

From: Measel, Robert <romeasel@pa.gov>
Date: Wednesday, August 18, 2021 at 11:49 AM
Subject: Field update – August 2021

Dear colleague,

We hope that your preparations for the start of school are going well and wish you a successful start to the 2021-2022 school year!

This field memo contains important and timely updates regarding policies and procedures related to the education of English learners (ELs). You are receiving this e-mail because your district has identified you in PIMS as a point of contact for the language instruction educational program (LIEP) in your district. If you are not the appropriate person to receive this information, please pass this along to the appropriate person and contact your administration to correct the point of contact in PIMS.

Reclassification of ELs

ELs are only eligible for reclassification if they meet the criteria outlined in the [Reclassification, Monitoring, and Re-designation guidance document](#).

Provisional 2021 ACCESS scores that were made available in June may be used for reclassification.

The reclassification window, which normally closes on October 1st, is extended until October 29th. This means that the deadline to complete the PIMS submission for the October snapshot is also extended until October 29th. All required EL data current at the time of submission must be submitted on or prior to October 29th. See below for information regarding updates to the October data based on ELs who may be reclassified later in the school year.

ELs who do not have provisional scores from the 2021 administration of ACCESS are not eligible for reclassification and must remain identified as ELs until the 2021 scores are available in December and the reclassification process can be completed.

Programming and support should be based on a student's needs with substantial input from teachers, not only ACCESS scores. If a student cannot be reclassified in the first half of the 2021-2022 school year because 2021 ACCESS scores are not available, then that student must remain identified as an EL until ACCESS scores are released in December, but the district is free to tailor the academic and language program as appropriate.

For students who receive an ACCESS score in December that exceeds the cutoff for reclassification eligibility (4.5 overall composite), the district may complete the reclassification process at any point before administering the 2022 ACCESS test. Districts are not required to administer the ACCESS test to students who are reclassified prior to the end of the 2022 ACCESS testing window. For students who are reclassified based on 2021 ACCESS scores, the district PIMS Coordinator must request an exception to change their 2021 October PIMS data to reflect Monitor Year 1 status. PDE recommends that districts begin as soon as possible to plan for reclassifying students (completing rubrics and compiling points) who are likely to reach the cutoff when 2021 ACCESS scores are released in December so that the process can be completed prior to the opening of the 2022 testing window or during the initial weeks of

testing. Any 2022 test materials for students who are reclassified based on 2021 scores should simply be returned to DRC.

For students whose 2021 ACCESS scores will not be available until December but who may be reclassified when those scores are made available, districts should still order tests in the fall to ensure that they are scheduled and/or available in January and can be administered should the students not be reclassified based on 2021 ACCESS scores.

ACCESS testing in the fall

The 2021 testing window will close on September 17th. All materials must be shipped back to DRC on or before September 24th.

The full table of dates related to ACCESS testing (for 2021 as well as 2022) can be found on the [PA page](#) on the WIDA website.

Fall ACCESS testing is an extension of the 2020-2021 testing window and therefor **ONLY FOR STUDENTS WHO WERE ENROLLED IN YOUR DISTRICT IN 2020-2021** and did not take the ACCESS test. **DO NOT** administer the ACCESS test in September to newly enrolling students.

Districts are not required to administer the ACCESS test in the fall to ELs who were previously enrolled in another district and did not take the test during the 2020-2021 school year.

Screening

For students previously assigned an EL status based on the provisional screening process and who have not been screened with an approved WIDA screening instrument yet and did not take the ACCESS in 2021, districts are required to administer one of the approved WIDA screening instruments as soon as possible once in-person school begins. This must be completed within 30 days of the start of school. This includes students who were provisionally identified as ELs *and those who were provisionally screened and determined not to be ELs.*

For provisionally identified ELs who took the ACCESS test in 2021 and have provisional 2021 ACCESS scores, there is no need to screen at this point. If the ACCESS score exceeds the reclassification threshold, then the students may be reclassified in accordance with the state procedure. If the score does not exceed the reclassification cutoff, then the student will remain identified as ELs and does not need to be screened.

For provisionally identified ELs who took the ACCESS test in 2021 but whose ACCESS scores will not be available until December, districts must administer a screener to verify the provisional status determination and provide an updated ELP level, but they may not remove an EL status if the student exceeds the screening cutoff. In other words, if a student was provisionally identified as an EL, took the ACCESS test in 2021, is then screened in the fall and exceeds the identification cutoff, then the district must continue to report the student as an active EL and wait for the 2021 ACCESS scores to be reported. At that point, the student may be reclassified if he/she meets the minimum threshold.

There is no extension to the screening window. All newly enrolling students who are potentially ELs must be screened and identified within 30 calendar days of the start of school or 14 calendar days for students who enroll after the start of school.

Please visit the PDE EL webpage to review the [Screening, Identification, and Placement guidance](#).

Test administrators

Just as a reminder, the requirements for ACCESS and Screener test administrators and test administrator eligibility are outlined on the [PA page](#) on the WIDA website.

For any questions related to policies or guidance, please feel free to contact a member of the EL team at PDE – Bob Measel (romeasel@pa.gov) or Julia Hutton (juhutton@pa.gov).

For questions related to professional learning, please contact Andrea Kolb (akolb@csc.csiu.org).

Best,

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