ELL Assessment Policy and Practice

In Texas, language proficiency is assessed in a structured manner for English language learners. Policies and practices are in place to accurately assess ELLs’ proficiency levels in order to provide quality, effective instruction. In addition, language proficiency is monitored to ensure that students continue to progress in language acquisition. A team of professionals make up the Language Proficiency and Assessment Committee (LPAC) which formally assesses and monitor language proficiency and language acquisition. ELLs’ linguistic needs are then accommodated in classroom instruction according to Texas state standards. Understanding the roles assessment, accommodation, and instruction play in effective language acquisition is critical knowledge for teachers.

ELL Assessment Policy and Practices

This content page will provide you with a basic understanding of the assessment system for ELL's in Texas. You will learn specific information about the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS), English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS), and Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS).

Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS)

TELPAS measures the learning of English according to a second language acquisition continuum that reflects distinct stages of second language development. These stages are termed English language proficiency levels. TELPAS assesses and reports four proficiency levels: beginning, intermediate, advanced, and advanced high. These are a series of reading tests designed for English language learners (ELLs) in grades 2–12. There are two types of assessments: holistic observations for listening, speaking and writing and multiple choice assessments for reading.

The TELPAS assessment components are as follows:

- For ELLs in grades K and 1, TELPAS is composed of holistically rated listening, speaking, reading, and writing assessments based on classroom observations.
- For ELLs in grades 2–12, TELPAS is composed of multiple-choice reading tests, holistically rated student writing collections, and holistically rated speaking and listening assessments. The listening and speaking assessments are based on classroom observations.

Following is a list of other assessments for language proficiency. You will also be provided with a comprehensive list of assessments on your next content page for this module.

- Oral Language Proficiency Tests (in English and native language [for bilingual programs] given annually
- TPRI ( Texas Primary Reading Inventory—in English) and Tejas LEE (in Spanish) K-2

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• Norm Referenced or Standardized Tests (SAT)
• Criterion Referenced Tests (TAKS)

**English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS)***

TELPAS is aligned with ELPS. The ELPS outline English language proficiency level descriptors and student expectations for ELLs. They are to be integrated in all subjects across the curriculum. The goal is for teachers to effectively integrate second language acquisition with quality content area instruction. The ELPS give students an opportunity to listen, speak, read, and write at their current levels of English development within their content area courses (K-12)

The implication, then, is that all instruction must be accommodated according to the student’s language proficiency level. Instruction in English must be communicated, sequenced, and scaffolded.

ELPS are available here [http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/rules/tac/chapter074/ch074a.html#74.4](http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/rules/tac/chapter074/ch074a.html#74.4)

**Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS)***

ELLs who are not exempt from taking TAKS must participate in the state assessment. The Language Proficiency and Assessment Committee (LPAC) may grant an exemption from TAKS if:

• the student is classified as LEP
• the student lacks academic language proficiency in English necessary for an assessment in English to measure academic progress reliably
• the student is a recent immigrant (has been enrolled in US schools for a total of 1-3 years)
• the student is rated Beginning, Intermediate, or Advanced the first year of enrollment **OR** the student is rated Beginning or Intermediate the second or third year of enrollment
• **all** students must take exit-level TAKS

Students in 3-6 may take TAKS in Spanish if:

• Spanish is the language of instruction (the student is in a bilingual program and receives academic content in Spanish)
• The number of years of Spanish TAKS plus the number of exemptions does not exceed three.

**The next item in your table of contents is TEA document that lists the approved tests for the assessment of LEP students. You are encouraged to scroll through the list of tests to increase your awareness of available and approved assessments for this population of students.**
The Language Proficiency and Assessment Committee (LPAC) is charged with making informed, defendable decisions regarding each LEP student as required by law. Following are the functions of this important committee:

- Identify LEP students (home language survey and language assessments).
- Place LEP students in appropriate program.
- Notify parents.
- Ensure instruction meets language needs of student.
- Assess student’s language proficiency and acquisition.
- Determine the best state testing option for each LEP student.
- Facilitate the participation of LEP students in other special programs.
- Review student’s progress annually.
- Exit the student from LEP.

The LPAC committee meets several times a year in response to any of the following occurrences:

- Within 20 days of an ELL student's enrollment in school.
- Immediately prior to formal assessments (school-wide and standardized LEP assessments).
- At the end of the year for annual review.
- As needed to discuss a student's academic needs.

LPAC for ESL programs are made up of at minimum:

- One or more professional personnel (recommended that this includes a campus administrator and a certified ESL teacher).
- Parent(s) of a LEP student or a trained parent representative who is not an employee of the district.

LPAC determines LEP status:

- Using the results of the home language survey. If any language other than English is indicated, student will be tested. Parent permission is not necessary for language proficiency testing.

LPAC exits a student from LEP status:

- When the student meets state performance standards on reading and writing portions (when available) on TAKS (this is usually used as the exit criteria). OR

- When the student achieves at the 40th percentile or higher on the language arts and reading portions of a norm-referenced standardized achievement test.
- After students are exited, the LPAC continues to monitor the student's academic progress for two years following the year they were exited to ensure that the student is successful.
ELL Assessment Policy and Practices

Classification and Monitoring Process

The LEP classification process is thorough and detailed. This content page will discuss the process for determining a student's eligibility as well as providing you with answers to some commonly asked questions regarding LEP students.

**How do students get classified as Limited English Proficient, LEP?**

First, when a student enrolls in school, a Home Language Survey form is completed as part of the enrollment paperwork for ALL students. *If the parent indicates that any language other than English is spoken at home or if another language is spoken at home in addition to English, the student must be tested for English proficiency.*

**Tip:** It is not uncommon for a parent to indicate that they speak *Inglés* in the home. This use of the Spanish word for English could indicate that Spanish is spoken in the home on a regular basis. A sample Home Language Survey has been provided at the end of the table of contents for your review.

Next, the LPAC begins the process of determining LEP eligibility. The committee will gather and review all pertinent information on all students for whom the Home Language Survey indicates a language other than English. Examples of pertinent information include the following:

- Review results of state-approved Oral Language Proficiency Test in grades Pre-K-12.
- For grades 2-12, review includes student performance data such as the English reading and language arts results on a state-approved norm-referenced achievement test.
- Review of TAKS results for students in grades 3-12.
- Review of any other language or academic information that may assist in making the appropriate placement, including parent interview and/or classroom observation data.

**What happens once a student is classified as LEP and the parent denies services?**

The student is still classified as LEP, but is placed in the general education program. The LPAC continues to review the student’s progress and language acquisition just as they monitor students who are receiving services.

**How does LPAC review student progress for LEP students receiving services or for LEP students whose parents denied services?**

LEP student progress must be reviewed *annually* to determine status of language classification and the appropriate placement of the student. The review process is outlined below and specifies the appropriate tests to determine if LEP students are progressing in language acquisition and receiving appropriate services:

- Reviews results of state-approved Oral Language Proficiency Test(s), pre and post test administrations.

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In grades 2-12 reviews student performance data that includes the English reading and language arts results on a state-approved norm-referenced standardized achievement test*.

Reviews TAKS results for students in grades 3-12.

Reviews TPRI, Tejas Lee, TELPAS.

Reviews any other language or academic information that may assist in making the appropriate placement, including final grades and other classroom performance data.

**How does LPAC decide if a student should take TAKS in English, Spanish, a linguistically accommodated test, or not at all?**

**English TAKS:**

- LEP students who have been denied services take English TAKS.
- LEP students in an ESL program who have been in United States schools for more than 3 total school years.

**Spanish TAKS:**

- LEP students in a bilingual program grades 3-6 who are in the 1st, 2nd, or 3rd year of enrollment in United States schools can Spanish TAKS if Spanish is the language the student receives instruction for the subject.

**TAKS LAT (Linguistically Accommodated Testing):**

- LEP students who meet TAKS exemption criteria and are in their 2nd or 3rd year in United States schools.

**Exempt from TAKS :**

- LEP students who are in their 2nd or 3rd year in United States school and who lack academic language proficiency in English necessary for an assessment in English to measure academic progress reliable can be exempt from TAKS.
- To be exempt, the student must be rated at Beginning, Intermediate, or Advanced is s/he is in the first year of enrollment.
- To be exempt, the student must be rated at Beginning or Intermediate if s/he is in the first second of enrollment.

**Exit-level TAKS:**

- No students are exempt from exit-level TAKS.
- Students can be granted a one-year waiver if otherwise they meet TAKS exemption. Students with waivers will take the test the next school year.

**How does the LPAC decide if a student meets exit criteria and is re-classified as Non-LEP?**

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At the end of the school year, LPAC may decide that a student is Non-LEP if the student is able to participate equally in all regular English instruction programs as determined by meeting the standard of the following three assessments:

1. Oral Language Proficiency Test
2. Reading portion of the TAKS test (or another norm-referenced achievement test)
3. Writing portion of the TAKS test OR TELPAS advanced high rating on writing

**Important Note:** Students cannot be exited from LEP status in Pre-Kindergarten or Kindergarten.

**What happens after a student exits LEP status?**

1. Parents must be notified.
2. Students are monitored for two years following the exit to ensure that students are progressing academically (review grades, TAKS scores, etc.)
3. If students are not progressing academically, the LPAC can reclassify the student as LEP.

The next item in your table of contents is a chart depicting the decision-making process and the appropriate tests to determine if a students should be categorized Limited English Proficient (LEP). You are encouraged to study this diagram to increase your understanding of this process.