
TO: PRINCIPALS OF ALL SCHOOLS

FROM: OFFICE OF ASSESSMENT

SUBJECT: ADMINISTRATION OF THE NEW YORK STATE IDENTIFICATION TEST OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (NYSITELL) EXAM AND THE SPANISH LAB

NYSITELL

OVERVIEW

The NYSITELL is designed to determine if a student is an ELL at the time of the student's enrollment in the NYS public school system. It is administered once during the ELL identification process (or during reentry after an absence of two or more years from New York State schools).

Based on NYSITELL results, students are categorized into one of five proficiency levels: Entering, Emerging, Transitioning, Expanding, and Commanding. Students who score below the Commanding level on the NYSITELL are mandated to receive bilingual education or English as a new language (ENL) instruction. NYSITELL results determine the number of units of ENL, ELA, and home language arts (for students in bilingual programs as outlined in NYS Commissioner's Regulations Part 154). Please refer to the [Policy and Reference Guide for MLs/ELLs](#) for information on ELL identification and placement policies. NYSITELL results may also help teachers inform instruction by considering a student's relative strengths in each tested modality (Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking).

Students identified as ELLs based on NYSITELL results must take the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT), which is administered in the spring, to determine ongoing ELL status (i.e. whether the student must continue to receive ELL services for the next school year).

Special Administration of NYSITELL (August & September 2021)

During the summer, schools typically administer the New York State Identification Test for English Language Learners to newly enrolled students for the upcoming school year. On May 27, 2021, NYSED [announced](#) additional flexibility for schools to administer the NYSITELL during a special administration period (August-September 2021) to current ELLs who were fully remote during the Spring 2021 New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT) administration period and were unable to complete the NYSESLAT. This option allows schools to determine a current English Language Proficiency level for students whose latest proficiency level may be over two years old. Additionally, it provides students the opportunity to exit ELL services if they score Commanding on the NYSITELL exam.

While the special and summer administration of the NYSITELL is optional, it is strongly recommended to ensure that schools are prepared for the upcoming school year and can provide services better aligned to students' current needs.

For additional information, see the guidance in the [Summer Administration of the NYSITELL](#).

ORDERING EXAM MATERIALS

Principals must order NYSITELL exams through the [NYSSED portal](#). Ordering is ongoing throughout the year. Along with the exams, schools will receive directions for administration and scoring guides. Answer documents must be generated and printed via ATS printers. For more information on generating these answer documents, see the [NYSITELL scanning handbook](#). All information needed to identify students will automatically print on the answer documents.

When placing your order with NYSED, indicate the total number of testers you have for each grade. Your school will be sent the number of test booklets requested, rounded up to the next multiple of 25, except Level I which is rounded up to the next multiple of 20. This will ensure that you have enough test booklets for each tester and no test booklet will have to be reused.

Materials for the NYSITELL requested before September 1 will be delivered beginning on September 9. Orders placed after September 1 and before September 22 will be delivered beginning on October 1. All test shipments will be delivered by UPS between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.

Principals who find that they need additional NYSITELL materials may return to the online examination request system throughout the school year to revise or add any supplemental quantities needed. To place your request, go to the most recent Session. Any supplemental materials requested throughout the school year should arrive approximately one month after the request has been made.

TESTING ELIGIBILITY

Per the [Policy and Reference Guide for MLs/ELLs](#), parents of all first-time entrants and re-entrants (after having been outside of NYS public schools for more than 2 years) are required to complete the [Home Language Identification Survey \(HLIS\)](#) to identify the primary language the student speaks at home and to determine the need for NYSITELL testing. The HLIS includes a written survey and interview with the parent and child. A licensed pedagogue (e.g., the school's ELL coordinator) must complete the HLIS form with the parent.

The home language is determined based on the results of the HLIS, which includes an interview with both the parent and student in English and the home language. A student is considered to have a home language other than English as determined by the licensed and trained pedagogue administering the HLIS. The home language is determined based on a combination of the interviews with the parent and student, and responses to the questions on the HLIS. The home language determination is not based solely on the responses to the questions (regardless of the number of responses of one language or another). Over-the-phone interpretation services are available through the DOE's Translation and Interpretation Unit so that parents can ask and have their questions answered in their preferred language.

If the student's home language is other than English, the school must determine if the student is NYSITELL- eligible. For students entering with an IEP, determination is done by the Language Proficiency Team (LPT). For more information on these procedures, refer to the [Policy and Reference Guide for MLs/ELLs](#).

If the student's home language is other than English and

1. It is determined that the student should take the NYSITELL, print the answer document through the [RLBA](#) in ATS, OR
2. It is determined that the student should NOT take the NYSITELL, indicate ineligibility through the [ELLO](#) in ATS.

Please note the following regarding student eligibility to take the NYSITELL:

- The NYSITELL should not be administered to students in Pre-Kindergarten. It should only be administered to eligible students in grades K-12. Students entering Kindergarten for the following September may be administered the NYSITELL beginning June 1. All other grades may begin testing on July 15.

PRINTING ANSWER DOCUMENTS

Printing for incoming students enrolling in September should occur on the ATS [Print NYSITELL Answer Documents \(RLBA\)](#) screen. Normal printing and scanning procedures for these students should be followed. Please refer to the [NYSITELL Scanning Handbook](#) for additional guidance.

Note: To print exam answer sheets for the NYSITELL special administration, schools will need to use a new screen in ATS that was designed for this purpose. The new screen is called the *Print NYSITELL Special Admin Documents (RNSA)* screen. Please follow the instructions on the ATS screen in order to print exam sheets for eligible students.

EXAM ADMINISTRATION

The NYSITELL is composed of eight distinct levels: I–VIII. The NYSITELL test content is aligned with the expectations for an English Language Learner/Multilingual Learner, depending on the grade and when in the school year the new student arrives. Attachment #2 shows the eight NYSITELL levels and identifies which level to administer to each new entrant, depending on the grade in which the student is enrolling and the date on which the test administration begins.

Except for Level I, which consists of only integrated Listening and Speaking questions in a single student test booklet, the NYSITELL assesses language proficiency in four modalities: Listening, Reading, Writing, and Speaking. The Listening, Reading, and Writing subtests are contained in one test booklet; the Speaking subtest is in a separate test booklet. Administration of all Levels II–VIII subtests, covering all four modalities, is mandatory.

Administrators of the NYSITELL *must* be certified teachers who are thoroughly familiar with the administration procedures. Staff administering the NYSITELL can include either an ENL or a bilingual teacher, or a teacher trained in language development, the needs of ELLs, and knowledge of diversity to address the needs of students. For detailed information about NYSITELL administration, review the directions provided by NYSED with NYSITELL exam materials and the [Guide to the NYSITELL](#).

As per NYSED guidance, schools must complete the formal identification process and place ELLs, including incoming students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP), into an ELL program within the timelines listed below. Therefore, based on the [current school calendar](#):

- Provisionally identified ELLs who did not participate in the Spring 2021 NYSESLAT must be identified and placed by October 27, 2021.
- Newly enrolled and re-entry students admitted before the first 20 days of the school year (October 13, 2021) must be identified and placed by October 27, 2021.
- Newly enrolled and re-entry students admitted after October 13, 2021, must be identified and placed within the standard 10 school days of enrollment (or 20 school days for incoming students with IEPs).

NYSITELL training materials are available on this [site](#); schools may also visit [UPLearning](#) for additional training opportunities or reach out to their BCO.

Spanish LAB

OVERVIEW

The Spanish LAB is a test that helps schools in instructional planning and in the provision of ELL services to students identified as ELLs through the NYSITELL whose home language is Spanish.

ORDERING EXAM MATERIALS

Principals order Spanish LAB beginning in June through NYCDOE. Schools should contact their [Borough Assessment Implementation Director \(BAID\)](#) if additional materials are needed. Answer documents must be generated and printed via ATS printers. For more information on generating these answer documents, see the [Spanish LAB Scanning Handbook](#). All information needed to identify students will automatically print on the answer documents.

TESTING ELIGIBILITY

All new entrants whose HLIS responses indicate a home language of Spanish and who are identified as an ELL based on NYSITELL results must be administered the Spanish LAB at the time of initial enrollment during the same testing window. The Spanish LAB is used to support schools in instructional planning in providing bilingual and services to these students. Spanish LAB results are *not* used to determine ELL status or service entitlement.

Test Security for NYSITELL and Spanish LAB assessments

All test materials must be stored in a secure, locked facility at all times. The security of test materials in the school is the responsibility of the principal. This responsibility begins with the receipt of test materials. Under no circumstances should test materials be removed from the school or used for classroom instruction.

All test materials, including answer documents, must be collected and secured by the principal or designee at the end of each day's testing.

Any individual who observes or suspects adult misconduct related to the administration and/or scoring of the assessments should notify the principal immediately*, and also must immediately notify:

1. NYCDOE Office of Assessment by e-mailing testsecurity@schools.nyc.gov and
2. [NYSITELL only] NYC Office of the Special Commissioner of Investigation (SCI): call (212) 510-1500 or email intake@nycsci.org; and

*The principal can provide support in following the reporting procedure outlined above.

RESOURCES FOR NYSITELL AND SPANISH LAB ASSESSMENTS

For more information on the ELL identification process, schools should refer to the following resources:

- [NYSED's Guide to the NYSITELL](#)
 - The purpose of this guide is to provide an introduction to, and an overview of, the NYSITELL for test coordinators, school administrators, and teachers. This guide is meant to be a general overview of the test, not specific instructions for administration by subtest or NYSITELL level.
- NYC DOE Division of Multilingual Learners (DML) [SharePoint](#) and [InfoHub](#) pages.
 - [Policy and Reference Guide for MLs/ELLs](#)
This guide outlines the State and City policies for identifying, enrolling, and serving English Language Learners (ELLs). It provides directions and details on programming ELLs, timelines, and procedures. It also contains a number of useful resources to ensure compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.



Assessment Memorandum #1

September, 2021

- Scanning Handbooks for [NYSITELL](#) and [Spanish LAB](#)

QUESTIONS

Your continuing cooperation is greatly appreciated. If you have any questions regarding the NYSITELL or Spanish LAB, please contact your BCO ELL Point or your [Borough Assessment Implementation Director \(BAID\)](#).

ATTACHMENT #1 – SUMMARY OF THE ELL IDENTIFICATION STEPS

Step 1: Determine if the enrolling student was in an NYS public school within the past 2 years.

Schools are required to obtain NYSITELL/NYSESLAT scores directly from the sending NYS public school to allow the student to continue in the ELL status (and proficiency level) in effect at the time of discharge from the NYS public school.

- Enter reentry status into the [ATS Transfer Student \(TRAF\) function](#).
- Contact the previous school to obtain NYSITELL and/or NYSESLAT scores, HL code, and SIFE status.
- Send received test scores to ELLTransfersNYS@schools.nyc.gov.
- Complete [New York State Transfer ELL Data Request Form](#).

Stop if the student was enrolled in an NYS public school within the past 2 years.

Proceed to the next step if the student is entering as a new student to NYS public schools or returning to NYS public schools after more than 2 years.

Step 2: Parent completes Home Language Identification Survey with qualified personnel.

The home language code is determined by [qualified personnel](#).

- Print the [HLIS](#) in the parent/guardian's preferred language.
- Enter HL Code into [BIOU](#) screen in ATS.
- Update HLIS flag to "Y" on [BIOU](#) screen in ATS.

Stop if the student's home language is English.

Proceed to the next step if the student's home language is other than English.

Step 3: Determine eligibility for NYSITELL and administer NYSITELL to eligible students.

A Language Proficiency Team (LPT) should be convened for incoming students with an IEP. Otherwise, general education students begin with the individual interview.

- If the student should NOT take the NYSITELL, update the [ELLO](#) screen in ATS.
- If the student should take the NYSITELL, administer the NYSITELL within the designated timeline.
To print answer sheets, go to [RLBA](#) in ATS.

Stop if the student is not eligible to take the NYSITELL.

Proceed to the next step once NYSITELL has been administered.

Step 4: Send entitlement and non-entitlement letters to parent/guardian.

These letters let parents know whether their child is eligible for ELL services.

- Print the [parent notification letters](#) in the parent/guardian's preferred language.
- Send the [entitlement letter \(after NYSITELL\)](#) for students who score below commanding and are an

ELL.

- Send the [non-entitlement letter\(after NYSITELL\)](#) for students who score commanding and are not an ELL.
- Keep copies of parent letters on record at school.

Step 5: Administer Spanish LAB to newly identified ELLs whose home language is Spanish.

The Spanish LAB is administered once to newly identified ELLs:

whose home language is Spanish, regardless of whether the student is placed in a bilingual program or not

AND do not attain “commanding level” on the NYSITELL.

Print the Spanish LAB answer documents via [RSLA](#) in ATS. For information and directions on administering and printing the Spanish LAB, refer to the [Spanish LAB Scanning Book](#).

Step 6: Determine if ELL is a student with interrupted/inconsistent education (SIFE).

SIFE status is determined within 30 school days of enrollment. SIFE status may be modified within 12 months of enrollment. Grades 3 to 9 only.

- Enter SIFE status in the [BNDC](#) screen in ATS.

Step 7: Provide families a parent orientation meeting.

At this meeting, which is conducted by a trained pedagogue with translation services available, parents are provided with information on the three ELL program types (Dual Language, Transitional Bilingual Education, and English as a New Language).

The student must be placed in the bilingual program if one is available. Parents complete the survey indicating their agreement (or not) of the placement in the ELL program for their child.

1. **Note:** If a bilingual program is not available, schools must open one if thresholds are met. See [Bilingual Program Protocols](#).

Step 8: The student is placed and programed in an ELL program.

Program all ELLs for the minimum number of minutes of English as a New Language. For students placed in a bilingual program, program for ENL and bilingual classes.

- Enter [ENL programming](#) and [bilingual programming](#) into STARS.

Stop. The ELL Identification Process is complete.

Proceed to the next step **only** if the ELL status is requested to be reviewed and considered for reversal (due to possible misidentification).

Step 9: Administer the Re-Identification Process as necessary.

A parent, student (age 18 or older), or teacher (with parent's approval) may appeal the ELL status within 45 school days of enrollment.

- Principals use the [RQSA](#) in ATS.
- Superintendents use the [RQGA](#) in ATS.
- Follow procedures outlined in [Step 9 of the ELL identification process](#).

Stop if the student's ELL status is not reversed.

Proceed to the next step if the student's ELL status is reversed.

Step 10: Within 6 to 12 months, review the progress of the student whose ELL status was reversed.

The principal must review the Re-identification Process decision to ensure that the student's academic progress has not been adversely affected by the determination. The principal's recommendation can be to provide additional services or to reverse the ELL status back to its originally determined status.

- Principals use the [RQSA](#) in ATS.
- Superintendents use the [RQGA](#) in ATS.
- Follow procedures outlined in [Step 10 of the ELL identification process](#).

ATTACHMENT #2 – NYSITELL & SPANISH LAB LEVELS AND TEST INFORMATION

NYSITELL - LEVEL CHART

NYSITELL LEVEL	GRADE	Dates on which test will be administered	MODALITIES OF SUBTESTS	ADMIN. TIME (MINUTES) <i>* times listed are approximate only and do not include recommended breaks</i>	TEST SETTING
I	K	June 1 – January 31	Listening	17	Individual
			Speaking	8	
II	K 1	February 1 – June 30 July 15 – January 31	Listening	15	Individual (recommended) or Group
			Reading	15	
			Writing	10	
			Speaking	10	Individual
III	1 2 3	February 1 – June 30 July 15 – June 30 July 15 – January 31	Listening	20	Individual (recommended) or Group
			Reading	15	
			Writing	10	
			Speaking	10	Individual
IV	3 4	February 1 – June 30 July 15 – January 31	Listening	20	Individual or Group
			Reading	15	
			Writing	10	
			Speaking	10	Individual
V	4 5	February 1 – June 30 July 15 – January 31	Listening	20	Individual or Group
			Reading	15	
			Writing	10	
			Speaking	10	Individual
VI	5 6 7	February 1 – June 30 July 15 – June 30 July 15 – January 31	Listening	20	Individual or Group
			Reading	15	
			Writing	10	
			Speaking	10	Individual
VII	7 8 9	February 1 – June 30 July 15 – June 30 July 15 – January 31	Listening	25	Individual or Group
			Reading	20	
			Writing	15	
			Speaking	10	Individual
VIII	9 10-12	February 1 – June 30 July 15 – June 30	Listening	25	Individual or Group
			Reading	20	
			Writing	15	
			Speaking	10	Individual

SPANISH LAB- LEVEL CHART

LEVEL	GRADES
I	K, 1, 2
II	3,4,5
III	6,7,8
IV	9,10,11,12