



TO: P-12 Education Committee

FROM: Angélica Infante-Green *Angélica Infante - Green*

SUBJECT: Emergent Multilingual Learners (EMLLs) in Prekindergarten

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SUMMARY

Issue for Discussion

Should the Board of Regents direct staff to utilize an “Emergent Multilingual Learners Language Profile for Prekindergarten Students” as part of a process to identify when a prekindergarten student’s home or primary language is other than English?

Reason(s) for Consideration

The term “English Language Learner” (ELL) in New York State (NYS) refers to students in grades Kindergarten through 12th grade who are identified pursuant to the ELL identification process set forth in Commissioner’s Regulations (CR) Part 154-2.3(a).

CR Part 151 Universal Prekindergarten (UPK) Regulations do not mandate a process for identifying ELLs in Prekindergarten. The New York State Education Department’s (NYSED) Prekindergarten Quality Assurance Protocol requires Prekindergarten programs to support all young learners with fidelity and communicate with their families in their home language.

CR Part 117.1-3 establishes standards for the screening of every new entrant into NYS schools to determine which students are possibly gifted, have or are suspected of having a disability in accordance with subdivision (6) of section 3208 of the Education Law, and/or possibly are “limited English proficient” in accordance with subdivision 2-a of section 3204 of the Education Law.

The United States Department of Education’s Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Early Learning Non-Regulatory Guidance contains explicit language related to the instruction to ELLs and providing professional development to their teachers: “States must assist teachers (including preschool teachers), principals, and other school

leaders, state educational agencies, and schools in establishing, in implementing and sustaining effective language instruction educational programs designed to assist in teaching English Learners including immigrant children and youth.” [SEC.3102Purposes]

Procedural History

In October of 2014, NYSED’s Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages (OBEWL) and the Office of Early Learning (OEL) presented a discussion item to the Board of Regents (BOR) on the formulation of protocols and procedures to meet the language and literacy needs of all young children. A panel presentation took place to discuss the importance of including the need for bilingual programs and services in Prekindergarten programs. In addition, the panel presented ways to effectively assess the needs of ELLs in Prekindergarten (or rather, Prekindergarten students likely to be identified as ELLs the following year upon entering Kindergarten), issues of equitable access, and the importance of providing necessary and appropriate supports and services to students and families.

The BOR directed staff to draft and develop protocols and procedures to reflect the needs of emerging bilingual children in Prekindergarten programs, which included items such as an at-home questionnaire, professional development curricula for Prekindergarten administrators and teachers, and the creation of resources for families.

Background Information

According to NYSED 2016 data, of the approximately 2.6 million public school students in NYS, over 245,000 (8.8%) are ELLs. Currently, NYSED mandates use of the New York State Identification Test of English Language Learners (NYSITELL) to identify ELLs beginning in Kindergarten. In 2016, approximately 29,425 (12.3%) of all ELLs were in Kindergarten. Among these students, 16,688 (56.71%) listed Spanish as their home or primary language. Another 3,655 (12.42%) listed Chinese as their home or primary language, and other languages listed as the home or primary language of a significant number of Kindergarten ELLs include Arabic (1,175, or 3.99%), Bengali (840, or 2.85%), Russian (696, or 2.37%) and Urdu (576, or 1.96%).

CR Part 151 Universal Prekindergarten (UPK) Regulations neither mandate a process for identifying students as ELLs in Prekindergarten nor mandate ELL services. School districts with State-funded Prekindergarten programs must report to NYSED if they have a process in place for identifying Prekindergarten students who speak a language other than English. In 2015-16 approximately 18% (86 out of 478) of NYS school districts with State-funded Prekindergarten self-reported that they do not have a process to identify Prekindergarten students who speak a language other than English. Those districts which did have an identification process (392 out of 478 or 82%) self-reported an approximate total of 29,802 Prekindergarten students statewide who speak a language other than English. These students made up approximately 25% of the total Prekindergarten population of 120,069 students. Among these ELL students, 23,538 (79%) were reported by the New York City Department of Education and 6,264 (21%) were reported by rest of State.

While we have witnessed the expansion of Prekindergarten programs and the rise in population of ELLs in Kindergarten through grade 12, the need to support such students starting in early care and education has also risen. As stated in [The Blueprint for English Language Learner Success](#) and as part of the Department's mission, the Department supports the design of optimal learning environments that value linguistically diverse children who enter as early as Prekindergarten.

In 2014, the Department established the Committee on Bilingual Education in Prekindergarten Programs (the Committee), which is comprised of educators and advocates who believe in the importance of promoting receptive and productive oral and literacy development in young learners, as well as in the advantages of multilingualism.

The Committee supports the design of optimal learning environments which value linguistically diverse children and their families, and the creation of high-quality Prekindergarten programs that strengthen the language and literacy skills of all students and lead to narrowing academic achievement gaps. The Committee also works to support development of a highly effective workforce, and to equip educators with classroom tools and professional training to meet the needs of multilingual children in Prekindergarten. In order to incorporate academically and linguistically relevant instruction into Prekindergarten curricula and programs, it is critical for educators to recognize the experiences that young children have with diverse languages, and use this information to inform instruction and programming in Prekindergarten and beyond.

The Department has developed an Emergent Multilingual Learners Language Profile For Prekindergarten Students (see Attachment 1) to identify students who speak a language other than English. The Department recommends use of the term "Emergent Multilingual Learners (EMLLs)" to refer to Prekindergarten students identified by this Language Profile. The Language Profile gathers information about all students in Prekindergarten, and identifies the existing language(s) and linguistic experiences of young students, rather than quantifying the level of English proficiency (unlike identification assessments like the NYSITELL, which do quantify students' level of English proficiency). This information will assist educators in providing services that best meet the needs of EMLLs.

Related Regents Item(s)

<http://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/1014p12d4.pdf>
<http://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/PreKELLS.pdf>

Recommendation

The Department proposes the use of an “Emergent Multilingual Learners Language Profile for Prekindergarten Students” (see Attachment 1) as part of a process (see Attachment 2) in which Prekindergarten educators will determine if a student’s home or primary language is other than English. The Department recommends identifying such children who speak languages other than English in their homes as “Emergent Multilingual Learners (EMLLs)”, who are entitled to a combination of supports and instruction in their home language(s) while learning English. In addition, the use of this Language Profile will assist the Department in maintaining accurate counts of emergent MLLs in Prekindergarten programs. This information should be shared with Kindergarten teachers to ensure that there is an effective and successful transition from Prekindergarten to Kindergarten.

Attachment 1



NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT Emergent Multilingual Learners Language Profile for Prekindergarten Students¹

*Dear Parent or Guardian,
Thank you for completing the Emergent Multilingual Learners Language Profile. This survey will assist your new school with valuable information about your child's experience with languages. Information gathered will assist Prekindergarten educators in delivering academically and linguistically relevant instruction that strengthens the language and literacy of all students.*

PROFILE TO BE COMPLETED BY ENROLLMENT OR SCHOOL PERSONNEL ONLY AND MAINTAINED ON FILE	
Date Profile Completed:	
Student Name:	
Gender:	
Date of Birth:	
SCHOOL DISTRICT OR COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATION (CBO) INFORMATION	
District or CBO Name:	
Student ID (if applicable):	
Name of Person Administering Profile:	
Title:	
PARENT OR PERSON IN PARENTAL RELATION INFORMATION	
Name of parent or person in parental relation:	
In what language or languages would you like to receive information from the school? <input type="checkbox"/> English	
Other Home Language:	
Relationship (to student) of person providing information for this profile:	
<input type="checkbox"/> mother <input type="checkbox"/> father <input type="checkbox"/> other	

Language in the Home	
1. In what language(s) do you (parents or guardians) speak to your child at home?	<input type="checkbox"/> English Other Home Language _____
2. What is/are the primary languages of each parent/guardian in your home? (List all that apply.)	<input type="checkbox"/> English Other Home Language _____
3. If there is a caretaker in the home, what language(s) does the caretaker speak most frequently?	<input type="checkbox"/> English Other Home Language _____
4. What language(s) does your child understand?	<input type="checkbox"/> English Other Home Language _____

5. In what language(s) does your child speak with other people?	<input type="checkbox"/> English Other Home Language _____
6. Does your child have siblings? If yes, in what language do the children speak with each other most of the time?	<input type="checkbox"/> English Other Home Language _____
7. At what age did your child begin to speak in short sentences? In what Language? At what age did your child begin to speak in full sentences? In what Language?	<input type="checkbox"/> English Other Home Language _____ <input type="checkbox"/> English Other Home Language _____
8. In what language does your child pretend play?	<input type="checkbox"/> English Other Home Language _____
9. How has your child learned English so far (television shows, siblings, childcare, etc.)?	
Language Outside the Home/Family	
10. Has your child attended any nursery or childcare program? If so, in what language was the program conducted? In what language does your child interact with other people in the nursery or childcare setting?	<input type="checkbox"/> English Other Home Language _____ <input type="checkbox"/> English Other Home Language _____
11. How would you describe your child's language use with friends?	
Language Goals	
12. What are your language goals for your child? For example, do you want child to become proficient in more than one language?	
13. Have you intentionally exposed your child to more than one language to ensure that he or she is bilingual or multilingual?	
14. Does your child need to speak a language other than English in order to communicate with your relatives or extended family?	
Emergent Literacy	
15. Does your child have books at home or does he or she read books from the library? In what language are these books read to him or her?	
16. Can your child name any letters or sounds in English? Can your child recognize letters or symbols in another language?	<input type="checkbox"/> English Other Home Language _____
17. Does your child pretend to read? Does your child pretend to write? In what language(s)?	<input type="checkbox"/> English Other Home Language _____
18. Does your child tell the stories from his/her favorite books or videos?	
19. Does your child's childcare or nursery program describe goals for his or her learning? If so, what goals do they describe?	
20. Please describe anything special you did to prepare your child to begin Prekindergarten.	

¹For more information contact: the New York State Education Department Office of Early Learning at (518) 474-5807 or email OEL@nysed.gov or the New York State Education Department Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages at (518) 474-8775 or (718) 722-2445 or email OBEWL@nysed.gov.



EMERGENT MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS LANGUAGE PROFILE PROCESS

STEP 1: ADMINISTER THE EMERGENT MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS LANGUAGE PROFILE

Administer the Emergent Multilingual Learners Language Profile to all enrolled students. If the Profile indicates that a student's home or primary language is other than English, complete each step of this process. The child is an Emergent Multilingual Learner who is entitled to bilingual supports and instruction in the home language while learning English.

STEP 2: FAMILY INTERVIEW AND SOCIAL HISTORY

An interview, preferably in the home language, is conducted with the parent or guardian to learn of the child's language practices. The information on the Profile would inform this interview. The content of this family interview supplements any information gathered on the Emergent Multilingual Learners Language Profile once it is determined that a student has a home or primary language other than English.

STEP 3: CONDUCT INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW WITH THE CHILD

An interview is conducted with the child in the presence of his/her parent or guardian. The interview is conducted in either language or bilingually to gauge the child's comfort in his/her languages.

STEP 4: REVIEW OF EXISTING SCREENINGS

Universal Prekindergarten requires initial screenings. At this point the child's screening results are reviewed to assess emergent literacy or numeracy skills and findings are summarized.

STEP 5: PLANNING FOR PREKINDERGARTEN INSTRUCTION

Ensure that all Emergent Multilingual Learners are provided bilingual supports and instruction in the home language while learning English.

TRANSITIONING TO KINDERGARTEN

All students who will not begin Kindergarten until September of the following school year are considered new entrants to districts and schools. Therefore districts and schools shall commence the [ELL Screening, Identification, and Placement Process](#) for all Prekindergarten students as per Commissioner's Regulations Part 154-2.3(a) on or after June 1 of the current school year. All information gathered in this Language Profile Process must be maintained in the student's record.