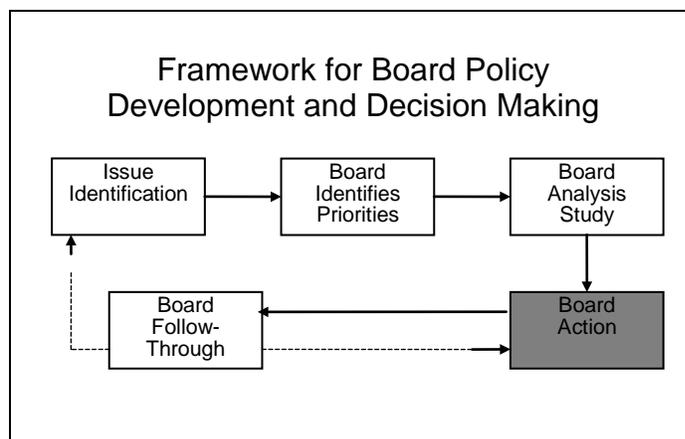


# Iowa State Board of Education

## Executive Summary

January 23, 2014



**Agenda Item:** English Language Proficiency Standards

**Iowa Goal:** All PK-12 students will achieve at a high level.

**State Board Role/ Authority:** Iowa Code 256.7(28) allows the State Board to adopt these standards. In addition, one of the State Board's priorities is reducing the achievement gap. This presentation addresses that issue.

**Presenter:** Byron Darnall, Chief  
Bureau of Educator Quality

**Attachments:** 2

**Recommendation:** It is recommended that the State Board vote to adopt the new English language proficiency standards.

**Background:** As Iowa school districts work to implement the Iowa Core state standards, the Iowa Department of Education (Department) has been engaged in the process of examining our current English language proficiency (ELP) standards, in order to ensure appropriate correspondence between the Iowa Core standards (in English language arts, mathematics, and science) and the English language proficiency standards. The current standards were adopted by the Iowa State Board during the 2005-06 school year and first implemented in schools in the 2006-07 school year.

The intent of our study of the current ELP standards was to ensure standards that best facilitate the academic

content and language development of English language learners (ELLs) and support their successful preparation for college and careers. The study determined that current standards were not reflective of current research on English language learning and not linked to the Iowa Core content standards and therefore, needed to be revised.

The Department, in collaboration with, the Stanford University Graduate School of Education's Understanding Language Center, WestEd, and a consortium of ten other states developed common ELP standards which could also be used in developing appropriate professional learning materials and student assessments. The 11 consortium states are: Arkansas, Florida, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Nebraska, Ohio, Oregon, South Carolina, Washington, and West Virginia.

The ELP standards address the following areas that are central to more rigorous college-and-career-ready standards:

- Engaging with Complex Texts to Build Knowledge Across the Curriculum
- Using Evidence to Inform, Argue, and Analyze
- Working Collaboratively, Understanding Multiple Perspectives, and Presenting Ideas
- Using and Developing Linguistic Resources to Do All of the Above



## Overview of English Language Proficiency (ELP) Standards

The standards are ordered using the Bunch, Kibler, and Pimentel (2013) schema (which, in turn, is based on the key shifts found in the Iowa Core ). The ELP Standards address the following areas which are central to more rigorous college-and-career-ready standards:

- Engaging with Complex Texts to Build Knowledge Across the Curriculum
- Using Evidence to Inform, Argue, and Analyze
- Working Collaboratively, Understanding Multiple Perspectives, and Presenting Ideas
- Using and Developing Linguistic Resources to Do All of the Above

ELP Standards 1 through 7 address the language demands for ELLs to engage in the central content-specific practices associated with ELA & Literacy, mathematics, and science. They begin with a focus on extraction of meaning and then progress to engagement in these practices.

Standards 8 through 10 focus in on some of the more micro-level linguistic features that are undoubtedly important to focus on, but only in the service of the other seven standards.

- **Standard 1: construct meaning from oral presentations and literary and informational text through grade-appropriate listening, reading, and viewing**
  - Standard 1 focuses on the construction of meaning and extraction of information from oral presentations and texts of different density. [We use “construct,” not “determine” here since meaning is interpretive, not deterministic.]

**Why this ELP Standard refer to *close reading of text*? We believe it can refer to something larger than an ELA/Literacy focus.**

While close reading (and listening) is important (and addressed in content standards), the challenge here is that what can be taken as "close reading" by one can be gleaned with a quick scan by others, which may cause some confusion about intended demands.

- **Standard 2: participate in grade-appropriate oral and written exchanges of information, ideas, and analyses, responding to peer, audience, or reader comments and questions**
  - Standard 2 focuses on exchange and response during discussion – active participation - and the language used to convey it.

- **Standard 3: speak and write about grade-appropriate complex literary and informational texts and topics**
  - Standard 3 focuses on ability to summarize key ideas and to organize/develop topics and experiences. This standard purposely is not restricted to formal presentations – we want students to express ideas in classroom discourse too.
- **Standard 4: construct grade-appropriate oral and written claims and support them with reasoning and evidence**
  - Standard 4 focuses on constructing a claim – and the language used to convey it. *[Note: This standard takes place in the context of arguments: An argument consists of a claim, reasoning and evidence. In earlier versions, this standard focused on “justifying” an argument. While this works for ELA, in science, for example, one supports or refutes an argument; one does not justify them.]*
- **Standard 5: conduct research and evaluate and communicate findings to answer questions or solve problems**
  - Standard 5 focuses is on how to use language when evaluating and communicating information during research or gathering information. You’ll note the focus on research (and obtaining information) covers more than ELA. Why? Research in science involves observations and experiment, not looking at text.
- **Standard 6: analyze and critique the arguments of others orally and in writing**
  - Standard 6 focuses on language students will use to analyze and critique arguments. This is one of the most challenging standards, students are asked to use language when participating in different types of interactions.
- **Standard 7: adapt language choices to purpose, task, and audience when speaking and writing**
  - Standard 7 focuses on appropriate selection of precision of language – which makes this standard a great candidate for activities in which the teacher provides scaffolding. But instructional activities need to be placed in within the context of language for specific social and academic contexts (as students learn to create precision and different shades of meaning for different types of Discourse). *[Note: This standard takes place in the context of understanding other perspectives & cultures.]*
- **Standard 8: determine the meaning of words and phrases in oral presentations and literary and informational text**

- Standard 8 focuses on development of one specific segment of academic language: vocabulary (but should take place in service of the first 7 standards).
- **Standard 9: create clear and coherent grade-appropriate speech and text**
  - Standard 9 focuses is on how text speakers and writers weave speech and text together. We wanted to address coherence and cohesion in both oral presentations and written texts as students' development progresses from simple to more complex language. Verbal language is as important as written when the emphasis is on *language for use*.
- **Standard 10: make accurate use of standard English to communicate in grade-appropriate speech and writing**
  - Standard 10 focuses on accuracy of English language forms -- conjugation of verbs and verb phrases, inflections, syntactical structures (compound and complex sentence, independent clauses.)

## References

- Bunch, G., Kibler, A., & Pimentel, S. (2013). *Realizing opportunities for English learners in the Common Core English Language Arts and Disciplinary Literacy Standards*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association. May 1, 2013. San Francisco, CA. Retrieved July 12, 2013, from [http://ell.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/events/Bunch-Kibler-Pimentel\\_AERA\\_2013-04-08.pdf](http://ell.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/events/Bunch-Kibler-Pimentel_AERA_2013-04-08.pdf).
- Shafer Willner, L. (2013). Initial tour of the 2013 English language proficiency standards. Developed for the Council of Chief State School Officers. Washington, DC: Author.

# The English Language Proficiency Assessment for the 21st Century (ELPA21) Consortium

- **MEMBERSHIP:** There are currently 11 member states (Arkansas, Florida, Kansas, Iowa, Louisiana, Nebraska, Ohio, Oregon, South Carolina, Washington, and West Virginia) in partnership with the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and Stanford University's Understanding Language initiative. The Oregon Department of Education is the lead state agency.
- **GOVERNANCE:** A Consortium Council (CC) will consist of the chief state school officer or designee from each member state. The CC will determine the general scope of the assessment system, review recommendations of Task Management Teams or TMTs (see below), and elect five members to serve on an Executive Board (EB). The Project Director from the Oregon Department of Education will also serve on the EB, which will act as the final voice on issues and decisions emanating from the CC.
- **PROJECT MANAGEMENT PARTNER:** CCSSO will provide project management. Nine TMTs — led by contracted experts and comprised of state education agency representatives from each Consortium state — will oversee development of all work components. The National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST) at UCLA will serve as the third-party evaluator, facilitate the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), and provide guidance to the CC and the EB.
- **AWARD:** \$6.3 million four-year Enhanced Assessment Grant from the U.S. Department of Education (USED), September 2012

This information is accurate as of April 11, 2013.

The following summary of the ELPA21 assessment system has been approved by the Oregon Department of Education and CCSSO managing partners.

ELPA21 is an enhanced assessment system designed to measure the English language proficiency (ELP) of English language learners (ELLs) as they progress through their K–12 education and achieve college and career readiness. Designed for states by states and other assessment and content experts of English language development, ELPA21 will provide assessments for ELLs — along with strategies for test design, administration, scoring, and reporting — that provide students, parents, teachers, administrators, and communities the current and relevant information they need to best support every student as they work toward achieving ELP in support of the college- and career-ready Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in English language arts and mathematics.

The purpose of ELPA21 is to enhance the quality of assessments used by states for measuring students' ELP development and progress. The Consortium plans to develop a system of valid and reliable ELP assessment instruments that align in deep and meaningful ways with the CCSS.

Under the ELPA21 grant, the Consortium will develop:

- two computer-based fixed forms of an annual summative assessment for each of six grade bands for monitoring student progress, tracking

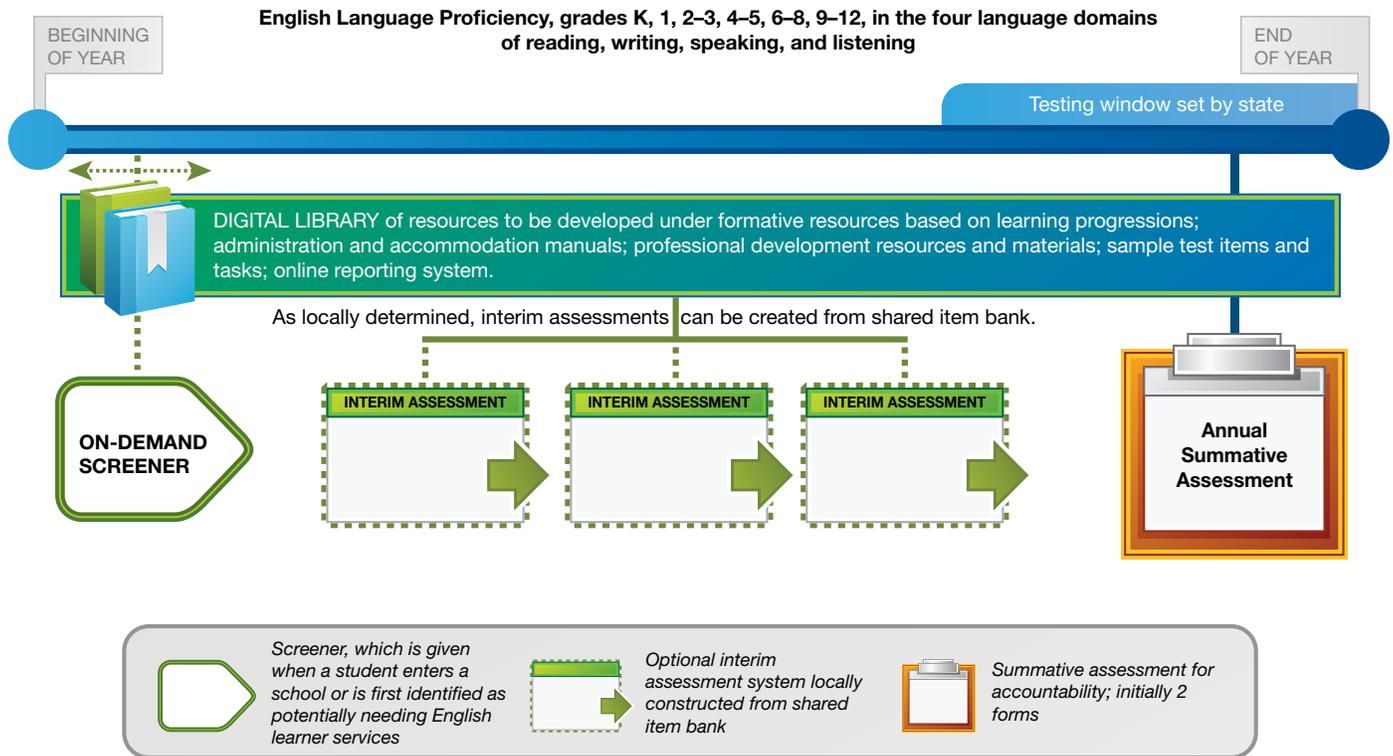
accountability, certifying program exit, and prompting instructional improvement; and

- a diagnostic screener test to provide information for English language learner identification and placement.

All Consortium states will use these assessments and agreed-upon criteria for entry, placement, and exit from ELL programs. Through extended collaboration, ELPA21 will also develop supporting professional development resources, recommendations on formative assessment practices, a secure item bank from which locally defined interim benchmark assessments can be constructed, and a cooperative data reporting system. The system, as a whole, is intended to establish a continuous feedback loop to teachers, schools, and districts to support ongoing improvements in ELP instruction, teacher professional development, and student learning in grades K–12.

To the extent that it is feasible and valid, the Consortium will contain costs by leveraging the existing quality work of member states. A rigorous vetting process will ensure that all adopted resources are appropriate for use across the ELPA21 system. A more detailed description of the system components of ELPA21 follows.

# ELPA21



## SYSTEM COMPONENTS

### SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENTS FOR ACCOUNTABILITY

The ELPA21 summative assessments will be developed for each of six grade bands — K, 1, 2–3, 4–5, 6–8, and 9–12 — and administered near the end of the academic year.<sup>1</sup> Because ELLs arrive in schools with varying levels of English and academic proficiency, each grade band assessment will measure across a wide range of proficiency. These assessments will measure students' level of English proficiency in the four domains of reading, writing, speaking, and listening. In addition, a composite score will be reported along a continuous K–12 vertical scale to facilitate monitoring of student progress.

#### Assessment Delivery

The summative assessments will be computer-delivered; a comparable paper-pencil format may also be provided for use. The decision to employ computer-based delivery as the preferred mode was made based on the desire to (1) ensure standardized administration

<sup>1</sup>The timing of the summative assessments will depend on each state's controlling state assessment schedule.

of the assessments, (2) have more flexibility and standardization in providing students with disabilities a range of accommodations that are consistent with other large-scale assessment programs, (3) include innovative item types that improve the ability to measure the ELP standards, and (4) provide economical and easily accessed training for administrators, proctors, and scorers.

The Consortium will not administer the summative assessments directly, but will develop and provide all of the necessary components for states to use on the delivery platform(s) of their choice. ELPA21 will work to maximize interoperability with the platforms being developed by the other major assessment Consortia, such as the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium and the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC). The deliverables for the summative assessments will feature test specifications, including blueprints, professional development resources, performance-level descriptors with performance-level cut scores, and administration and security protocols. These resources, as well as model Request for Proposal language, will be available to states (individually or in multi-state partnerships) as they enter contracts with vendors for delivery of the operational assessments, beginning in the 2016–17 school year.

## Types of Items and Tasks

To the extent that it is feasible and practical, the Consortium will use a range of item types, including selected response, short constructed-response, technology-enhanced, and more extensive performance tasks. The test blueprints, to be developed by the Consortium, will specify the standards appropriate to assess and the number and types of items that will be used to measure them. The technology-enhanced and performance items will be used, where necessary, for the valid measurement of the ELP standards. Constructed-response or performance-based items will be included in the assessment of each of the four domains, to the extent possible, and technologies such as audio output and speech recorders will be utilized. The Consortium will leverage existing secure items from member states' item banks that align to the common set of ELP standards for use in the summative assessments. A gap analysis will then be conducted, and the Consortium will develop additional items, as needed, to fulfill the test blueprints.

## Scoring

Scores will be produced for the four language domains of reading, writing, speaking, and listening, along with a composite ELP score based on all four domains. The weight of each of the four domains within the composite score will be determined after field test data are available.

ELPA21 will provide the materials and protocols for consistency in the administration, scoring, and reporting of the assessments across member states, and each state will be responsible for conducting these activities. Selected-response items will be computer scored, and the use of speech-recognition software is being explored for the efficient measurement of speaking ability. Systems will be developed to ensure that items requiring human scoring can be quickly and consistently scored. An ELPA21 scoring certification course will be developed, and successful completion will be encouraged for all human scorers. States may choose to use an external vendor to score these items or may opt to have certified local educators score them.

## Measuring Growth

Each of the grade band assessments will report composite ELP scores on a single, K–12 vertical scale. In addition, each grade band assessment will measure across a wide range of ELP. These features, in tandem, will allow the reporting system to capture the progress students make between the annual administrations of the summative assessment. When interim assessments

are added to the system, these optional assessments will also produce scores along the vertical scale, allowing progress during the school year to be monitored.

## Accountability

The summative scores from the ELPA21 assessments may be used to qualify a student for exit from the ELL program as long as other data also provide evidence of ELP. Consortium states will decide how and what combination of evidence will be acceptable, and ELPA21 will make recommendations as to how this can best be done. The results will be appropriate for use within state accountability systems and for program improvement purposes. As appropriate, data regarding student progress on achieving ELP may be used as one of multiple measures within a state's educator evaluation system.

## Reporting

A web-based reporting system will provide secure access to data and allow for the generation of reports that are customized for different user audiences. For example, reports of student growth and performance across the four domains can be created to help teachers identify the instructional needs of their students and to help school officials identify the types of professional development that will support teachers to better address the needs of their students. Formats for reports to students' families will be created to help them understand their child's progress. Student reports will include:

- student's overall composite ELP score on the K–12 vertical scale; and
- scale scores for each of the four domains of reading, writing, speaking, and listening, also reported on the K–12 vertical scale.

Student summative assessment results will inform decisions about reclassification for the following school year and will provide important information about the students' ELP levels to the following year's teachers.

## ON-DEMAND DIAGNOSTIC SCREENER

ELPA21 will develop a diagnostic screener to determine whether, and at what level, a student needs ELL services. It will be administered at the time a student enters the school system and may be re-administered as needed. While shorter than the summative assessment, the screener will still assess across the four language domains. To the extent possible, it will be administered by computer and will be composed of a limited range of item types, primarily selected-response items in the reading and listening portions and

constructed-response items in the speaking and writing portions. In order to support prompt and appropriate placement of students into ELL services, ELPA21 will design the screener to be scored very quickly through a combination of computer scoring and trained, certified local scorers.

ELPA21 will establish and use a Consortium-wide common cut score to make initial ELL identification and program placement decisions. Teachers will also have access to the score reports from the screener to inform instruction.

### **Formative and Interim Assessments\***

ELPA21 believes that a comprehensive assessment system for ELL students should include formative assessment at the time of instruction and interim assessments to monitor progress throughout the school year. However, these components are beyond the scope of the initial grant. The Consortium plans to seek additional funding to refine existing formative and interim assessment resources contributed by member states.

\*These assessments are not yet funded.

## **RESOURCES, TOOLS, AND CAPACITY BUILDING**

### **Professional Development Resources and Activities**

ELPA21 will provide professional development modules for both ELL teachers and academic content teachers on (1) how to provide a secure and accurate assessment experience, (2) how to best use the assessment results to inform instructional placement and (3) how to discuss results with students and families.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

Technology based upon the Assessment Interoperability Framework being developed by the Smarter Balanced and PARCC Consortia will be used extensively in test development and in test administration, scoring, and reporting. The intent is for the ELPA21 assessments to be administered on the platforms used by states to deliver the Smarter Balanced and PARCC assessments. All items will be adapted or developed to comply with open license interoperability standards to support consistent delivery across multiple compliant platforms.

ELPA21's website is under construction and will be available at [www.ELPA21.org](http://www.ELPA21.org). You also can visit [www.ccsso.org](http://www.ccsso.org) and search "ELPA21" for updates.