

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



Fact Sheet No. 21-12

June 2021

**Summary**

In the effort to determine a more accurate English language proficiency (ELP) level for the large number of English language learners (ELLs) who did not participate in the 2021 administration of the NYSESLAT due to the COVID-19 pandemic, NYSED is offering districts a one-time, special administration of the NYSITELL for specifically identified students who are expected to be resuming at least partial in-school instruction in the new school year. While it is not mandated that districts offer this special administration of the NYSITELL, if they do offer it, the test must be administered completely in-person and according to district safety protocols that are guided by the CDC and the local Department of Health. The results from this administration of the NYSITELL will be used in place of the student’s last NYSESLAT or NYSITELL results and will determine the level of ELL services that must be provided to the student in accordance with C.R. Part 154-2.3(g).

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**Identified Students Who Can Participate in the Special Administration**

**1. ELLs who:**

- Took the NYSITELL when originally identified; AND
- Received entirely remote instruction between April and June 2021, and as a result, did not participate in the Spring 2021 NYSESLAT; AND
- Will be receiving instruction that is completely or partially in-person at the start of the 2021–22 school year; OR
- Will continue to receive entirely remote instruction at the start of the 2021–22 school year.

*For students continuing to receive entirely remote instruction, the student’s family must be willing to have the student come to school for the in-person administration.*

**2. Newly Enrolled ELLs who:**

- Enroll in a NYS school during June–August 2021; OR
- Enroll in a NYS school during the first 20 school days of the 2021–22 school year

*Schools will have 30 days to complete the ELL identification process, including administering the NYSITELL, for ELLs who enroll during the summer and up to the 20th day of the 2021–22 school year.*

year. From the 21st day of the 2021–22 school year, schools must return to the 10-school-day identification period identified in C.R. Part 154-2.3(g).

### **3. Provisionally-Identified ELLs who:**

- Enrolled during the COVID-19 pandemic and received entirely remote instruction; AND
- Did not participate in the Spring 2021 NYSESLAT
- Will be receiving instruction that is completely or partially in-person at the start of the 2021–22 school year

*Schools will have 30 days to administer the NYSITELL and complete the ELL identification process.*

The NYSITELL should be administered at the start of the 2021–22 school year to provisionally-identified students who are continuing to receive entirely remote instruction provided the student’s family is willing to have the student come to school for the in-person administration. If not, once these students do begin to receive either completely or partial in-person instruction, the 10-school-day identification period will apply.

## **Students Who Cannot Participate in the Special Administration**

ELLs who completed the Spring 2021 NYSESLAT

## **Applying NYSESLAT Results in Place of NYSITELL**

Schools may apply the results from the Spring 2021 NYSESLAT in place of administering the NYSITELL for identifying provisionally-identified students as ELLs and determining the level of ELL services that must be provided to students in accordance with C.R. Part 154-2.3(g).

## **Definition of Provisionally-Identified ELLs**

Provisionally-identified ELLs are students who:

- are enrolled in a NYS school during the COVID-19 pandemic;
- have been receiving entirely remote instruction;
- have been identified as needing ELL services by their school;
- have not participated in the in-person administration of the NYSITELL; and
- have not been able to complete the ELL identification process

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **1. Is the special administration of the NYSITELL at the discretion of the district/building administrator or is NYSED requiring schools to administer the NYSITELL?**

The NYSITELL is required for newly enrolled and provisional ELLs who did not take the 2021 NYSESLAT. The deadline to complete ELL identification through the NYSITELL has been extended in recognition of the additional students that need to be tested.

For all other identified ELLs who did not take the 2021 NYSESLAT due to participation in remote-only learning, the special administration of the NYSITELL is at the discretion of the district/building administrator (depending on how the NYSITELL is normally administered within the district). We encourage districts/schools to contact students’ parents in their preferred language

and mode of communication to provide them information about the special administration and determine their preferences when making the decision of whether a student should re-take the NYSITELL.

- 2. There are numerous ELLs receiving completely or partially in-person instruction who did not show up for all in-person test days or make-up days and did not complete the full administration of the Spring 2021 NYSESLAT despite the lengthened period for make-ups. Would these students be allowed to participate in the special administration of the NYSITELL to determine their current level of ELL services?**

NYSED substantially extended the administration window to address the unique challenges of administering the Spring 2021 NYSESLAT to students who, because of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, were receiving instruction in a hybrid model, attending school in person between one and four days per week. The special administration of the NYSITELL is only for ELLs who were receiving instruction remotely for the entirety of the NYSESLAT administration window and were unable to come into the school building on a sufficient number of days to complete all four sessions of the NYSESLAT. It is not available to students who did not complete the Spring 2021 NYSESLAT due to a high rate of absence during the extended NYSESLAT administration window.

- 3. Will newly enrolled students be required to take the August–September special administration of the NYSITELL if they will be receiving fully remote instruction and their family is not willing to have the student come to school for the in-person administration?**

As in the 2020-21 school year, the NYSITELL must be administered in person.

- 4. For provisionally-identified ELLs who participated in the Spring 2021 NYSESLAT, is forgoing the administration of the NYSITELL and instead applying the results of the Spring 2021 NYSESLAT for the purpose of identifying the student as an ELL and determining the level of ELL services at the discretion of the district/building administrator? If yes, what happens in a case where the resulting NYSITELL level differs from that determined by the NYSESLAT?**

As indicated in NYSED’s memo of May 2021 “schools may forgo administration of the NYSITELL” to provisional ELLs who take the 2021 NYSESLAT.

Students who receive a score for the 2021 NYSESLAT and who participate in the special administration of the NYSITELL should receive programming based on the results of their NYSESLAT score. These students may not exit ELL status based on the special administration of the NYSITELL.

### **Advice to Local Leaders**

- Due to the time it takes to administer the NYSITELL to an additional pool of students, ENL teachers may be asked to cancel mandated services in September. Protections should be put in place to ensure that both services and teacher schedules are safeguarded.
- The rigor of the NYSITELL, whose purpose is a screening test, is not comparable to the NYSESLAT. It is neither as comprehensive nor aligned with the standards-based NYS English

Language Arts exam. Students may potentially score higher thus reducing the amount of services provided or even eliminating ELL services altogether.

- Student scores from the special administration NYSITELL should not be used for evaluative purposes, such as a baseline for APPR in 2021–22.
- Additional ENL staff may be required to work during the summer to administer the NYSITELL and complete the ELL identification process. As a result, educators must be paid according to contractual language for days they come in for over the summer.

## Resources

**NYSUT's Education & Learning Trust (ELT)** offers a rapidly expanding array of relevant training for all educators, including school-related professionals, ENL, Bilingual and classroom teachers on the topic of language acquisition and the needs of English language learners and meets the Part 154/CTLE Language Acquisition mandate designed to address the needs of English language learners (ELLs).

**Regional Bilingual Education-Resource Networks (RBE-RN)** provide professional development and technical assistance to educators in New York State and are funded through grants from NYSED's Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages (OBEWL). RBE-RNs provide regionally-based resources to districts/school to improve instructional practices and educational outcomes for ELLs. More information about RBE-RNs and a current directory is on the NYSED website:

<http://www.nysed.gov/bilingual-ed/schools/regional-supportrberns>

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](#). Link to [NYSED memo](#).