, TASC)	Individuals age 16 or older who are no longer enrolled in school and have not achieved a high school credential	Pursuant to <i>N.J.A.C. 6A:20-1.4</i> , the Commissioner shall award a state-issued high school diploma based on achieving the Statewide standard score on the General Education Development test (GED) or other adult education assessment ( <i>N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.2(c)</i> ).

*Diploma Options*

## Standards (Credits) and Assessments Requirements

Pursuant to *N.J.A.C. 6A:15-1.11*, all ELLs shall satisfy requirements for high school graduation according to *N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1(a)*. In addition, state law requires students to pass a statewide assessment to graduate from high school. During the transition to PARCC, students have had the ability to satisfy [state graduation assessment requirements](#) by demonstrating proficiency in alternate ways, depending on the student's graduation cohort.



### Alternative Graduation Assessments

The NJDOE has allowed students until the Class of 2019 to demonstrate high school proficiency by achieving certain scores on a number of alternative assessments to PARCC, such as the SAT, PSAT, ACT, Accuplacer, [Accuplacer Write Placer ESL](#) or ASVAB-AFQT.

**Note:** Until 2019, the Accuplacer Write Placer ESL can be used as a substitute competency assessment for ELLs. The Accuplacer Write Placer ESL is an English test of writing for ELLs. The score scale for Accuplacer Write Placer ESL is 0-6. The passing score for meeting the English language arts assessment requirement for graduation is equal to or greater than 4. All other graduation requirements (math assessment, credit requirements, etc.) remain unchanged for students who meet graduation requirements using the Accuplacer Write Placer ESL. See the College Board's [Accuplacer ESL webpage](#) for more information on the Accuplacer Writer Placer ESL.

### *Graduation Portfolio Appeal*

ELLs currently enrolled in a language assistance program, who entered a U.S. school from a foreign country in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade or later, may be eligible to appeal the assessment requirement by filing a portfolio appeal. Students who are on track to meet all graduation requirements except the assessment requisite may file a portfolio appeal. The process for [submitting a portfolio appeal](#) is detailed in an NJDOE Broadcast [memo](#), "Portfolio Appeals Process for Students Who Have Not Met Their Assessment Graduation Requirement," sent to district administrators December 12, 2017.

**Note:** The appeal must include constructed response tasks (CRTs) in the subject area the student has not satisfied academically: mathematics and/or English language arts (ELA). ELLs currently in language assistance programs may address CRTs in their native language. It is the district's responsibility to translate CRTs into an ELL's native language. An ELL may respond in his/her native language, and then the district must translate or transcribe the student's responses and the CRTs into English before sending the PARCC portfolio appeal to the NJDOE.

### *Option Two*

The 120-credit requirement may be met in whole or part by program completion, commonly referred to as "Option Two." The NJSLS establish a core body of knowledge and skills that all students must complete to earn a high school diploma. The NJDOE acknowledges, however, that all students will not achieve the standards in the same way or at the same pace. [Option Two](#) is an alternative to traditional high school courses and involves in-depth experiences that focus on student interest and abilities. *N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1(a)(1)(ii)* provides the regulatory framework for district boards of education to adopt policies and procedures for implementation of Option Two. Districts should consider how the flexibility afforded by the use of Option Two will provide enriching, stimulating, and meaningful learning experiences that meet the educational needs of diverse groups, including ELLs. Examples of programs currently may include dual or concurrent enrollment programs (e.g., early college high school).

**Note:** Section 8101(17) of the *ESEA* defines "early college high school" as a partnership between at least one Local Education Agency (LEA) and at least one institution of higher education that allows participants to simultaneously complete requirements toward earning a high school diploma and earn not less than 12 credits that are transferable to the institution of higher education in the partnership as part of an organized course of study toward a postsecondary degree or credential at no cost to the participant or the participant's family.

# Appendices

## Appendix A

### ELL Identification Process in New Jersey – Text Version

School districts must accurately identify any student who may be an ELL. The identification of English language learners (ELLs) must be in compliance with New Jersey Regulations, *N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.4(f)*; *N.J.A.C. 6A:15-1.3(a)2*; *N.J.A.C. 6A:15-1.3(b)*; *N.J.A.C. 6A:15-1.3(b)*; P.L. 1995 c.327. The following steps outline the process for ELL identification.

#### Step 1: Standardized New Jersey Home-Language Survey

- Upon a student’s enrollment, the school administers the statewide home language survey.
- Based on the results of the statewide home-language survey, the school initiates the standardized identification screening process.

#### Step 2: Standardized Identification Screening Process

- A certified teacher screens any student whose native language is not English to distinguish students who are proficient in English and, therefore, need no further testing.
- The school implements the English learner identification process if the screening process suggests the student may not be proficient in English.

#### Step 3: [Multiple Indicators](#) for Identification

- The school uses the statewide identification criteria, as determined by [NJDOE-approved WIDA language proficiency assessments](#), to confirm a student’s classification as an ELL. The criteria are:
  1. A composite proficiency level below 4.5 on the W-APT, WIDA Screener, or WIDA MODEL; and
  2. The use of at least one additional indicator that demonstrates the student meets the definition of an ELL. A certified teacher must:
    - Assess the student’s level of reading in English;
    - Review the student’s previous academic performance, including his/her performance on standardized tests in English, if applicable; and
    - Review the input of teaching staff who educate ELLs to determine eligibility.

#### Step 4: Parent Notification (In English and parent’s home language)

- [Parent notification letter](#) must be provided no later than 30 calendar days after the beginning of the school year or within the first two weeks of placement in a language instruction education program (ESEA Section 1112(e)(3)(A), 1112(e)(3)(B)).
- The notice and information provided must be in an understandable and uniform format and, to the extent practicable, provided in a language that the parents can understand (ESEA Section 1112(e)(4)).



## Appendix B

### English Language Learners and School Enrollment FAQ

The New Jersey Department of Education's (NJDOE) Office of Supplemental Educational Programs developed this Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) guidance document to help school districts better understand the rights of all students and their parents/guardians, in particular English language learners (ELLs).

Below are some frequently asked questions that parents/guardians may have regarding registering their child, translating foreign transcripts, and graduation requirements in a New Jersey school. It is the responsibility of the school administrators to know, disseminate, and educate all staff, parents/guardians, and the community regarding students' right to education.

#### *Registering English Language Learners*

- Q. I and/or my child is undocumented. Can I register my child for school?**
- A.** Yes. Under federal law, all children in the United States are entitled to a public elementary and secondary education regardless of their race, color, national origin, citizenship, or immigration status of their parents/guardian. ([Dear Colleague Letter](#); [Plyler v. Doe](#), 457 US 202 (1982)).
- Q. Must a district register unaccompanied minors?**
- A.** Yes (*See response to previous question*). For more information and resources on unaccompanied minors, see the NJDOE's [Unaccompanied Immigrant Children](#) webpage.
- Q. Who is responsible for helping me to register my child?**
- A.** School staff are responsible for helping you register your child. School officials are obligated under federal law to provide equal educational opportunities to all children residing in their districts. This means school districts must make registration and enrollment processes accessible to all parents/guardians.
- Q. My school district is requesting state identification or a Social Security number to register my child. Is this permissible?**
- A.** No. School districts are prohibited from requesting any documents that may reveal a parent's/guardian's or a family's immigration status, ask questions of students or parents that may expose their undocumented status, or conduct any practices that may hinder or discourage parents/guardians from registering and enrolling their child in school. (See [Dear Colleague letter](#) from the U.S. Department of Education dated May 8, 2014.)



**Q. Is my child eligible for preschool programs in my neighborhood?**

A. All district boards of education with early childhood programs must also provide appropriate instructional programs to eligible preschool English language learners (ELLs) based on need, according to the [New Jersey Preschool Program Implementation Guidelines](#).

**Q. Our family is homeless. Can I still enroll my child in school even if I do not have a proof of residence?**

A. Yes. The federal *McKinney-Vento Act*, as amended by the *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)*, and state regulations at *N.J.A.C. 6A:17* mandate immediate enrollment of students who lack a fixed, regular, or adequate housing and are considered homeless. School districts may not require that students experiencing homelessness present residency affidavits as a condition of enrollment. Specifically, [students experiencing homelessness](#) are presumed to be best served by their school of origin, except when contrary to the request of the child's or youth's parent or guardian, or the youth in the case of an unaccompanied youth. As such, the federal definition of the school of origin, which is the school the homeless child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled, has been expanded to include preschools and "receiving schools."

**Q. My nephew/niece is living with me. His/her parents are overseas. Can I enroll him/her in my local school district?**

A. Yes (*See response to previous question*). Your niece's/nephew's circumstance may be considered homeless under the *McKinney-Vento Act*. If the students do not meet McKinney-Vento eligibility requirements pursuant to the regulations at *N.J.A.C. 6A:17*, specifically *N.J.A.C. 6A:17-2.2*, they are to be enrolled pursuant to the regulations at *N.J.A.C. 6A:22-3.2*. A student is eligible to attend the school district pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 18A:38-1.b* if he or she is kept in the home of a person other than the student's parent or guardian, and the person is domiciled in the school district and is supporting the student without remuneration as if the student were his or her own child. Additional information may be required in determining which regulations will guide the enrollment of the students.

**Q. My child has not received his/her vaccinations. Can I still enroll my child in the school district?**

A. Yes. [Schools must not delay or deny attendance](#) based on their non-receipt of medical information, although attendance at school may be deferred while awaiting immunization records (*N.J.A.C. 6A:22-4.1(h)*; *N.J.A.C. 8:57-4*).

**Q. My child has a disability, can he/she still receive English language services?**

A. Yes, neither federal nor state regulations prohibit a student who is receiving ESL services from being evaluated for special education services. Conversely, a student who is determined eligible for special education services can continue to receive bilingual/ESL services. For more information, see the [Special Education and ELLs FAQ](#).

For more information about registering your child in a New Jersey school, refer to the NJDOE's Bilingual/ESL Policy Initiatives in [English](#) or [Spanish \(En Español\)](#).



## *Translating Foreign Transcripts for English Language Learners*

**Q. My school district will not accept my child’s foreign transcripts. Is this permissible?**

**A.** No. In addition to the federal law, New Jersey Administrative Code (*N.J.A.C. 6A:22-3.3*) also prohibits the barring of any student from public elementary and secondary schools on the basis of immigration/visa status, except for students on F-1 visas. Districts should continue to enroll all students who are between the ages of 5 and 20 who are domiciled in the district or who are otherwise entitled to attend pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 18A:38.1*, and the implementing regulations, *N.J.A.C. 6A:22-3.2, et seq.*

**Q. My school district will not translate my child’s foreign transcripts. Is this my responsibility?**

**A.** No. It is the responsibility of the school district to review any prior academic records of students entering the district. Therefore, it is the district’s responsibility to translate the foreign transcript. The NJDOE determined that practices that incur additional costs for parents/guardians to register their child for school violate the rights of students and are discriminatory. In 2009, the [New Jersey Commissioner of Education decided](#) that a school district’s “contention that it was not qualified to review school records from a foreign high school – was arbitrary, capricious, and unreasonable, and additionally constituted discrimination based on the national origin.” (p.4). In other words, all school districts are required to review educational records, regardless of the language of records or the country from which records came.

**Q. My child completed the 9<sup>th</sup> grade in my home country. The school district told me she has to repeat 9<sup>th</sup> grade because her credits do not count. Is this permissible?**

**A.** No. Specific to *N.J.A.C. 6A:15-1.3(a-b)*, each district must have a process for enrolling ELLs, which includes the home language survey, a records review process, and multiple indicators for identification, that must include native language assessments to determine appropriate placement. Therefore, a district must have a process on academic records review which includes credit transfers, transcript translations, and appropriate grade placement and program service identification. ([Dear Colleague Letter on January 7, 2015](#)).

**Q. My child is 17 and completed high school in our native country. Can I still enroll my child in a high school in New Jersey so that he/she can obtain her high school diploma in the U.S.?**

**A.** According to *N.J.S.A 18A:38-1*, public schools shall be free of charge to any person over 5 and under 20 years of age, who is domiciled within the school district. Furthermore, school districts may not discriminate based on national origin. Thus, a child who is under 20 years of age and has completed high school in his/her native country *may* be entitled to enroll in a high school in New Jersey. However, this is a fact-sensitive inquiry. The district must determine if the student’s education in his/her native country was sufficient to meet the goals embodied in a New Jersey state-endorsed high school diploma. [In a 2009 case](#), the New Jersey Commissioner of Education set forth a non-exhaustive list of factors that public school districts may consider in making this determination. Only if the district concludes that the student has not received the requisite education is the student entitled to enroll in the district to obtain a New Jersey state-endorsed diploma.



## Graduation Requirements for English Language Learners

- Q. My district will not allow my ELL child to take Advanced Placement (AP) courses. Is this permissible?**
- A.** No. According to *N.J.A.C. 6A:15-1.4*, districts must ensure that all students have equitable access to any instructional program available (e.g., magnet, gifted and talented, special education); extracurricular programs, sports, and clubs; ROTC; student exchange programs; and supports and other services (e.g., tutoring, counseling).
- Q. My child was unable to attend middle school in my home country. Is there a program to help my child catch up to peers in his/her grade level?**
- A.** Yes. Some students may have had interrupted or limited formal education. These students are considered SIFEs/SLIFEs (students with interrupted or limited formal education). Districts must support all students enrolling in the district. A district may support SIFEs/SLIFEs with an alternative program, which may include a newcomer program that can be used as a bridge to general education classes. For more information, turn to the NJDOE’s [Alternative Programs for SIFEs/SLIFEs](#) webpage.
- Q. My child is 15 and was unable to attend middle school. What grade will he start here in N.J.?**
- A.** According to the U.S. Department of Education and Office of Civil Rights [Dear Colleague Letter on January 7, 2015](#), “School districts should place English language learners (ELLs) in age-appropriate grade levels so they can have meaningful access to their grade-appropriate curricula and an equal opportunity to graduate.” The guidance further clarifies, “It would be inappropriate for a district to place high school-aged SIFE students in middle or elementary school campus programs because this would not permit SIFE students to meet high school grade-level standards and graduation requirements within a reasonable amount of time and the placements would not be age-appropriate.” The district will make an informed decision on the appropriate grade-level placement for a new student based on a complete review of the student’s prior academic experience.
- Q. Is there another way for students to meet graduation requirements besides taking traditional classes?**
- A.** Yes. The NJDOE acknowledges that not all students may achieve the standards in the same manner or at the same pace. A district may permit an alternative learning experience to enable students to fulfill the expectations set forth in the NJSLS.

[Option Two](#) (*N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1(a)(1)(ii)*) of the high school graduation requirements allows local school districts to design and/or approve educational experiences that serve as an alternative to traditional instruction and provide meaningful learning experiences that support student achievement of the NJSLS. Option Two allows schools to provide a superior education for all students through the use of multiple and diverse paths.

Consult with your district for more information on Option Two learning experiences.



## Appendix C

### Foreign Credential Evaluation Services

The following private agencies provide foreign credential evaluation services for varying fees. This is not an exhaustive list and does not represent endorsement by the New Jersey Department of Education.

<p><b><u><a href="#">Center for Applied Research Evaluation &amp; Education, Inc.</a></u></b>  P. O. Box 18358  Anaheim, CA 92817  Phone: 714-237-9272</p>	<p><b><u><a href="#">Foundation for International Service, Inc.</a></u></b>  505 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue South, Suite 101  Edmonds, WA 98020  Phone: 425-248-2255 ext. 10</p>
<p><b><u><a href="#">Educational Credential Evaluators, Inc.</a></u></b>  P.O. Box 541070  Milwaukee, WI 53203-3470  Phone: 414-289-3400</p>	<p><b><u><a href="#">Globe Language Services, Inc.</a></u></b>  305 Broadway, Suite 401  New York, NY 10007  Phone: 212-227-1994</p>
<p><b><u><a href="#">Education Evaluators International</a></u></b>  120-34 Queens Blvd., Suite 300  Kew Gardens, NY 11415  Phone: 401-521-5340</p>	<p><b><u><a href="#">International Consultants of Delaware</a></u></b>  3600 Market Street, Suite 450  Philadelphia, PA 19104-2651  Phone: 215-243-5858</p>
<p><b><u><a href="#">Educational Perspectives</a></u></b>  P.O. Box A3462  Chicago, IL 60661-3462  Phone: 312-421-9300</p>	<p><b><u><a href="#">International Education Research Foundation, Inc.</a></u></b>  P.O. Box 3665  Culver City, CA 90231-3665  Phone: 310-258-9451</p>
<p><b><u><a href="#">Educational Records Evaluation Service</a></u></b>  601 University Avenue, Suite 127  Sacramento, CA 95825-6738  Phone: 916-921-0790</p>	<p><b><u><a href="#">International Education Consultants</a></u></b>  7101 SW 102 Avenue  Miami, FL 33173  Phone: 305-273-1616</p>
<p><b><u><a href="#">Evaluation Service, Inc.</a></u></b>  333 W. North Avenue, Suite 284  Chicago, IL 60610-1293  Phone: 847-477-8569</p>	<p><b><u><a href="#">SpanTran: The Evaluation Company</a></u></b>  2400 Augusta Drive, Suite 451  Houston, TX 77057  Phone: 713-266-8805</p>
<p><b><u><a href="#">Foreign Academic Credentials Service (FACS), Inc.</a></u></b>  P.O. Box 400  Glen Carbon, IL 62034  Phone: 618-656-5291</p>	<p><b><u><a href="#">World Education Services</a></u></b>  Attention: Document Center  P.O. Box 5087  New York, NY 10274-5087  Phone: 212-966-6311</p>



## Appendix D

### Embassies and Consulates

The following list of embassies and consulates provides contact information for potential partnerships to assist with various international and immigrant communities. The list is organized by the top ten birth countries of ELLs in New Jersey.

For additional community resources, you may also reference the [NJDOE's Resource Guide for Adult English Language Learners](#).

Country	Embassy	Consulate
<b>Brazil</b>	<a href="#">Brazilian Embassy</a> 3006 Massachusetts Avenue NW Washington, DC 20008-3634 T: 202-238-2700	Brazilian Consulate General 1185 Avenue of the Americas 21st Floor New York, NY 10036 T: 917-777-7777
<b>Colombia</b>	<a href="#">Embassy of Colombia</a> 1724 Massachusetts Avenue NW Washington, D.C. 20036 T: 202-387-8338	Consulate General of Colombia 10 East 46th Street New York, NY 10017 T: 212-949-9898
<b>Dominican Republic</b>	<a href="#">Embassy of the Dominican Republic</a> 1715 22nd Street NW Washington, DC 20008 T: 202-332-6280	Dominican Consulate 1501 Broadway New York, NY 10036 T: 212-768-2480
<b>Ecuador</b>	<a href="#">Ecuador Embassy</a> 2535 15th Street, NW Washington, D.C. 20009 T: 202-234-7200	Consulate General of Ecuador 800 Second Avenue, Suite 600 New York, NY 10017 T: 212-808-0170
<b>El Salvador</b>	<a href="#">Embassy of El Salvador</a> 1400 16th Street NW Washington, DC 20036 T: 202-595-7500	Consulate General of El Salvador 46 Park Avenue New York, NY 10016 T: 212-889-3608
<b>Guatemala</b>	<a href="#">Embassy of Guatemala</a> 2200 R Street NW Washington, DC 20008 T: 202-745-4993	Consulate General of Guatemala 8124 Georgia Avenue Silver Spring, MD 20008 T: 202-745-4952
<b>Haiti</b>	<a href="#">Embassy of the Republic of Haiti</a> 2311 Massachusetts Avenue NW Washington, DC 20008 T: 202-332-4090	Consulate General of Haiti 271 Madison Avenue, Suite 5 New York, NY 10016 T: 212-697-9767
<b>Honduras</b>	<a href="#">Embassy of Honduras</a> 3007 Tilden Street NW Washington, DC 20008 T: 202-966-7702	Consulate General of Honduras 80 M Street NW Washington, DC T: 202-842-2841



Country	Embassy	Consulate
<b>India</b>	<a href="#">Embassy of India</a> 2107 Massachusetts Avenue NW Washington, DC 20008 T: 202-939-7000	Consulate General of India 3 East 64th Street New York, NY 10021 T: 212-774-0600
<b>Mexico</b>	<a href="#">Embassy of Mexico</a> 1911 Pennsylvania Avenue NW Washington, DC 20006 T: 202-728-1600	Consulate General of Mexico 125 23 Street NW Washington, DC 20037 T: 202-736-1000

*List of embassies and consulates contact information*



## Appendix E

### Sample Credits Determination Checklist

Student ID \_\_\_\_\_  
 First Name \_\_\_\_\_

School Year \_\_\_\_\_  
 Last Name \_\_\_\_\_

New Jersey Graduation Credit Requirements	Country (Specify) _____
<p>Below is a list of the New Jersey minimum graduation requirements by content area (120 credits) set forth in <i>N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1</i>. Note: Option II as set forth in <i>N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1(a)1ii</i> can be used in any content area.</p> <p><small>Note: The 120 credit total is greater than the sum of the individual requirements above to allow for student electives.</small></p>	<p>Provide verbatim translation of the title of the course from the home country that has been determined to be equivalent to the state level requirement. Attach documentation.</p>
<p><b>20 credits English language arts/literacy</b>  <small>*Align grade 9-12 2016 New Jersey Student Learning Standards for English Language Arts</small></p>	
<p><b>15 credits mathematics (or grade content equivalent)</b>            Algebra I            Geometry            3<sup>rd</sup> Year math</p>	
<p><b>15 credits science (or grade content equivalent)</b>            Laboratory biology/life science            Lab/Inquiry-Based Science course including chemistry, environmental science, or physics            Lab/Inquiry-Based Science</p>	
<p><b>15 credits social studies</b> <small>Satisfy N.J.S.A. 18A:35-1,2</small>            World History            US History            US History</p>	
<p>2.5 credits in financial, economic, business, and entrepreneurial literacy</p>	
<p><b>3.75 credits in health, safety, and physical education per year of enrollment</b>  <small>150 minutes per week, N.J.S.A. 18A:35-5,7 and 8</small></p>	
<p><b>5 credits visual and performing arts</b></p>	
<p><b>5 credits world languages</b>  <small>Option II as set forth in N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1 (a)2ii(2) can be used</small></p>	
<p><b>5 credits in 21<sup>st</sup> century life and careers, or career-technical education</b></p>	
<p><b>Evaluator Name &amp; Title</b></p>	<p><b>Signature, Date</b></p>



## Appendix F

### Country Index

The following list is adapted from the New York City Department of Education's [Evaluating Foreign Transcripts: The A-Z Manual](#) and [A Guide for the Placement of Students Presenting Foreign Transcripts](#), developed by the District School Board of Pasco County. A comprehensive list of countries can be found in these documents.

**Note:** The following country index contains the top 10 birth countries, other than Puerto Rico and the U.S., for ELLs enrolled in New Jersey schools K-12 (See Figure 3, page 8) (N.J. Smart, SY 2016/2017). As noted on page 8, grading systems may vary widely within one country across various regions of the country. This country index does not represent a comprehensive overview of all grading systems in any given country listed. As a reminder, the number of grade levels of schooling may differ from the traditional twelve years of schooling in the U.S. Close attention to variations is necessary for appropriate translation and evaluation of foreign transcripts.

Country	Levels (Primary)	Levels (Secondary)	Diploma Awarded	Grading System	Academic Year	Country Notes
<b>Brazil</b>	<b>Brazil:</b> (1 <sup>o</sup> Grãu) 1 to 8  <b>US Equivalent:</b> 1 to 8	<b>Brazil:</b> (2 <sup>o</sup> Grãu) 1 <sup>a</sup> 2 <sup>a</sup> 3 <sup>a</sup> (Série)  <b>US Equivalent:</b> 9 10 11 *(12)	Certificado de Conclusão do 2 <sup>o</sup> Grãu” “Diploma de Escola Normal” “Diploma de Escola Técnica”	A = 9 – 10 (5) B = 7 – 8.9 (4) C = 5 – 6.9 (3) D = 3 – 4.9 (2) F = 1 – 2.9 (1)	March to November	Compulsory education: Age 7 to 14. Grades 1 - 8  Adult literacy: 81%

**Notes:** There is no tracking in Brazilian schools; all classes have the same curriculum and program. Students must have an overall average of 5 for promotion. The school year is divided into two semesters, five days a week, 7:00 AM to noon. High school students have some special classes and tests on Saturday.



Country	Levels (Primary)	Levels (Secondary)	Diploma Awarded	Grading System	Academic Year	Country Notes
Colombia	<p><b>Colombia:</b> 1 – 5</p> <p><b>U.S. Equivalent:</b> 1 – 5</p>	<p><b>Colombia:</b> Secondary Basic Cycle – 1, 2, 3, 4 or 6, 7, 8, 9</p> <p>Secondary Advanced Cycle – 5, 6 or 10, 11</p> <p><b>U.S. Equivalent:</b> 6, 7, 8, 9  10, 11, (12)</p>	<p>“Bachiller” “Bachillerato”</p>	<p>A+/A (Superior ) = 10 – 9.5 B+/B (Excellent) = 9.4 – 8.5 C+/C (Good) = 7.2 – 8.4 D+/D (Satisfactory/Pass ) = 5.9 – 4.5 F (Fail) = 4.4 – 0</p> <p>* If a student receives a grade of below 6 in three subjects, the entire school year must be repeated.</p>	<p>Calendar A: February – November</p> <p>Calendar B: September - June</p>	<p>Sobresaliente Outstanding, Superior = A+</p> <p>Excelente Excellent = A/B+</p> <p>Compulsory education: Age 5 to 15; Grades 1 – 5</p> <p>Adult literacy: 87%</p>

**Notes:** There are 200 days of school per year over 40 weeks, but there are many school holidays. Calendar A is used in most of the country; vacation is from June 15 to July 15 and there is another vacation in December and January. Calendar B is used in the southwest part of the country; vacation is from December 16 to January 15, and again in July and August.

Country	Levels (Primary)	Levels (Secondary)	Diploma Awarded	Grading System	Academic Year	Country Notes
Dominican Republic	<p><b>Dominican Republic:</b> 1 – 6</p> <p><b>U.S. Equivalent</b> 1 – 6</p>	<p><b>Dominican Republic:</b> Intermediate 7, 8</p> <p>Secondary 1, 2, 3, 4</p> <p><b>U.S. Equivalent</b> 7, 8</p> <p>9, 10, 11, 12</p> <p><b>Dominican Republic:</b> Basic Cycle 1, 2, 3, 4</p> <p>Higher Cycle 5, 6</p> <p><b>U.S. Equivalent</b> 7, 8, 8, 10</p> <p>11, 12</p>	“Bachiller”	<p>A = 85 – 100</p> <p>B = 70 – 84</p> <p>C = 55 – 69</p> <p>D = 40 – 54</p> <p>F = 0 – 39</p>	September - June	<p>Compulsory education: Age 7 to 13</p> <p>Adult literacy: 83%</p>



Country	Levels (Primary)	Levels (Secondary)	Diploma Awarded	Grading System	Academic Year	Country Notes
Ecuador	Ecuador 1 – 6	Ecuador Secondary Basic Cycle 1, 2, 3	Bachillerato en Ciencias Bachillerato en Humanidades	A = 19 – 20 B = 16 – 18 C = 14 – 15 D = 12 – 13 F = 0 – 11	October - July  *May vary by country region	Compulsory education: Age 6 to 14; Grades 1 – 9  Adult literacy: 88%
	U.S. Equivalent 1 – 6	Secondary Diversified Cycle 4, 5, 6				
		U.S. Equivalent 7, 8, 9 10, 11, 12				

**Notes:** The school year is divided into trimesters. Between each trimester there are four days of vacation. School runs five days per week, Monday through Friday. On the secondary level there are seven periods, each 45 minutes long. There are also three sessions: morning, afternoon and evening (only four hours). There are a variety of grading systems; important to verify information. A grade of 5 or above is required for promotion.

Country	Levels (Primary)	Levels (Secondary)	Diploma Awarded	Grading System	Academic Year	Country Notes
El Salvador	El Salvador Cycles I, II, III 1 – 9	El Salvador (Media) 1, 2, 3	Bachiller or Contador	Excellent 9 – 10 Very Good 7 – 8 Good 5 – 6 Fail 1 – 4	March - November	Compulsory education: Age 6 to 12; Grades 1 – 6  Adult literacy: 75%
	U.S. Equivalent 1 – 9	U.S. Equivalent 10, 11, 12				

**Notes:** School day lasts six hours. In some rural areas children of different ages will be grouped together, similar to a one-room schoolhouse. For the most part, students stay in their classroom and the teachers of each subject move from class to class. Grade of 5 required for promotion.



Country	Levels (Primary)	Levels (Secondary)	Diploma Awarded	Grading System	Academic Year	Country Notes
Guatemala	Guatemala 1 – 6	Guatemala Basic Cycle 1, 2, 3	After grade 11, the usual diploma is a “Bachiller en Ciencias y Letras”	A = 90 – 100 B = 80 – 89 C = 70 – 79 D = 60 – 69 F = 0 – 59	January - October	Compulsory Education: Age 7 to 14; Grades 1 – 6
	U.S. Equivalent 1 – 6	Diversified Cycle 1, 2, or 3 (3 <sup>rd</sup> year is a specialized optional year)  U.S. Equivalent 7, 8, 9 10, 11, 12	Maestro de Educación Primaria Urbana			

**Notes:** There are 180 school days per year. There are five hours of class per day. Each period is 40-45 minutes. The diversified cycle of secondary school (equivalent to 10th-12th grades) offers the student the choice between academic courses or a more vocational/technical course of study.

Country	Levels (Primary)	Levels (Secondary)	Diploma Awarded	Grading System	Academic Year	Country Notes
Haiti	Haiti Année Fondamentale (AF)	Haiti Année Fondamentale (AF)	Certificat de Fin d’ Etudes Secondaires Classiques Baccalaureate I & II	A = 10.0 – 9.0 B = 8.5 – 6.5 C = 6.4 – 5.0 F = 4.0 –	October - July	Compulsory education: Grade 9 (reform system)  Adult literacy: 53%
	Premiere (1e) AF Seconde (2e) AF Troisième (3e) AF Quatrième (4e) AF Cinquième (5e) AF	Septième (7e) AF Huitième (8e) AF Neuvième (9e) AF	Baccalaureate Technique			



Country	Levels (Primary)	Levels (Secondary)	Diploma Awarded	Grading System	Academic Year	Country Notes
	Sixième (6e) AF  <b>U.S. Equivalent</b> 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	Dixième (10e) AF Academic Track (Classic Baccalaureate) Seconde Rhetorique Philosophie  Technical Track (Technical Baccalaureate) Seconde Premiere Terminale  <b>U.S. Equivalent</b> <b>7, 8, 9, 10</b>  <b>11, 12, 13</b>				

**Notes:** The reform system (Haiti Education Reform Movement, 1982), now being implemented in large cities, is similar to the United States' system. At present, the traditional and reform systems are both in operation. It is also important to note that in rural areas many students do not have opportunities for secondary education. Primary school lasts for six years. Students stay with the same teachers.

Country	Levels (Primary)	Levels (Secondary)	Diploma Awarded	Grading System	Academic Year	Country Notes
Honduras	Honduras Cycles I, II - 1 – 6  Common Cycle 1, 2, 3	Honduras Diversified Cycle 4, 5  Vocational 6	Upon completion of academic program (after grade 11) student receives the “Bachiller en Ciencias y Letras”	A = 91 – 100 B = 80 – 90 C = 60 – 79 D = 1 – 59	February - November	Compulsory Education: Age 7 to 12; Grades 1 – 6
	<b>U.S. Equivalent</b> 1 – 6	<b>U.S. Equivalent</b> 10, 11 12	Upon completion of vocational program (after grade 12) student receives the “Bachiller Técnico”			Adult literacy: 73%

**Notes:** The school year consists of 200 class days, six days per week, Monday-Saturday. The school year is divided into five cycles: February-March; April-May; June-July; August-September; October-November. Vacation takes place in December and January. On the secondary level students normally receive 36 hours of instruction, but there are schools where the class load is up to 44 hours per week, according to the course of study. Students in grades 10 through 12 may choose from among 10 tracks offered in academic studies, business, commercial studies, science, social sciences, etc.

Country	Levels (Primary)	Levels (Secondary)	Diploma Awarded	Grading System	Academic Year	Country Notes
India	India 1 – 8	India IX, X, XI, XII	Higher Secondary Certificate Examination Standard XII (Grade 12)	(Division) A = 60 – 100 (1 <sup>st</sup> ) B = 50 – 59 (2 <sup>nd</sup> ) C = 35 – 49 (3 <sup>rd</sup> )	June – March*	Compulsory Education: Age 6 to 14; Grades 1 – 8
	<b>U.S. Equivalent</b> 1 – 8	<b>U.S. Equivalent</b> 9 – 12				Adult literacy: 48%

**Notes:** \*The academic years vary from state to state. Usually the school year starts in June and ends nine months later in March or April. The year is divided into three terms of 15 weeks each, six days a week. The number of weeks varies widely, but the standard is 39 weeks in many regions. External exams are given at the end of class 10 and 12. There are 220 days of school; 48 periods a week, each period being 30-40

minutes in length. School is conducted for 5-1/2 days per week. The school day is approximately five hours long for primary school (grades 1-5) and six hours long for higher primary (6-8 grades) and secondary (9-10 grades). Curriculum at the lower secondary stage seeks to give all students the “competence to enter life.” At the upper secondary stage the national plan calls for providing introductory courses for college education.

Country	Levels (Primary)	Levels (Secondary)	Diploma Awarded	Grading System	Academic Year	Country Notes
Mexico	Mexico 1 – 6*	Mexico 1, 2, 3	Academic track students earn the “Bachillerato” after year 5 or 6 of the preparatory stage. Vocational, Technical, and “Normal” teaching graduates earn a diploma listing a specialization after year 6 or 7 of the	A = 9.0 – 10 B = 8.0 – 8.9 C = 7.0 – 7.9 D = 6.0 – 6.9 F = 1 – 5.9	September - June	Compulsory Education*: Ages 6 to 14; Grades 1 – 9  Adult Literacy Rate: 92%
	U.S. Equivalent 1 – 6	Preparatory 1, 2, 3 or 4, 5, 6  U.S. Equivalent 7,8, 9 10, 11, 12				

**Notes:** Saturday classes are optional for both secondary school students and prep students. Tracking does not normally occur until the first year of preparatory school, where a student may select a course of study, e.g., medicine, science, humanities. Selection of a career field of study does take place during the first year of preparatory school. After two years, the student is ready for admission to the university. A third optional year is for those students whose grades are below an 8 (or B in U.S. terms).

## Appendix G

### Glossary of Terms

#### **Accuplacer Writeplacer ESL**

Effective April 5, 2016, the Accuplacer Write Placer ESL can be used as a substitute competency assessment for current English language learners (ELLs). The Accuplacer Write Placer ESL is an English test of writing for ELLs. The score scale for Accuplacer Write Placer ESL is 0-6. The passing score for meeting the English language arts assessment requirement for graduation is equal to or greater than four. You can find more information on the [Accuplacer WriterPlacer ESL](#). [Source: NJDOE Broadcast, April 5, 2016, [ELL Graduation English Language Arts Assessment Inclusion](#)].

#### **Credit**

The award for the equivalent of a class period of instruction, which meets for a minimum of 40 minutes, one time per week during the school year or as approved through *N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1(a)2*. [Source: *N.J.A.C. 6A:8-1.3*].

#### **English language learner**

“English language learner” or “ELL” means a student whose native language is other than English. The term refers to students with varying degrees of English language proficiency in any one of the domains of speaking, reading, writing, or listening and is synonymous with limited English speaking ability as used in *N.J.S.A. 18A:35-15* to 26. [Source: *N.J.A.C. 6A:15-1.2*].

#### **English language proficiency (ELP) Test**

“English language proficiency test” means a test that measures English language skills in the areas of aural comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing. [Source: *N.J.A.C. 6A:15-1.2*].

#### **English language services (ELS)**

“English language services” means services designed to improve the English language skills of ELLs. The services, provided in school districts with less than 10 ELLs, are in addition to the regular school program and are designed to develop aural comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing skills in English. [Source: *N.J.A.C. 6A:15-1.2*].

#### **Homeless student**

The federal McKinney-Vento Act, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), and State regulations at *N.J.A.C. 6A:17*, in part defines homeless students as those who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate residence. Further, the McKinney-Vento Act defines students who are “sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason” as homeless.

#### **Immigrant student**

“Immigrant children and youth” are defined as individuals who are (a) aged 3 through 21; (b) were not born in any State; and (c) have not been attending one or more schools in any one or more States for more than three full academic years. A “State” is defined as each of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. [Source: ESEA section 3114(d)].

**Language assistance program**

Kindergarten to grade 12 language assistance program defined by *N.J.A.C. 6A:15* (New Jersey's Bilingual Education administrative code) for New Jersey school districts with English language learners (ELLs). [Source: [A Guide to New Jersey English Language Learner \(ELL\) Programs](#)].

**Newcomer**

Any foreign-born students and their families who have recently arrived in the United States. [Source: U.S. Department of Education, [Newcomer Tool Kit](#), September 2016].

**Parent**

"Parent" means the natural parent(s), adoptive parent(s), legal guardian(s), foster parent(s), or parent surrogate(s) of a student. When parents are separated or divorced, "parent" means the person or agency who has legal custody of the student, as well as the natural or adoptive parent(s) of the student, provided parental rights have not been terminated by a court of appropriate jurisdiction. [Source: *N.J.A.C. 6A:16-1.3*]

**Student with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE or SIFE)**

A subset of ELL newcomers to U.S. schools, above the age of seven, who have missed more than six consecutive months of formal schooling prior to enrolling in a U.S. school and/or are more than two years below grade-level in content due to limited educational supports. [Source: NJDOE, *Implementing English Language Learner Programs in New Jersey*].

**Transcript**

A document for all students exiting the public education system that describes a student's progress toward achievement of the NJSL and other relevant experiences and achievements. [Source: *N.J.A.C. 6A:8-1.3*].

**Transfer credit**

Transfer Credit is awarded for work done outside the high school awarding the credit. The appropriate school personnel should evaluate the transcript or other records of a transfer student enrolling in their school. Based on the student's transcript or other records, the district awards the appropriate units of transfer credit towards a high school diploma. The decision as to whether or not to award transfer credit for work done at educational institutions other than a New Jersey registered high school shall be based on whether the record indicates that the work is consistent with state standards and district policy and is of comparable scope and quality to that which would have been done in the school awarding the credit. [Source: *N.J.A.C. 6A:8-4.2*]

**Unaccompanied minors**

An unaccompanied child is the term the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) uses to refer to a child who meets the definition in the Homeland Security Act of 2002 as a UAC. Unaccompanied Alien Child (UAC) is the term used and defined in the Homeland Security Act of 2002, which created the Unaccompanied Children's program at ORR. A UAC is a child who has no lawful immigration status in the United States; has not attained 18 years of age; and with respect for whom: 1) there is no parent or legal guardian in the United States or 2) no parent or legal guardian in the United States available to provide care and physical custody. ORR uses the term unaccompanied child instead of the term UAC. [Source: Office of Refugee Resettlement].

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