

## MEMORANDUM

TO: District EL Coordinators  
FROM: Jim McCobb  
SUBJECT: Transition to Online Survey  
DATE: February 8, 2021

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This message is being sent to all District EL Coordinators as a follow-up to the [K-12 EL List Serve message](#) (11/9/2020), which outlined Vermont's basic guidelines for identifying, screening, and assessing potential English Learners (ELs) enrolling in Vermont K-12 schools/districts. Administering the home language survey (HLS) to parents/guardians of all newly enrolling students is only the first step in a process that helps LEAs and schools collect information about students' linguistic and educational history, in order to determine the need for further screening (English language proficiency) and ultimately plan an appropriate language instruction educational program for eligible ELs.

The November List Serve message also discussed the Agency of Education's (AOE) collaboration with the Agency of Digital Services (ADS) to develop an **Online Survey** tool. Within the next few weeks, all designated LEA Contacts will receive a link to the new collection site. This more systematic, efficient, and secure process for transmitting Home Language Survey (HLS) information should eventually streamline the collection of complete and accurate, readily available EL student demographic data necessary for multiple purposes at the local, state, and federal levels. We acknowledge that the transition to the new Online Survey tool now represents a new ask of LEAs at a challenging point in the year. For some, this ask will be more significant than for others. With COVID-19, there has been no good time to make this transition, nor is delaying another year an option because of federal reporting commitments.

In prior years, SEA staff manually entered information from LEAs' Home Language Surveys into a database, which involved extensive back-and-forth communication with LEAs to clarify entries on the paper forms, etc. During the first half of the 2020-2021 school year, many LEAs have followed the existing protocol and kept sending their districts' home language surveys. We especially appreciate this knowing all the challenges districts have faced this year. We are asking that you now begin the transition to entering surveys of identified ELs and "Eligible Immigrants" received in the 2020-2021 school year in the new Online Survey collection site. We apologize that this may appear redundant for those of you who have continued to send surveys in the current school year.

**Specific Actions Required During this Transition to the New Collection Process:** To implement the new process, District EL Coordinators are asked to do the following -

- Designate an LEA Contact for submission of *qualifying* Home Language Surveys (*please email me the person's name and contact info by Friday, January 29, 2021*);
- Read and share the new step-by-step **Instructions for Home Language Survey (HLS) Collection and Submission** with the LEA Contact and qualified EL professionals who are responsible for identification and screening of potential ELs in your district/schools;
- As soon as you receive a link to the Online Survey, enter surveys into the HLS collection site only for students who have been:
  - Screened by EL Professionals for ELP and identified as ELs; and/or
  - Identified as eligible to be counted under "Immigrant Children and Youth" definition;
- In the meantime, please contact me with any questions about the new process, the HLS and online collection site, and/or general requirements for programs/services.

**Collection Process After this Transition Period:** Going forward, designated LEA Contacts should make sure that new HLSs are submitted online as soon as students have been identified as either ELs or “Eligible Immigrants” according to the standardized identification and screening process. For specifics, please refer to the attached **Instructions for Home Language Survey (HLS) Collection and Submission**. [**Note:** When in-person initial identification and screening in compliance with health and safety requirements is not possible, HLSs and interviews with parent/guardian(s) may be completed *remotely* by district-trained enrollment personnel via phone or platforms if secure and accessible to both districts and families, e.g. Skype, Zoom. For Information on options for conducting in-person or remote screening of potential ELs, please refer again to the [11/09/2020 memo](#).]

**Timeline for Submission:** In order to meet SEA timelines for assessment, reporting, and grant management, the AOE is asking that LEAs **submit all *qualifying surveys* by Friday, March 5, 2021**. Please reach out if you foresee a problem submitting by this date.

**Reminder re: Legal Considerations:** LEAs are responsible for notifying parent/guardian(s) of all ELs identified through WIDA ELP screening (or *Annual ACCESS for ELLs/Alternate ACCESS* testing) of their placement/participation in an EL program within the first 30 days of the school year. If initial identification of an EL occurs during the school year, this notification must be provided within the first two weeks of student’s enrollment in an EL program. To comply with Federal requirements, LEAs need to keep documentation of all students’ Home Language Survey info (including Non-ELs) and also Parental Notifications required for eligible ELs under ESSA. Please remember that districts/schools are legally required to provide essential information to parent/guardians in a language and format they can understand.

The AOE is grateful for your assistance and support in this transition to the new Online Survey. Thanks to everyone for all the input and shared resources that have helped moved the needle! We look forward to working with you during the initial implementation phase!