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**TO:** Principals of Public, Religious, and Independent Schools  
Leaders of Charter Schools

**FROM:** Elisa Alvarez *Elisa Alvarez*  
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**SUBJECT:** COVID-19 Related Special Administration of the New York State Identification Test for English Language Learners (NYSITELL) in August-September 2021

This memorandum is to announce and provide details for a one-time special administration of the New York State Identification Test for English Language Learners (NYSITELL) being given to address the adverse impact of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic in preventing some English language learners (ELLs) and provisionally-identified ELLs from being able to participate in the Spring 2021 New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT). Schools must ensure that they are providing appropriate levels of ELL instruction and services as required by Commissioner's Regulations Part 154-2.

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, many students, including provisionally-identified ELLs, have received remote-only instruction during the 2020-21 school year. It is anticipated that most students will be able to resume at least partial in-school instruction when the new school year gets underway. In order to address the need to determine these students' current English Language Proficiency (ELP) level, NYSED is providing the following flexibility through a special August-September administration of the NYSITELL for all affected students as described below. The NYSITELL must be administered in person while adhering to the district's safety protocols as guided by the CDC and the local Department of Health.

#### **ELLs Who Received Entirely Remote Instruction During the Spring 2021 NYSESLAT Administration Period and Did Not Participate in the Spring 2021 NYSESLAT**

For those ELLs who received entirely remote instruction during the Spring 2021 NYSESLAT administration period and did not participate in the 2021 NYSESLAT, schools may administer the NYSITELL for a second time to the student in August or September of 2021. This special administration of the NYSITELL may be provided in August or September of 2021 for those ELLs who will be receiving either completely or partially in-person instruction at the start of the school year. This special administration of the NYSITELL may also be provided to those ELLs who will be continuing to receive entirely remote instruction at the start of the new school year, provided that the family is willing to have the student come to school in person for the one-to-two days necessary to participate in the NYSITELL. The special administration of the NYSITELL is not permitted for any ELLs who completed the Spring 2021 NYSESLAT.

The results of this special administration will provide a current measure of the student's English language proficiency and will be used, in place of the student's previous NYSESLAT or NYSITELL results, to determine the level of ELL services that must be provided to the student in accordance with Part 154-2.3(g).

If you have questions about student eligibility or any other aspect of the special August-September administration of the NYSITELL, please contact the Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages at [obewl@nysed.gov](mailto:obewl@nysed.gov).

### **Newly Enrolled Students**

For students who enroll in a New York State school during summer of 2021 and during the first 20 school days of the 2021-22 school year, schools must complete the ELL identification process, including the administration of the NYSITELL when required, within 30 school days of the start of the academic school year. Thereafter, the usual 10-school-day identification period under Commissioner's Regulations Part 154 will apply. The ELL identification process should proceed in accordance with Part 154-2.3(a). For students identified as ELLs through this process, the results of the NYSITELL will determine the level of ELL services that must be provided to the students in accordance with Part 154-2.3(g).

### **Provisionally-Identified English Language Learners (ELLs)**

A provisionally-identified ELL is a student who, as a result of having enrolled in a New York State school during the COVID-19 pandemic and having always received entirely remote instruction, has been identified as needing ELL services by their school but has not been able to complete the ELL identification process including an in-person administration of the NYSITELL. For those provisionally-identified ELLs who do not participate in the Spring 2021 NYSESLAT, the school must complete the ELL identification process by administering the NYSITELL to the student within 30 school days of the start of the 2021-22 school year, if the student will be receiving either completely or partially in-person instruction at the start of the school year. The NYSITELL should also be administered at the start of the 2021-22 school year to those provisionally-identified ELLs who are continuing to receive remote-only instruction, provided that the family is willing to have the student come to school in person for the one-to-two days necessary to participate in the NYSITELL. Otherwise, the usual 10-school-day identification period under Commissioner's Regulations Part 154 will apply after they begin to receive either completely or partial in-person instruction.

For those provisionally-identified ELLs who do participate in the Spring 2021 NYSESLAT, schools may forgo administration of the NYSITELL and instead apply the results of the 2021 NYSESLAT for the purpose of identifying the student as an ELL and determining the level of ELL services that must be provided to the student in accordance with Part 154-2.3(g).