

Dear colleagues,

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 do not respond to this e-mail.** Rather, pass this along to the appropriate person and contact your administration to correct the point of contact in PIMS.

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The Department is aware that many districts may/will be closed and/or conducting education virtually for a time due to current circumstances related to the spread of COVID-19. ACCESS testing may not be conducted remotely, so districts must wait until school is in session face-to-face in order to begin or continue testing, and they must adjust their testing schedules accordingly. The Department is monitoring the situation closely. Should it become necessary, the testing window *may* be extended to ensure that all districts are afforded the opportunity to administer the ACCESS test to all of their ELs in 2022. The testing window is NOT being extended at this time. The field will be notified promptly if the decision is made in the coming weeks to extend the window. In the meantime, district should plan to begin testing as soon as possible and make every effort to complete testing before the currently scheduled close of the testing window on February 18<sup>th</sup>.

Tests for students who are not present during the testing window should be coded with the appropriate DO NOT SCORE code. The most appropriate code for a student who was contacted by the district and informed of the need to be present for testing, but who refused to come into school or whose parents refused to allow them to come to school, may be DEC (declined). ABS (absent) may be the most appropriate code to use in situation wherein the student was not present for testing and district was unable to verify acknowledgement of the testing requirement by the student and/or parent. Ultimately, the district must determine which code is most appropriate in each situation, though. DO NOT SCORE codes are described in greater detail in the Test Coordinator Manual.

If you have questions, please feel free to contact a member of the EL team at PDE – Bob Measel ([romeasel@pa.gov](mailto:romeasel@pa.gov)) or Julia Hutton ([juhutton@pa.gov](mailto:juhutton@pa.gov)).

Best,

**Bob Measel** | ESL Bilingual Education Advisor II / Title III Director  
Division of Instructional Quality  
Department of Education | Bureau of Curriculum, Assessment, and Instruction  
333 Market Street | Harrisburg PA 17126-0333  
Phone: 717.783.6595 | Fax: 717.783.6642  
[www.education.pa.gov](http://www.education.pa.gov)