



## Guidance for Language Proficiency Teams

John Boniello, RSE-TASC Bilingual Special Education Specialist

In December 2014, the New York State Education Department (NYSED) issued changes to Part 154 of the Chancellor’s Regulations concerning English Language Learners. One of the revisions requires schools to create a Language Proficiency Team, or LPT, for the purpose of determining the English language proficiency status of students with disabilities. This past month, NYSED released the long-awaited guidance, *Commissioner’s Regulations on Subparts 154-2 and 154-3: Determining English Language Learner/Multilingual Learner (ELL/MLL) Status of and Services for Students with Disabilities* (found mid-page at: <http://www.nysed.gov/bilingual-ed/regulations-concerning-english-language-learnersmultilingual-learners>).

The guidance document states that the LPT must be part of the process for English Language Learners (ELLs) with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), who are newly enrolling in or re-entering a NYS K-12 public school if the initial screening and individual interview with the student suggests that the student’s home or primary language is other than English. This includes students who are transitioning from CPSE to CSE and those arriving from



another state or territory. The LPT must make a recommendation to the principal that either: 1) the student has second language acquisition needs and is to take the New York State Identification Test for English Language Learners (NYSITELL), or 2) the student’s disability is the determinant factor affecting his or her ability to demonstrate proficiency in English and the student does not have language acquisition needs.

Examples of two students entering Kindergarten may clarify this process. Both students are classified with Autism and have severe communication disorders.

The first student lives with his grandmother and both parents. The grandmother speaks Bengali and the

*Continued on page 2*

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Language Proficiency Teams	1
School Tool: Culturally & Linguistically Appropriate Evaluations	2
RSE-TASC Workshops	3
Community Events	3
Bright Spot	4
Contact Information	4



# School Tool: Culturally & Linguistically Appropriate Evaluations

While the decisions of the Language Proficiency Team are critically important, decisions made by evaluators and the CSE will affect more students more often. Culturally and linguistically appropriate evaluations are the foundation of appropriate actions by the CSE. Teachers College at Columbia University's Leaders Project has posted a great series of videos featuring Dr. Catherine Crowley on distinguishing between difference, disorder, or gap. In this series she draws on current regulations and evidence-based practices to conduct a culturally and linguistically appropriate evaluation. You can find the series here: <https://www.leadersproject.org/category/all-menus/disability-evaluations/school-age-disability-video-modules/>



## LPTs

*Continued from page 1*

mother and father speak Bengali and English. In the Home Language Questionnaire, the parents identify a language other than English as being present in the home. As a result, the English as a New Language (ENL) teacher conducts an interview with the student and the student is not able to demonstrate proficiency in English. At the subsequent LPT meeting the team reviews documentation from the CSE of the student's severe expressive and receptive language delays. The prior speech/language and educational evaluations state that the student had difficulty with directions provided in both English and Bengali, but was more frequently able to respond to directions in English. They also learn that, although the grandmother speaks Bengali to the student at home, the parents speak only English to him. With this information the LPT concludes that the disability is the primary reason the child cannot demonstrate proficiency in English and that he has no second language acquisition needs. This student is not

identified as an ELL and will not take the NYSITELL.

The second student comes from a home in which Spanish is identified as the dominant language in the Home Language Questionnaire. During the interview with the ENL teacher the student is not able to demonstrate proficiency in English. The LPT then reviews CSE documentation that the student had severe expressive communication delays and stronger receptive communication skills. Most of the evaluators say that the student performed better when test questions and directions were in Spanish. The LPT concludes that the student's limited English proficiency might not be due to the disability, but to limited exposure to English and recommend that the student be given the NYSITELL with accommodations. Results of the NYSITELL confirm the student is an ELL.

A student who comes from an environment where English is not the dominant language should not be denied the opportunity to take the NYSITELL if there is any doubt. The guidance released by NYSED is very clear on this:

*Unless the preponderance of evidence clearly indicates that a*

*student has no second language acquisition needs and requires no second language supports, the student should take the NYSITELL. A lack of information about second language needs in the IEP or previous records should not be interpreted as meaning these needs do not exist. (NYSED, 2018, p. 12)*

The guidance also emphasizes that the LPT should not recommend that disability is the determinant factor merely because of concerns that the student may be unable to exit ELL/MLL status due to the impact of the disability (p.12).

The LPT is an important step in identifying students who should or should not take the NYSITELL due to their disability. This decision can have long-lasting effects on a student's outcomes. These decisions require a close look at all of the available evidence. Page 8 of the guidance provides a list of factors for the LPT to consider. Take some time to carefully review the entire document, and contact us if you have questions.



# Come Learn with us at our Upcoming Regional Trainings



## Community Events

### From PNW BOCES

[www.pnwboces.org/catalog](http://www.pnwboces.org/catalog)

- Choosing Appropriate Texts for Struggling Readers, 4/9
- Assistive Technology Forum, 4/30

### From SW BOCES

[www.swboces.org](http://www.swboces.org)

- Isabel Beck, author of “Bringing Words to Life” in a rare speaking engagement, 4/20
- Incorporating Vocabulary Routines for English Language Learners, 4/20 or 4/26

### From Rockland BOCES

[www.rocklandboces.org](http://www.rocklandboces.org)

- Rockland County Resource & Transition Fair, 4/11
- Early Childhood Transitions Conference 2018 “Looking Back, Looking Forward”, 4/24
- New Testing Accommodations and Computer Based Testing Implications, 4/26

### From WIHD

[www.wihd.org](http://www.wihd.org)

- 15th Annual Transition Linkages Fair, 4/12
- CPSE/CSE Parent Member Training, 4/13
- New York State CDOS Commencement Credential: What it Is, and What it Is Not, 4/18

### From OPPWD

[opwdd.ny.gov](http://opwdd.ny.gov)

- Public Forum—New Care Coordination Organizations, 4/12

## Behavior & Discipline Supports

### April

- Developmentally Appropriate Practices for Preschoolers, 4/25  
**\*WAIT LIST\***
- Team Implementation Guidance for Social & Behavioral Supports, 4/26

### May

- FBA-BIP for Preschoolers (3 Day), 5/3, 5/30, & 6/14
- PBIS Coaches' Forum, 5/11
- New Coaches' Basic Training, 5/11
- Tier 2 Overview, 5/11
- Classroom Management: Increasing Expected Behaviors, 5/15 **\*WAIT LIST\***
- Team Implementation Guidance for Social & Behavioral Supports, 5/21

### June

- Team Implementation Guidance for Social & Behavioral Supports, 6/6

## Individualized Educational Planning & the CSE Process

### April

- Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Evaluations, 4/23

### May

- New CPSE Chairperson Training, 5/1  
**\*BY INVITATION ONLY\***
- IEPs for English Language Learners, 5/10

## Leadership

### April

- CSE Roundtable, 4/19

## Instructional Practices

### June

- Special Ed 101 for ENL Teachers, 6/5

## Transition Systems

### April

- Putnam County Transition Consortium, 4/12
- WE-CAN (Westchester Educators and Community Agencies Network), 4/13
- Diploma and Credential Options for Students with Disabilities, 4/18
- The Forum: Skills and Achievement Commencement Credential & Student Exit Summary, 4/20
- Transition Assessment and Planning for Students Entering Careers, 4/23  
**\*WAIT LIST\***

### May

- Introduction to Assessing the Transitioning Student, 5/8
- WE-CAN (Westchester Educators and Community Agencies Network), 5/9
- Ready to Work? Job Coaching, 5/10  
**\*WAIT LIST\***
- Ready to Work? Job Developing, 5/10 **\*WAIT LIST\***
- Putnam County Transition Consortium, 5/10
- Work-Readiness Options for Student's with Disabilities: Registered WBL Programs and National Credentials, 5/31

### June

- WE-CAN (Westchester Educators and Community Agencies Network), 6/13
- Putnam County Transition Consortium, 6/14

## Student Outcomes Conference (SOCon)

Thursday, June 7, 2018, 8:00am—3:00pm

Join 250 of your regional colleagues to celebrate our 2017-18 improved student outcomes!

The Double Tree by Hilton, 455 S. Broadway, Tarrytown NY

View our Training Calendar  
and Register at  
[rsetasc.pnwboces.org/](http://rsetasc.pnwboces.org/)



# BRIGHT SPOT!

This month's Bright Spot comes from the Mamaroneck School District, which has been working with the RSE-TASC Bilingual Special Education Specialist, John Boniello, on building systems to improve the evaluation and identification of ELLs who are suspected of having disabilities.

**What were students able to achieve?** Students are making great gains both academically and socially. Through teacher reports and progress monitoring data we see improved peer relationships, higher level academic functioning, and an improvement in the overall well-being of our bilingual and ELL students. ELL students who might have been identified for Special Education in the past, are instead now receiving targeted instruction through general education systems.

**What practices or systems made this possible?** The district has put multiple practices and systems in place. Elementary support staff team have worked hard to incorporate thorough assessments that better distinguish between students who have different learning needs and/or are still acquiring English, as opposed to students who may have a disability. The district provides professional development on the most recent research in bilingualism and has recruited team members who have extensive training and experience with bilingual education and evaluations. They have enhanced communication practices to better connect with families and ensure families feel more connected to the school community. In addition, the district has put systems in place to ensure instruction meets the needs of their ELLs. Assessment data inform academic planning and are used to identify the type of support each student requires. If students are found ineligible for Special Education services, the team sets specific goals to help differentiate instruction for these students through building level supports. Each student's progress is then monitored regularly and interventions are continually adjusted based on progress monitoring results.

**What can we learn from this?** Keeping current with the most recent research in bilingual education to inform practices and school systems can impact the lives of many students. With appropriate bilingual evaluations, targeted instruction and on-going progress monitoring, these students who might previously have been classified are thriving across subject areas in general education classrooms.

## RSE-TASC Staff

914-248-2289

[rse-tasc@pnwboces.org](mailto:rse-tasc@pnwboces.org)

[www.pnwboces.org/rse-tasc](http://www.pnwboces.org/rse-tasc)

Follow us on Twitter: @lhrsetasc

**Patti Slobogin, Director**

**Leslie Zedlovich, Jr. Administrative Assistant**

**Felecia Morris, Sr. Office Assistant**

**Megan King, Office Assistant**

### REGIONAL TRAINERS:

**John Boniello, Bilingual Special Education Specialist**

**Kit Casey, Transition Specialist**

**Sara Fienup, Behavior Specialist**

**Dale Langley, Behavior Specialist**

**Erin Leskovic, Preschool Behavior Specialist**

**Laurie Levine, Regional Special Education Specialist**

**Ann Narcisse, Regional Special Education Specialist**

**Stephanie Wozniak, Transition Specialist**

### SPECIAL EDUCATION SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT SPECIALISTS (SEIS):

**Randy Ascher, Yonkers Public Schools**

**Andrew J. Ecker, Putnam Northern Westchester BOCES**

**Fran Fernandez, Special Act and Approved Private Schools**

**Denise Jaffe, Southern Westchester BOCES**

**John McCabe, Special Act and Approved Private Schools**

**Nicole Scariano, Rockland BOCES**

**Martha Trujillo-Torp, Yonkers Public Schools**



#### Superintendents

James M. Ryan Ed.D.  
DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT

Todd Currie  
ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT

Lynn Allen Ed.D.  
ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT

John McCarthy  
ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT

#### Board Members

Richard Kreps  
PRESIDENT

Catherine Lilburne  
VICE PRESIDENT

Anita Feldman  
TRUSTEE

Douglas Glickert  
TRUSTEE

Tina Mackay  
TRUSTEE

Mary Cay Nilsen  
TRUSTEE

Frank Schneckner  
TRUSTEE