



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



TO: English Learner Assessment Coordinators, District Administrators in TIDE, and Special Education Directors

FROM: Janet Stuck, Education Consultant
Special Populations

DATE: December 17, 2020

SUBJECT: Dually Identified English Learner Procedures for the 2021 LAS Links Assessment

The following information was discussed in the English Learner Assessment Coordinator (ELAC) Workshop conducted virtually November 10, 12, and 13, 2020. The PowerPoint from this training is being revised based upon recent changes impacting the testing window. The revised ELAC workshop slides may be viewed on the new [Connecticut DRC LAS Links Website](#) under Assessment Administration. This memo provides specific information about 2021 LAS Links procedures for dually identified students. Dually identified students are those students identified as English learners (ELs) who have an active Individualized Education Program (IEP) or a Section 504 Plan. All students identified as English learners in Grades K-12 are expected to participate in the LAS Links Assessment between **January 4, and March 31, 2021.***

English Learners Educated in Approved Private Special Education Programs

On November 20, 2020, you were emailed the memo, *Dually Identified English Learners Placed Outside the District Including Approved Private Special Education Programs*. If applicable, you were provided a list of students from the October 1, 2020, PSIS collection indicated as attending schools outside your district. Within the memo you were also provided a link to a list of District Administrators (DAs) in the Test Information Distribution Engine (TIDE) for each APSEP to support communications related to testing these students. Please use the [District Administrators in TIDE at Approved Private Special Education Programs](#) (APSEPs) as needed. District ELACs should communicate with special education staff in their districts to ensure all placements are reflected accurately in the Public School Information System (PSIS).

Accommodated/Paper Test Forms

Some English learners, for reasons specified below, will not be able to participate in the online LAS Links Assessment and will be administered the LAS Links paper form.

The ELACs responsible for the administration of the LAS Links to students represented in the following groups will need to request the paper version:

- students entered in PSIS who have an active IEP or Section 504 Plan indicating a need for a paper-test form, a braille form, or a large-print form due to a disability;
- students entered in PSIS who are being educated out of state; or
- students enrolled in an APSEP without access to the online LAS Links testing platform.

*End Date Subject To Change

Use the **2021 LAS Links Accommodated/Paper Materials Order Form** available on the [Connecticut DRC LAS Links Website](#) under Assessment Administration to order a paper form. Orders must be placed by **January 15, 2021**, and take approximately one week to ship from the time the order is received. All paper materials must be returned to the Data Recognition Corporation (DRC) for scoring. The last day to call the United Parcel Service (UPS) for pickup of completed forms is **March 10, 2021**. (Please note this is prior to the end of the LAS Links Testing Window to ensure all paper submissions meet required deadlines for scoring.) Districts should maintain copies of all mailing and tracking receipts. Please see the Receipt and Return of 2021 Accommodated/Paper Test Materials information provided on the [Connecticut DRC LAS Links Website](#).

Dually Identified Students Eligible to Participate in the Connecticut Alternate Assessment System

A small group of dually identified students will not participate in the standard or in the accommodated LAS Links Assessment (online or paper version). These students are English learners who are also identified with a significant cognitive disability per their IEP and meet the criteria specified by the [Connecticut Alternate Assessment Eligibility Form](#). While Connecticut offers alternate assessments in the subject areas of English language arts, math and science, it does not currently have an alternate assessment for the English Language Proficiency (ELP) Assessment.

The ELACs must communicate to CSDE any student who will **not** participate in the LAS Links due to the student's disability and the Planning and Placement Team (PPT) confirmation that the student meets eligibility criteria for the alternate assessments. These students will be excluded from reporting for the LAS Links based on the data provided to the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE). **The student's EL status will not change for the following school year.** There are two ways to communicate this student information to the CSDE based on the student's grade.

- Dually identified English learners who meet eligibility for alternate assessments in Grades 3-8 and 11: Students who are eligible to participate in the Alternate Assessment System must have a [Connecticut Alternate Assessment Eligibility Form](#) submitted into the Data Entry Interface (DEI) by **January 15, 2021**. The submission of this form documents that the Planning and Placement Team (PPT) determined the student meets eligibility criteria for the alternate assessments and will communicate to the CSDE these students will not participate in the LAS Links. The ELAC should maintain a list of these students to ensure no test sessions or tests are created in the DRC INSIGHT Portal.
- Dually identified English learners in Grades K-2, 9, 10, and 12: The student identified as an English learner must have a significant cognitive disability (per their IEP) and evidence throughout their IEP to substantiate the need for an alternate assessment (if an assessment of English language arts, math or science were required in these grades). The EL team (consisting of special education staff, district test administrators, and teachers) may use the [Connecticut Alternate Assessment Eligibility Form](#) for discussion purposes, however, forms are **not** submitted through the Data Entry Interface (DEI) for students in Grades K-2, 9, 10, or 12.

For students in Grades K-2, 9, 10, or 12, ELACs communicate the student's SASID, Grade, District Name, School Name, Primary Disability Category, ELAC Name, and ELAC Phone Number by **January 15, 2021**. The new English Learners with Significant Cognitive Disabilities Potentially Eligible for Alternative Assessments Survey is used for this communication to CSDE. It is located on the [Connecticut DRC LAS Links Website](#) under Assessment Administration

Note: Please take extra precautions to manage the list of students who are considered for an alternate assessment. These students should not participate in the LAS Links or the standard assessments in ELA, math, or science. Errors in documentation or the testing of these students with significant cognitive disabilities has repercussions for each student and may impact school and district accountability.

LAS Links Domain Exemptions

A small group of English learners may not be able to access a specific domain tested on the LAS Links due to a disability. For example, some English learners may also have a primary disability category of Deaf or Hard of Hearing and are unable to access the Listening subtest of the LAS Links due to this disability.

Similarly, some English learners with an IEP or Section 504 Plan may be non-verbal, and due to their disability, even when provided assistive technology or augmentative and alternate communication supports, may not be able to participate in the Speaking subtest.

The ELAC should contact the CSDE to share the demographics of these students requiring a domain exemption on the LAS Links due to a disability. Based on the information provided to the CSDE by the ELAC, the reporting and composite scores for these students will be adjusted (i.e., overall, composite, literacy, comprehension and productive scores). To communicate to the CSDE about these students the ELAC will submit the information using the [Connecticut DRC LAS Links Website](#) under Assessment Administration.

Connecticut Students in the Public School Information System Educated Out of State

The ELACs should determine if any students who are English learners identified in PSIS are attending an out-of-state school where the district has accepted programmatic responsibility for the student's education through the development and implementation of an IEP. The reporting district is responsible for testing these students. The ELAC is responsible for confirming the student is in PSIS and work with the out-of-state program to complete testing.

The ELAC should place an order for paper-test materials using the **2021 LAS Links Accommodated/Paper Materials Order Form** by January 15, 2021. The ELAC will work with the out-of-state program to assess the student on the LAS Links. The ELAC must define a "return to district" date, so the Connecticut district can ensure all sections are completed and returned for scoring no later than **March 10, 2021**. The ELAC must ensure the student is administered the LAS Links Assessment at the out-of-state program in a secure manner, providing accommodations as required and should maintain all tracking receipts for the sending and return of all tests.

Considerations for Entering LAS Links Accommodations

Students identified as English learners (ELs) who have an active IEP or a Section 504 Plan may be eligible for accommodations on the LAS Links Assessment subtests: Speaking, Listening, Reading, and Writing. Accommodations are entered by the English Learner Assessment Coordinator (ELAC) into the DRC InSight Portal as recorded and confirmed in the IEP or Section 504 Plan for the current school year. This year ELACs will be able to access the student demographic area to enter accommodations as needed.

These students require one or more accommodations in at least one subtest area. The ELACs will indicate in each subject area if a student has one or more accommodations in that subject by checking category 3, or Text-to-Speech. The actual accommodation is not selected here other than Text-to-Speech.

The ELACs should communicate with special education staff early in the school year and maintain a list of actual accommodations to ensure they are provided appropriately to each student in each subject by proctors during the testing window.

Accommodations are recorded in the demographic area for each student **prior** to testing the student. It is critical for accurate scoring and reporting, that no changes or additions other than the accommodations be entered in the demographic area. The ELAC *MUST* confirm the student has not started testing at the time they are entering accommodations. If a change is made to accommodations while a student's test is in progress it will have significant consequences for the student's testing, scoring and reporting.

Additional English Learner Resources

Please access additional English learner resources, including the [Connecticut DRC LAS Links Website](#), the [English Language Proficiency Assessment –LAS Links](#) webpage and the [CSDE English Learners](#) webpage.

For any questions or concerns about these topics regarding English learners, please contact Janet Stuck at janet.stuck@ct.gov.

Thank you.