



THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK / ALBANY, NY 12234
Office of P-12

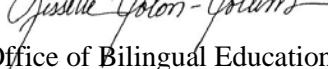
Lissette Colón-Collins, Assistant Commissioner
Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages

55 Hanson Place, Room 594
Brooklyn, New York 11217
Tel: (718) 722-2445 / Fax: (718) 722-2459

89 Washington Avenue, Room 528 EB
Albany, New York 12234
(518)474-8775/ Fax: (518)474-7948

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FIELD ADVISORY

FROM: Lissette Colón-Collins 
Assistant Commissioner, Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages

SUBJECT: PENpal interactive Home Language Questionnaire (HLQ) toolkits

The Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages in collaboration with Mantra Lingua Ltd is introducing the first technologically based solution to enhance appropriate identification of English Language Learner (ELL). New York is one of the most linguistically, and culturally diverse states with over 200 languages spoken by English Language Learners from over 180 countries. Beginning this school year, districts in New York State will receive Mantra Lingua's PENpal™ toolkits with an interactive Home Language Questionnaire (HLQ) accessible in 26 different languages. The HLQ is an important part of the ELL identification process. After registration and enrollment in the school, the HLQ is completed by the parent/guardian. The new sound enabled HLQ will feature audio in 26 of the Top Home Languages in New York State. The PENpal™ will give districts the capability to immediately conduct the HLQ in any of the 26 languages, which include Spanish, Mandarin, Cantonese, Bengali, Russian, Arabic, Urdu, Korean, Haitian-Creole, Polish, Albanian, French, Yiddish, Karen, Nepali, Punjabi, Somali, Uzbek, Japanese, Burmese, Fulah, Vietnamese, Turkish, Portuguese, Ukrainian, and English.

“It's always been our goal to support the diverse language needs of our student population. In creating this toolkit, we found the perfect partner in Mantra Lingua who specializes in creating innovative accessible technology in over 50 world languages.” stated, Deputy Commissioner, Angelica Infante.

In addition this tool will greatly benefit parents who may not be literate in their home language, and would not necessarily be able to read the translated version of the document. The new digital device will provide parents with immediate on the spot audio translation of the HLQ, by touching a printed 'soundspots' with the PENpal parents can listen to the HLQ questions in the translated version of their choice. The new language based technology also provides a solution for school districts that have difficulty finding translation services, and enhance services in schools that serve culturally and linguistically diverse students. Now, for the first time school districts will have a new resource to engage speakers of unique languages in their community and fulfill our commitment to providing access and equity for diverse cultures and languages.

Under CR Part 154-2.3(a) newly enrolled students (as well as those who reenter New York State public school after a two year absence) are identified as ELLs. A Home Language Questionnaire (HLQ) is administered by qualified personnel.¹ If the HLQ reflects that a language other than English is spoken at home, the qualified personnel conduct's an individual interview in English and the student's home language. For more information about the identification process please visit (link: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/biling/bilinged/GuidanceDocuments.htm>).

Based on information gathered at the informal interview, the qualified personnel determine if the student will take the New York State Identification Test for English Language Learners (NYSITELL). The student's NYSITELL score determines if he or she is an ELL (and if so, the student's level of proficiency). Under Part 154-2.3(b), this determination may be reviewed within forty-five days and corrected if found to be in error.

Under Part 154-2.3(f), districts must provide parents of ELLs with a high quality orientation session in the language or mode of communication that the parent best understands regarding state standards, assessments, and school expectations. In this orientation, districts should also provide parents with information, grounded in research, about Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE), Dual Language, and English as a New Language (ENL) programs. This orientation session shall occur prior to final placement in a program (however, a parent's failure to attend the session shall not delay enrollment and placement). To facilitate the ability of school districts to fully inform ELL parents (and persons in parental relation) about their children's rights under Part 154 and to ensure that they are making informed decisions about programmatic choices, NYSED has created a number of parent orientation and information resources. These include:

- **A Guide for Parents of English Language Learners in New York State:** This ten page parent-friendly booklet includes BE and ENL program descriptions, Frequently Asked Questions about ELLs and Multilingual Learners, Facts about Bilingualism and Bilingual Education, links to ELL parent resources, and tips on Participating in Your Child's Education. This booklet has been translated into 25 languages, including the top ten ELL home languages in NYS. <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/biling/bilinged/parent-information/home.html>
- **Information on the New York State Identification Test for English Language Learners (NYSITELL):** This booklet offers a brief introduction to the NYSITELL, describing its purpose and format and outlining proficiency levels and corresponding ELL services. It has been translated into 22 languages, including the top ten ELL home languages in NYS. <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/biling/bilinged/parent-information/home.html>
- **Information for Parents on the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT):** This booklet offers a brief introduction to the NYSESLAT, describing its purpose and format and outlining proficiency levels and corresponding ELL services. It has been translated into 25 languages, including the top ten ELL home languages in NYS. <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/biling/bilinged/parent-information/home.html>

¹ Under Part 154-2.2(u), qualified personnel is defined as a Bilingual Education or ESOL teacher or a teacher trained in cultural competency, language development, and the needs of ELLs.

² For students with disabilities, please see Part 154-3 regarding the process by which it is determined whether such students shall take the NYSITELL, with testing accommodations recommended in the student's IEP or Section 504 Accommodation Plan.

NYSESLAT sample items with notations can be found here:

<https://www.engageny.org/resource/new-york-state-english-a-second-language-achievement-test-nyseslat-sample-items-annotations>

- **Parent Bill of Rights:** This one page document summarizes critical rights concerning educational access and programming for ELLs and their parents and persons in parental relation. The bill also includes information on how parents, persons in parental relation, and students can contact our [ELL Parent Hotline](#) at (800) 469-8224 or OBEWL at 518-474-8775 if they have questions or complaints. The Parent Bill of Rights has been translated into eleven languages, including the top ten ELL home languages in NYS.
<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/biling/bilinged/parent-information/home.html>
- **Parent Notification Letters:** A series of letter templates that can be used by schools to notify parents or persons in parental relation regarding a student’s ELL status:
 - [NYSITELL score and eligibility for ELL services](#) (translated into 16 languages)
 - [NYSITELL score and non-eligibility for ELL services](#) (translated into 16 languages)
<http://p1232.nysed.gov/biling/bilinged/EntitlementLetterstoParents.html>
 - [NYSESLAT score and continuation of services](#) (translated into 25 languages)
 - [NYSESLAT/Assessment score \(as applicable\) and exiting ELL status](#) (translated into 25 languages)
<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/biling/bilinged/NYSESLATResultsLetterstoParents.html>
- **Student Placement Form:** Informs parents and persons in parental relation of programmatic/placement options and allows them to exercise their right to place children in an ENL program rather than a BE program. This document has been translated into 25 languages, including the top ten ELL home languages in NYS.
<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/biling/bilinged/ELLStudentPlacementForm.html>
- **Parent Orientation Video—ELL Programs in NYS:** This whiteboard animation video, which runs approximately ten minutes and is to be shown during ELL parent orientation. The video describes the ELL identification and assessment process and outlines in detail various available program options. It also describes the differences between ENL and the various BE program models. The video is currently available in English, Spanish, Haitian, Arabic, Russian, French, Traditional Chinese, and Simplified Chinese, with more translations to come.
<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/biling/bilinged/parent-information/parent-orientation-videos.html>
- **ELL Parent Hotline:** This resource, operated by the [New York State Language Regional Bilingual Education Resource Network](#) (RBE-RN) serves as a mechanism for parents of ELLs and persons in parental relation to inquire about their rights and the delivery of services for their children based on state regulations. Via [a dedicated website](#) and a phone line (800 469-8224), parents can inquire and receive responses in the top ten ELL home languages in NYS. NYSED has printed and distributed bookmarks with full online information, translated in the top ten ELL home languages in NYS. <http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/metrocenter/ellparenthotline>

- **New York State Bilingual Common Core Initiative Progressions:** Beginning in Spring 2012, NYSED launched the Bilingual Common Core Initiative to develop new English as a Second Language and Native Language Arts Standards aligned to the Common Core. As a result of extensive research and a three year process, NYSED has developed two sets of resources known as New Language Arts Progressions (NLAP) and Home Language Arts Progressions (HLAP) for every NYS Common Core Learning Standard (CCLS) in every grade. The NLAP and HLAP provide a framework for teachers to ensure that students in English as a New Language and Bilingual Education programs are meeting the CCLS. The Progressions include five levels of language proficiency and demonstrate a trajectory of language learning and teaching. <https://www.engageny.org/resource/new-york-state-bilingual-common-core-initiative>

CC: Angelica Infante, Deputy Commissioner