

Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages

New York State Education Department
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August 2020 Newsletter

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Greetings from Associate Commissioner Elisa Alvarez

Dear Colleagues,

I would like to thank you for taking care of the children, their families and one another during these trying times.

In July, the monthly Board of Regent meeting was held to discuss proposed regulatory changes as well as guidance intended for our New York State districts. All items presented were approved and as a result, we have released a comprehensive guidance document (<http://www.nysed.gov/common/nysed/files/programs/reopening-schools/nys-p12-school-reopening-guidance.pdf>) to support all aspects of the work ahead as you create and implement your reopening plans.

I would like to reassure you, that your voice is important to us. For that reason, we utilized the findings from our Regional Reopening Task Force meetings to address concerns, requests and suggestions presented by the various stakeholders. Approximately four task force meetings were held which convened stakeholders from throughout the state. One of our task force meetings engaged the voices of our students themselves, which is only fitting, since our topic of discussion would impact their educational journey. The students were brilliant and truthful. We must continue to do better for them. Our support will continue to focus on access, technology, Wi-Fi, and the instructional integrity that address the linguistic demands in English, while simultaneously strengthening the student's heritage language.

As you become familiar with the guidance document, you will find that each department is represented to support you in addressing this delicate transition to reopen, reimagine and rethink education. We, at OBEWL, are currently working on creating an FAQ and a webinar to help you strategically plan for English Language Learners, while taking into consideration the model of reopening your school district adopts.

COVID-19 school closures have impacted each of our lives. We have all felt the challenges however, you and your teams continue to shine a light on the perseverance, strength and heartfelt compassion shared. Now is the time to stand firm and help others understand that being bilingual or multilingual is an asset and a privilege. I stand with you!

COVID -19 disruptions have created additional concerns for our immigrant families. As you plan your educational supports, it is necessary to design and develop your social-emotional programs that can be an outlet for students and families. Despite the difficulties our families face, they understand the importance of demonstrating the good in all humanity regardless of their own circumstances. A recent article from the New York Times by Nicholas Kristof, "[Now Is a Time to Learn from Hispanic Americans](#)" highlights Hispanic Americans, their challenges, and the responsibility they feel in serving others.

Relationships and positive rapport between the home and school members have always been an important aspect of our work. These relationships have been a positive indicator in ensuring communication with students and families. Due to your dedication, end-of-year reports documented that consistent attendance and participation was higher among current ELLs than non-ELLs. This was attributed to the relationships, (*continued on p. 2*)



(continued from p. 1) respect and trust developed early in the beginning of the school year. Parents were also willing and trusting of the support the school offered.

The ability you provided students in selecting and participating in relevant topics of study helped maintain the level of engagement during these uncertain times, especially topics that supported issues we are facing as a nation. Creating virtual spaces for collaboration reiterated the need for human connection. Our non-English speaking families need you to continue to see them as they are, value them for all they have to offer and advocate on their behalf. As Associate Commissioner for the Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages, I stand in support of all that you do.

I celebrate you and your school community and look forward to your continued support and respect for all students of Bilingual Education and World Languages.

In unity,

Elisa Alvarez

Guidance to Reopen New York State Schools

Statewide school closures during the 2020 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak were extremely challenging for all students, and caused particular difficulties for vulnerable students including ELLs. As districts prepare to reopen schools in 2020-21, NYSED has issued guidance regarding legal regulatory requirements that must be followed and best practices that will help proactively address these inequities, including, to the greatest extent feasible, providing support and instruction to parents/guardians on the use of technology in their home language. ELLs also require specialized support to close any potential learning loss from school closures. As we reopen schools, we must ensure that learning gaps that may have been caused by the closures are not exacerbated during possible remote or hybrid learning in fall 2020 or if future COVID-19 outbreaks lead to more school closures.



Mandatory elements of our fall reopening guidance include:

- Qualifying schools that reopen using in-person or hybrid instruction will be required to complete the ELL identification process within 30 school days of the start of the school year for all students who enrolled during COVID-19 school closures in 2019-20, as well as all students who enroll during summer of 2020 and during the first 20 school days of the 2020-21 school year for school districts with 150 or more ELLs, or where ELLs make up 10% or more of the district's population. After this period, identification of ELLs must resume for all students within required 10 school days of initial enrollment as required by Commissioner's Regulations Part 154.
- School districts with 149 or fewer ELLs or where ELLs constitute less than 10% of the district's population may seek an exemption from the English language learner identification timeline for students who enrolled during COVID-19 school closures in 2019-20, as well as all students who enroll during summer of 2020 and during the first 20 school days of the 2020-21 school year. An application for the exemption must be submitted to the Department and the school must demonstrate sufficient need for the exemption notwithstanding the size and percentage of its ELL population.

- The 45 day ELL identification review period shall be extended to 65 days from the beginning of the school year for all students who enrolled during COVID-19 school closures in 2019-20, as well as all students who enroll during summer of 2020 and during the first 20 school days of the 2020-21 school year.
- The individual interview portion of the ELL identification process is waived if a district can document that a video interview was conducted as part of provisional remote identification during COVID-19 school closures. In such instances, qualified school personnel must review the Home Language Questionnaire with the parent or person in parental relation.
- Districts must provide required instructional Units of Study to all ELLs based on their most recently measured English language proficiency level during in-person or hybrid instruction. (Guidance on accounting for units of study during hybrid and remote instruction is provided in the Teaching and Learning section of the Reopening document.)
- Time spent in a remote learning program during COVID-19 school closures shall not count toward the 12 months of enrollment in a NYS school allowed prior to identification as a Student with Interrupted or Inconsistent Education (SIFE).
- Districts must maintain regular communication with parents/guardians of ELLs to ensure that they are engaged in their children’s education during the reopening process, and provide all communications for parents/guardians of ELLs in their preferred language and mode of communication.

Considerations and best practices that districts should incorporate, to the greatest extent possible, for reopening include:

- Enabling all teachers and administrators to receive professional learning on topics related to use of technology and hybrid or remote learning strategies in topics related to ELLs.
- Establishing protocols that promote coordination among English as a New Language (ENL) and content area teachers for the delivery of remote and hybrid learning.
- Adopting or developing progress monitoring tools to identify areas of student strengths and needs to support instructional decisions as ELLs develop English language proficiency and content area knowledge in both English and their home languages. It is not the intent for such tools to be used for accountability purposes (for more on progress monitoring, see page 11).
- Allowing 12th grade students who were unable to complete requirements in 2019-20 to continue work towards earning the New York State Seal of Biliteracy in 2020-2021.
- Resuming and creating programs to address the specific needs of SIFE, ELLs with IEPs, and other vulnerable populations during the reopening process.
- Continuing to utilize educational technology when teaching ELLs in both in-person and hybrid models to reinforce students’ familiarity with these tools.
- Providing Emergent Multilingual Learners enrolled in Prekindergarten programs with instruction in their home languages during remote and hybrid learning (for more on early learning, see page 9).
- Actively engaging students on a regular basis to assess their need for Social Emotional Well Being supports that address the unique experiences of ELLs and are delivered in or interpreted into students’ home languages during remote or hybrid learning.
- Implementing the practices described in the Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education Framework during hybrid or remote learning.

For more information, please visit the OBEWL site on the [Provision of Services to ELL and World Languages Students During School Closures](#).



Who are the recipients of the NYS Seal of Biliteracy (NYSSB)? (Interim Report 8/19/20)



The NYSSB is an award given to a student who has demonstrated a high level of proficiency in English and one or more world languages.



Total # of students who earned the NYSSB in 2019-20 (so far): **4,695**

3,302
(70%)

1,394
(30%)



80 students have earned the Seal in TWO world languages in addition to English!



3 students have earned the Seal in THREE world languages in addition to English!



English Language Learners (ELLs): **188 (4%)**



Former/Ever ELLs: **1,058 (22.5%)**



Never ELLs: **3,450 (72.5%)**



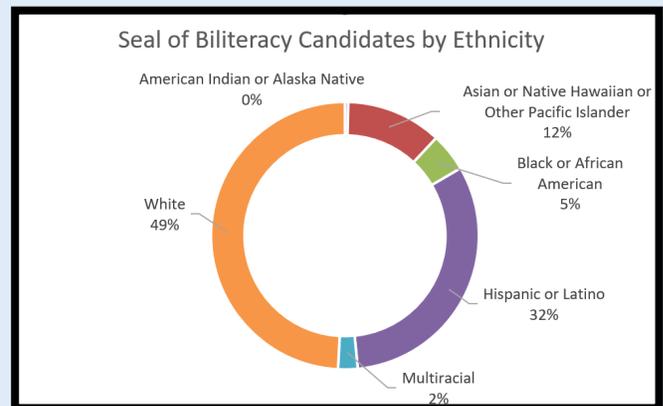
Total # of schools reporting data on the NYSSB in 2019-20 (so far):

293



Total # of languages in which students have earned the NYSSB in 2019-20 (so far):

59



Albanian, American Sign Language, Arabic, Bengali, Bosnian, Burmese, Chin, Chinese, Czech, Danish, Dari, Dutch, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Gujarati, Haitian Creole, Hausa, Hebrew, Hindi, Hungarian, Italian, Japanese, Karen, Kinyarwanda, Kirundi, Kiswahili, Khmer, Korean, Kurdish, Latin, Latvian, Lithuanian, Macedonian, Malay, Malayalam, Mandarin, Mongolian, Nepali, Persian/Farsi, Polish, Portuguese, Punjabi, Romanian, Russian, Serbo-Croatian, Somali, Spanish, Swahili, Tagalog, Thai, Tibetan, Tigrinya, Turkish, Tuscarora, Ukrainian, Urdu, and Vietnamese



Office of Bilingual Education & World Languages
Elisa Alvarez, Associate Commissioner
Candace Black, World Language Associate

For more information on the New York State Seal of Biliteracy, please visit our [website](#).

How has the Seal of Biliteracy evolved in New York State?

(Interim Report—08/19/2020)



The NYSSB was offered for the first time as a pilot program in 2015-16.

Total # of students who have earned the



2019-20	2018-19	2017-18	2016-17	2015-16
4,695	4,031	2,054	1,355	284



English Language Learners (ELLs)	# of students earning the Seal	Former/Ever ELLs	# of students earning the Seal	Never ELLs	# of students earning the Seal
2019-20	188	2019-20	1,058	2019-20	3,450
2018-19	218	2018-19	873	2018-19	2,940
2017-18	87	2017-18	524	2017-18	1,440
2016-17	80	2016-17	279	2016-17	995
2015-16	22	2015-16	84	2015-16	178

Total # of schools reporting data on the NYSSB:



2019-20	2018-19	2017-18	2016-17	2015-16
293	228	115	84	14

Total # of languages in which students have earned the Seal:



2019-20	2018-19	2017-18	2016-17	2015-16
59	47	39	33	9

Year	# of students who earned the Seal in 2 world languages (in addition to English)	# of students who earned the Seal in 3 world languages (in addition to English)
2019-20	80	3
2018-19	23	1
2017-18	12	0
2016-17	6	0
2015-16	0	0

Data on gender and race/ethnicity were only collected in the current year (2019-20) and therefore there are no comparative statistics.

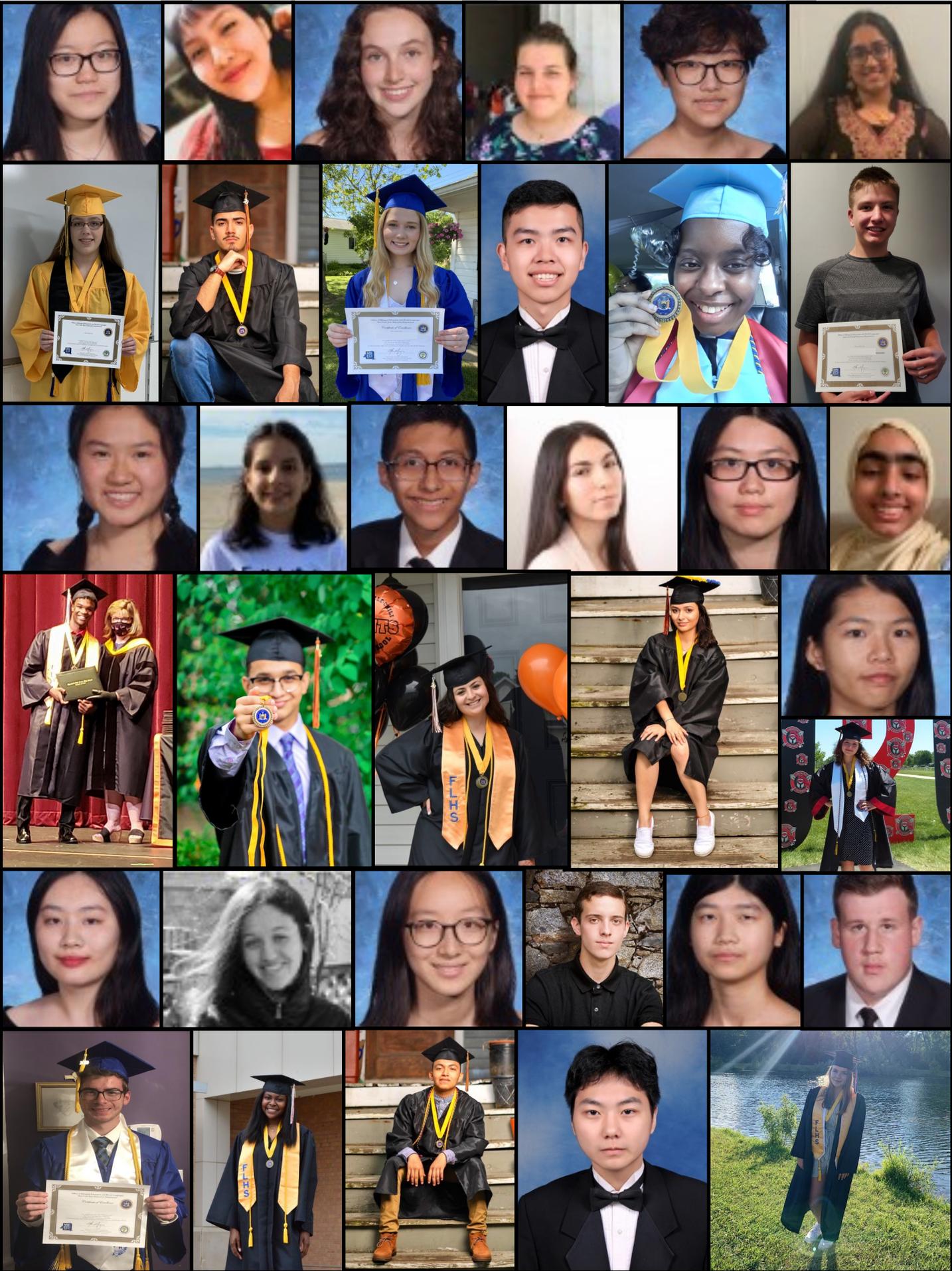


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Seal of Biliteracy - Class of 2020





New Resources from ELL Leadership Council Workgroups

The ELL Leadership Council is comprised of about 50 ENL Directors and other district-level administrators that support the education of English Language Learners. The group has met regularly for the past five years to provide a direct line of communication between OBEWL and ELL administrators from the districts with the highest enrollment of ELLs in New York State. In the past, this group served as a means for OBEWL to periodically inform districts about NYSED policies and activities. Since the COVID-19 related closures, OBEWL has partnered with the ELL Leadership Council, providing districts the opportunity for regular and open communication to identify and address problems that have been noted in the field, to advise OBEWL on policy changes and guidance needed to help schools improve their distance learning for ELLs, and to ensure that districts are informed about actions being taken by NYSED in a consistent and timely manner. This spring the ELL Leadership Council created a number of workgroups to investigate specific issues in need of additional guidance and/or resources. In particular, the focus of these workgroups is to help prepare educators for the reopening of schools and the anticipated challenges that will come with it.

Considerations for Progress Monitoring for English Language Learners with Equity in Mind

The Progress Monitoring, Feedback & Engagement Workgroup has been established to research and report on best practices for progress monitoring, giving effective feedback, and engaging ELLs. The workgroup has created a [PowerPoint presentation](#) and corresponding [infographic](#) (see next page) to provide teachers with guidance on effective feedback, progress monitoring with equity in mind, and how to use data effectively for instructional design. Both resources are available on the OBEWL website and the PowerPoint presentation will be turned into a recorded webinar for educators and schools to use for their own professional learning. The members are: Chastity Beato, Director of Language Acquisition, Newburgh Enlarged CSD; Candace Black, World Language Associate, Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages, NYSED; Audrey Cabbell, Director of ENL and Bilingual Education, Nyack Public Schools; Marguerita Circello, Ed.D., District Administrator - Bilingual/ENL & World Languages, Mount Vernon CSD; Kimberly O'Brien, K-6 Academic Standards Facilitator, East Ramapo CSD; Michelle Passeggiata, Coordinator of ELLs K-12, Copiague CSD; and Rebecca Zuch, Supervisor of Multilingual Education/ENL, Buffalo Public Schools.

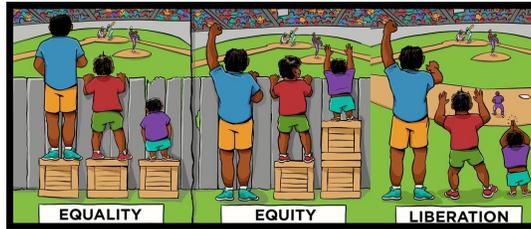
Instructional Units of Study Position Statement and Guidance for COVID-19 Fall School Re-Opening

The Compliance Workgroup was established to support districts and schools in preparing for the potential delivery of instruction in three different modes (in person, hybrid, or remote) during the 2020-2021 school year, and for the possibility of needing to change mode in the middle of the year. The group's key focus is to help schools address changes to Commissioner's Regulations, and to develop guidance on what these changes mean for instruction. The [position statement document](#) on the Units of Study addresses flexibility regarding the ENL and Bilingual units of study requirements that was approved by the NYS Board of Regents in April 2020 and remains in effect for all schools during COVID-19 related closures. When schools reopen in the fall of 2020, districts must provide required [instructional Units of Study](#) to all ELLs based on their most recently measured English language proficiency level. (Guidance on accounting for units of study during hybrid and remote instruction is provided in the Teaching and Learning section of the Reopening document.). In this statement, the workgroup addresses the need for schools to determine lessons and class assignments that are appropriate to students' proficiency levels and emphasizes the ability for school leaders to assign additional Units of Study (or their online equivalent) to ELLs as determined to be necessary in order to maintain their English language development.

The members of the Compliance Workgroup are: Marguerita Circello, Ed.D., District Administrator - Bilingual/ENL & World Languages, Mount Vernon CSD; Sharon Eghigian, District ENL Facilitator, Utica CSD; Brenda Garcia, Executive Director of School Support & Implementation, Division of Multilingual Learners, NYC DOE; Jordan Gonzalez, Director of Language Acquisition, Yonkers Public Schools; Jacqueline LeRoy, Director of ENL, Syracuse CSD; Maria Angelica Meyer, Director of Instruction, Assessments, and Funded Programs, Westbury UFSD; Wanda Ortiz-Rivera, Assistant Superintendent of Bilingual/ENL Programs K-12 & Student Intake, Brentwood UFSD; and Jill Schilling, District Coordinator of World Languages, ENL & Bilingual Education, Lindenhurst UFSD.

Considerations for Progress Monitoring for English Language

Learners with Equity in Mind



What are some best practices for providing feedback to English Language Learners (ELLs)?

Quality feedback:

- Is specific;
- Meets the individual students' academic and linguistic needs in a transparent fashion;
- Improves a student's understanding of the content being taught;
- Involves an exchange of information that helps ELLs become independent learners, develop critical thinking skills, and take ownership of their learning; and
- Includes clarifying questions that give teachers insight into what the student is thinking.



Using clarifying questions:

- Allows both the teacher and the student to dig deeper into the misconception or lack of understanding;
- Motivates students to engage in metacognition (thinking about their own thinking); and
- Encourages conversations and think-alouds rather than rote learning.



How can teachers monitor student progress with equity in mind?

Formal assessments, activities, group discussions, projects and other items to be graded should be planned in advance, designed to gather information from students, and aligned to the standards being taught. Here are some examples:

- Tiered Questions
- Tiered Supports/Scaffolds
- Chunked Text
- Defined Tier II and III vocabulary words
- Attention to linguistic needs for English proficiency
- Culturally-relevant Units of Study created as project-based and performance-based assessments
- Rubrics that allow teachers to grade students with specific academic purposes in mind.

Here are some additional resources:

[A Repair Kit for Grading](#) by Ken O'Connor

[Driven by Data](#) by Paul Bambrick-Santoyo

How does keeping equity in mind benefit students?

- Assessing for equity takes away the surprise factor, allowing teachers to assess all students based on facts, not emotions, and is bias-resistant.
- Students know what is expected before completing assignments.

What data options might schools consider to assess student learning?

Grading with data can include:

- Utilizing a variety of means of collecting data from observations of student interaction (speaking, reading, listening and writing);
- Understanding the modalities measured by the data;
- Utilizing a Data-Driven Instructional (DDI) protocol; and
- Using resources such as the NYSESLAT Targets of Measure, Performance Level Descriptors, and the Bilingual Progressions.



How can teachers assess student learning while keeping the whole child in mind?

- Provide support for continued development of native or heritage language skills;
- Develop lessons to target a specific skill or concept;
- Provide targeted academic supports;
- Differentiate to support student learning and academic growth;
- Engage in conversations with students; and
- Assess students on what they know rather than what they don't know.



For more resources for ELL instruction, please visit our [website](#).

This infographic was created by Audrey Cabbell and Rebecca Zuch with the Feedback & Engagement Workgroup of the ELL Leadership Council in collaboration with the Office of Bilingual Education & World Languages (June 2020).

Checklist for Developing or Selecting an English Language Proficiency (ELP) Progress Monitoring (Interim) Assessment

The Compliance Workgroup has developed a [checklist](#) to help schools and districts identify and/or design their own local project monitoring tools to determine, in light of the 2020 NYSESLAT cancellation, whether their students have advanced or regressed in their English language proficiency (ELP) over the past year. The document provides an overview on the reason to engage in progress monitoring as well as links to various resources that can assist in the development of a local tool, including information about the different resources that were used to develop the NYSESLAT. The checklist itself is a brief exercise that will help educators focus on different measures that should be included and the best methods that should be used in the test design process. The results of the assessments that are adopted using this checklist should serve as an advisory to help educators modify instruction for their ELLs, but the results may not serve as a determination new ELP levels for those students. Students must officially remain at the ELP level identified in their most recent NYSESLAT or NYSITELL score, and no student may be exited from ELL services based on the results of progress monitoring tool other than the NYSESLAT.

Professional Learning Opportunities

August 18-20, 2020: [Western New York Multilingual Teacher Summit](#)

- Keynote Speakers: Elisa Alvarez
- Live Conference via WebEx
- These sessions will explore some of the most innovative resources for multilingual learners of all ages and proficiency levels. Experts will showcase a variety of online and printed products that can support content and language learning.



September 16, 2020: [Preparing for the “New Normal”: Supporting English Language Learners for Success](#)

- Time: 4:00 p.m. — 5:00 p.m.
- This panel will include experts from the field to answer commonly asked questions about how to support the success of English Language Learners (ELLs) as we return to face-to-face and hybrid learning after COVID-19. We will discuss successful strategies, common challenges (and how to best address them), and ideas for how educators and parents can support ELL learners.
- Co-Sponsors: Capital District RBERN and SUNY Albany

November 3, 2020: World Languages Virtual Workshop: Curating Authentic Resources for World Languages

- Presenter: Leslie Grahn, time: 8:00 a.m.— 12:00 p.m.
- Maximum capacity: 500 attendees
- 4 hours of CTLE credit offered; the live webinar will be recorded and uploaded to the OBEWL site for on-demand viewing.
- Registration will be available starting in August 2020 via an online form. Please visit our [website](#) for the link later in the summer.

[Calendar of Professional Learning events](#)

Resources and Professional Learning for ELLs and World Languages Students

In response to New York State school closings due to the COVID-19 public health emergency, the OBEWL has collected resources for educators to provide continuity of instruction for English Language Learners and World Language students. We are also providing educational resources for students and parents to continue moving ELLs toward English proficiency in the absence of face-to-face classroom instruction, and to support their remote learning of core content areas. In addition, OBEWL is maintaining a calendar of all RBERN professional learning events held virtually and open to all New York State Educators.

[Resource Collection for ELLs](#)

[Resource Collection for World Languages](#)



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OBEWL Home Page: <http://www.nysed.gov/program-offices/office-bilingual-education-and-world-languages-obewl>

Bilingual Education website: www.nysed.gov/bilingual-ed

World Languages website: <http://www.nysed.gov/world-languages>

NYS Seal of Biliteracy website: <http://www.nysed.gov/world-languages/new-york-state-seal-biliteracy-nyssb>

Need local support? Contact your Regional Bilingual Education Resource Networks (RBERNs)!

- [New York State Language RBERN \(statewide\)](#)
- [Capital District Region RBERN at Questar III BOCES](#)
- [Hudson Valley RBERN at SW BOCES](#)
- [Long Island RBERN at Eastern Suffolk BOCES](#)
- [Mid-State RBERN at OCM BOCES](#)
- [Mid-West RBERN at Monroe 2 - Orleans BOCES](#)
- [New York City RBERN at Fordham University](#)

The mission of the New York State Education Department's Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages is to ensure that all New York State students, including English Language Learners / Multilingual Learners, attain the highest level of academic success and language proficiency. We strive to ensure that all students' individual educational paths and socio-emotional needs are met in multiple languages leading them to college and career readiness. NYSED believes that all teachers are teachers of ELLs/MLLs.

