

Dear colleague,

*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, but rather pass this along to the appropriate person and contact your administration to correct the point of contact in PIMS.***

Closing of the ACCESS testing window

The ACCESS testing window closed on February 17th and the deadline for shipping back all materials to DRC was March 8th. As of the date of this update, all testing must be complete and districts should have returned all materials to DRC.

Materials **MUST** be returned on time. If your materials were not returned on or before March 8th, they will be processed as late returns, and you will not receive the results in May.

Alternate ACCESS field testing

The Alternate ACCESS field test window is currently open. All districts with eligible students should have received materials. If you did not, you should contact DRC - WIDA@datarecognitioncorp.com | 1-855-787-9615 (TTY: 763-268-2889).

As a reminder, all districts with students who are eligible to take the Alternate ACCESS must participate in the Alternate ACCESS field test. This will mean testing these students twice. The Consortium must have sufficient participation to meet federal statutory and regulatory requirements under Title I of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) for implementing valid and reliable state assessment systems. Please contact the Department if you encounter a situation that may prevent one or more of your students from participating in the field test.

Act 158

On January 31st, the Department conducted a virtual meeting to provide an overview of the requirements of Act 158 with considerations for ELs. The recording of that meeting can be found [here](#). The Act 158 toolkit page where you can find additional resources including a comprehensive FAQ can be found [here](#). You are encouraged to review these materials if you have questions about Act 158.

Reclassification of ELs

In the coming weeks, districts should begin planning for reclassification of ELs. After thoroughly reviewing the [reclassification guidance](#), you must ensure that you have a plan to:

- select content teachers who will complete the language use inventories;
- manage the decision-making/reporting process in accordance with the [reclassification procedure](#);
- train staff to use the rubrics and evaluate students' language use;
- hold teachers accountable for completing the inventories; and
- select students for whom inventories will be completed in anticipation of qualifying ACCESS scores.

As a reminder, the final step in the reclassification decision-making process is the recommendation from teachers who complete the language use inventories. Districts **must** consider these recommendations along with the points assigned by the ACCESS assessment and the rubrics when deciding whether or not to reclassify ELs.

Professional learning opportunities

Please visit the [ELD Portal](#) for all state-offered professional learning opportunities.

The annual ELD virtual conference is scheduled for November 14th – 16th. Pre-K through 12th-grade content teachers, ESL specialists, special education teachers, paraprofessionals, school administrators, pre-service teachers, and higher education faculty are encouraged to attend. Check the ELD Portal for more information about the conference.

Office hours

Please consider attending one of the scheduled virtual office hours meetings to hear updates from PDE, ask questions or bring your concerns, and network with colleagues from across the Commonwealth. The schedule for the meetings can be found on the ELD Portal on the [professional learning page](#). The next meeting will be on March 22nd at 10:00.

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 Puza (jpuza@pa.gov).

For questions related to professional learning, please contact esl@csc.csiu.org.

Best,

Bob Measel | ESL Bilingual Education Advisor / Title III Director

www.education.pa.gov