Assessing Students with Disabilities

According to *California Code of Regulations* (*CCR*) sections 11511 and 11516 through 11516.7 (Title 5, Division 1, Chapter 11, Subchapter 7.5) as well as *EC* Section 313, the initial and annual administration of the CELDT are the responsibilities of the LEA. Most students with disabilities are able to participate effectively on the CELDT. For those students whose disabilities preclude them from participating in one or more domains of the CELDT, their IEP teams may recommend accommodations, modifications, or an alternate assessment. (See *EC* Section 56385, *CCR* 11516.5 through 11516.7, and the "Matrix of Test Variations, Accommodations, and Modifications for Administration of California Statewide Assessments" [August 2011] at http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/el/resources.asp.)

Because modifications and alternate assessments fundamentally alter what the CELDT measures, students receive the lowest obtainable scale score (LOSS) on each domain affected. Caution should be used when interpreting results because the LOSS on one or more domains may lower the Overall performance level on the CELDT. The LOSS on the CELDT will be used to calculate the AMAOs for Title III accountability purposes. If the student is not reclassified (see pp. 20–22 for reclassification guidelines for students with disabilities), the LOSS will be entered as the Most Recent Previous Scale Score(s) at the next year's administration of the CELDT.

In accordance with 34 *Code of Federal Regulations* (CFR) 300.304 through 300.305, initial identification for determining whether a student is a student with a disability takes into consideration existing data, which include LEA and statewide assessments. For those who participate in programs for students with disabilities, the LEA may be a school district, an independent charter school, the county office of education, or a state special school.

When a student is not able to take the CELDT (the entire test or any portion thereof), this information is shared at the IEP team meeting. IEP team members may determine that alternate assessments are appropriate and necessary. The results of alternate assessments and/or the CELDT are part of current levels of performance in the IEP. The scores or performance levels are a part of the information considered by the team to develop linguistically appropriate goals [*EC* sections 56341.1(b) and 56345(b)(2)].

Due to the unique nature of individual students' disabilities, the CDE does not make specific recommendations as to which alternate assessment instruments to use. However, the appropriate alternate assessment must be identified annually

in a student's IEP. The LEA must ensure that the IEP team includes an individual who can interpret the instructional implications of evaluation results (e.g., an ELD specialist to interpret CELDT results) [34 CFR 300.321(a)(5)]. Identified English learners with disabilities must take the CELDT with any accommodations or modifications specified in their IEPs, or take appropriate alternate assessments as documented in their IEP every year until they are reclassified.

The sample worksheets provided in the past to assist LEAs and schools in planning for the administration of the CELDT to students with an IEP or Section 504 plan have been condensed into a user-friendly checklist, which is available in Section 1 on pages 14–15. Other documents that may assist LEAs in determining how to assess individual students are: (1) guidelines for reviewing IEPs and Section 504 plans in Section 1 on page 16 and (2) Participation Criteria Checklist for Alternate Assessments in Section 1 on page 17.

Checklist of Key Actions for the Administration of the CELDT to Students with Disabilities

***Note*:** These key actions are not all-inclusive and may vary based on district/site needs.

Actions	Person(s) Responsible	
	CELDT District Coordinator (CDC) and/or designee(s)	CELDT Site Coordinator (CSC) and/or designee(s)
Pre-CELDT Administration		
❑ 1. Review ordering specifications/timeline/process from test contractor and order materials.	●	
❑ 2. Required: Register and attend a CELDT Scoring Training of Trainers (STOT) workshop at a state-, regional-, or local-sponsored location.	●	
❑ 3. Review CELDT testing requirements.	●	●
❑ 4. Communicate with special education coordinator and/or special education teachers, as applicable, to review CELDT (or possible alternate assessment) requirements for students with disabilities.	●	●
❑ 5. Prepare list of English learners receiving EL services specified in current IEP or Section 504 plans and who must be tested with the use of identified variations, accommodations, modifications, and/or alternate assessments.		●
❑ 6. Return completed list to CDC.		●
❑ 7. Respond to site requests for test variations, accommodations, modifications, and/or alternate assessments, if applicable.	●	
❑ 8. Schedule and conduct CELDT administration training for CELDT site and special education coordinators. Information and materials should include, at a minimum: – IEP/Section 504 plan process to identify who will take the CELDT with test variations, accommodations, modifications, or take an alternate assessment(s) – Test variations, accommodations, modifications, and/or alternate assessments – Test administration – Procedure for monitoring test administration – Test security maintenance – Procedures for administering the CELDT – Process and materials to respond to requests for needed test variations, accommodations, modifications, and/or alternate assessments – Selection of appropriate test examiners (see Section 1, page 6.)	●	
❑ 9. Participate in test administration training provided by CDC.		●

Actions	Person(s) Responsible	
	CELDT District Coordinator (CDC) and/or designee(s)	CELDT Site Coordinator (CSC) and/or designee(s)
CELDT Administration		
❑ 1. Provide direction/assistance to test examiners and proctors.		●
❑ 2. Ensure that identified variations/accommodations/modifications are used during testing.		●
❑ 3. Follow identified process for administering and scoring alternate assessments, if applicable.		●
Post-CELDT Administration		
❑ 1. Follow up with IEP team or CDC to ensure that students' IEP/Section 504 plans are updated with current test variations, accommodations, and/or modifications for CELDT or alternate assessments.		●
❑ 2. Package all completed tests with test variations, accommodations, and/or modifications as directed and return them to CDC.		●
❑ 3. Check packaging of site materials and schedule delivery to test contractor for scoring.		●
❑ 4. Schedule a post-CELDT debriefing with district and site IEP/Section 504 plan lead(s) and CSC, as needed, to discuss ways to improve the process.	●	●
❑ 5. Participate in debriefing with CDC and/or special education lead(s), if requested.	●	●

Review of Individualized Education Programs or Section 504 Plans

Some students with disabilities may require test variations, accommodations, and/or modifications, or may take alternate assessments. Test variations are allowed for any student who regularly uses them in the classroom. Prior to testing, accommodations, modifications, and/or alternate assessments must be specified in each student's IEP or Section 504 plan. Before any test variation is used, the following activities should be considered when preparing or updating the IEP or Section 504 plan:

1. **Review state and federal regulations.**

   - These include the *California Code of Regulations*, Title 5, CELDT; Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) of 2004; and Title III of the ESEA, which are available on the CDE Title III Web page at http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/el/t3/.

2. **Review "Matrix 1. Matrix of Test Variations, Accommodations, and Modifications for Administration of California Statewide Assessments (August 2011).**" This matrix is available on the CDE CELDT Resources Web page at http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/el/resources.asp.

   - Discuss (1) the use of variations and accommodations, which produces valid results because they do not alter what the test measures, and (2) the use of modifications or an alternate assessment, which produce results that are not valid because they alter what the test measures.

3. **Review IEP or Section 504 plan.**

   - Specify in the student's IEP or Section 504 plan if the ELP assessment is specifically addressed and verify that student information is current.

4. **Determine how the student will participate in the ELP assessment.**

   - Using the Participation Criteria Checklist for Alternate Assessments on page 17, determine if the student will require an alternate assessment(s) or can participate in the CELDT using test variations, accommodations, and/or modifications.

   - Specify in the student's IEP or Section 504 plan exactly how and for what domain(s) CELDT test variations, accommodations, and/or modifications are to be implemented relative to the student's disability. If the student has an IEP, specify any alternate assessment(s) the student is to use and identify which domain(s) of the CELDT the alternate assessment(s) is replacing. Note how the student's disability precludes the student from taking any or all sections of the CELDT.

   - Review each domain of the CELDT a student has taken with modification(s) or for which an alternate assessment has been administered. If one or more domains of the CELDT have been taken with modifications or if an alternate assessment(s) has been administered, the Overall score will not reflect the student's actual performance level in English, and the student will receive the LOSS on each affected domain, which may lower the Overall performance level.

Participation Criteria Checklist for Alternate Assessments

To assist an IEP team in determining whether a student should use alternate assessments, the criteria below may be considered. If the answer to one or more of the criteria is "Disagree," the team should consider administering the CELDT to the student with the use of any necessary test variations, accommodations, and/or modifications.

Circle "Agree" or "Disagree" for each item:

Agree	**Disagree**	The student requires extensive instruction in multiple settings to acquire, maintain, and generalize skills necessary for application in school, work, home, and community environments.
Agree	**Disagree**	The student demonstrates academic/cognitive ability and adaptive behavior that require substantial adjustments to the general curriculum. The student may participate in many of the same activities as his/her nondisabled peers; however, the student's learning objectives and expected outcomes focus on the functional applications of the general curriculum.
Agree	**Disagree**	The student cannot take the CELDT even with test variations, accommodations, and/or modifications.
Agree	**Disagree**	The decision to participate in an alternate assessment is not based on the amount of time during which the student is receiving special education services.
Agree	**Disagree**	The decision to participate in an alternate assessment is not based on excessive or extended absences.
Agree	**Disagree**	The decision to participate in an alternate assessment is not based on language, cultural, or economic differences.
Agree	**Disagree**	The decision to participate in an alternate assessment is not based on visual, auditory, and/or motor disabilities.
Agree	**Disagree**	The decision to participate in an alternate assessment is not based primarily on a specific categorical program.
Agree	**Disagree**	The decision for using an alternate assessment is an IEP team decision rather than an administrative decision.

Guidelines for Reclassification

Under current state law (*EC* Section 313), identified students who are English learners must participate in the annual administration of the CELDT until they are reclassified as RFEP. The LEAs are to establish local reclassification policies and procedures based on the four criteria below:

- Assessment of English language proficiency using an objective assessment instrument, including, but not limited to, the ELD test that is developed or acquired pursuant to *EC* Section 60810 (i.e., the CELDT);
- Teacher evaluation including, but not limited to, a review of the student's curriculum mastery;
- Parental opinion and consultation; and
- Comparison of the performance of the student in basic skills against an empirically established range of performance in basic skills based upon the performance of English proficient students of the same age, that demonstrates whether the student is sufficiently proficient in English to participate effectively in a curriculum designed for students of the same age whose native language is English.

Clarification for applying the four criteria to local reclassification decisions is provided in the guidelines approved by the SBE that follow.

Assessment of English Language Proficiency

Use CELDT as the primary criterion. Consider for reclassification those students whose Overall performance level is Early Advanced or higher and:

- Listening is Intermediate or higher,
- Speaking is Intermediate or higher,
- Reading is Intermediate or higher, and
- Writing is Intermediate or higher.

Those students whose Overall performance level is in the upper end of the Intermediate level also may be considered for reclassification if additional measures determine the likelihood that a student is proficient in English.

In July 2010, the SBE modified the definition of the English proficiency level for K–1 students on the CELDT, to require an Overall score of Early Advanced or Advanced,

with the domain scores for Listening and Speaking at the Intermediate level or above. The domain scores for Reading and Writing would not need to be at the Intermediate level.

- Use most recent available test data.

Teacher Evaluation

- Use student's academic performance.
- Note that incurred deficits in motivation and academic success unrelated to ELP do not preclude a student from reclassification.

Parent Opinion and Consultation

- Provide notice to parents or guardians of their rights and encourage them to participate in the reclassification process.
- Provide an opportunity for a face-to-face meeting with parents or guardians.

Comparison of Performance in Basic Skills

- Definitions:
  1. "Performance in basic skills" means the score and/or performance level resulting from a recent administration of an objective assessment of basic skills in English, such as the California English–Language Arts Standards Test (CST for ELA) and the California Modified Assessment for ELA (CMA for ELA).
  2. "Range of performance in basic skills" means a range of scores on the assessment of basic skills in English that corresponds to a performance level or a range within a performance level.
  3. "Students of the same age" refers to students who are enrolled in the same grade as the student who is being considered for reclassification.
- Basic skills criteria:
  1. A student's score on the test of basic skills (e.g., the CST for ELA or the CMA for ELA) in the range from the beginning of the Basic level up to the midpoint of the Basic level suggests that the student may be sufficiently prepared to participate effectively in the curriculum and should be considered for reclassification. The LEAs may select a cut point in this range.

2. Students with scores above the cut point selected by the LEA should be considered for reclassification.

3. For students scoring below the cut point, LEAs should attempt to determine whether factors other than ELP are responsible for low performance on the test of basic skills (e.g., the CST for ELA or the CMA for ELA) and whether it is reasonable to reclassify the student.

4. For students in grade twelve, the grade eleven CST for ELA results may be used, if available.

5. For students in grade one, LEAs should base a decision to reclassify on CELDT results, teacher evaluation, parent consultation, and other locally available assessment results.

6. The LEAs must monitor student performance for two years after reclassification in accordance with existing California regulations and Title III of the ESEA.

There is no change to the SBE guidelines for reclassification of English learners in 2013–14. *EC* Section 313(f)(4) calls for a comparison of student performance in basic skills against an empirically established range of performance in basic skills based on the performance of English proficient students of the same age.

While the spring Smarter Balanced Field Test will not yield any scores, the suspension of CSTs and CMAs does not impede or prohibit a school district's ability to use the 2012–13 CST or CMA ELA results to be used as the academic criterion for reclassification during the 2013–14 school year.

Reclassification of English Learners with Disabilities

Students with disabilities, including severe cognitive disabilities, are to be provided the same opportunities to be reclassified as students without disabilities. Local IEP teams, therefore, may determine appropriate measures of ELP and performance in basic skills and minimum levels of proficiency on these measures that would be equivalent to an English proficient peer with similar disabilities, in accordance with local reclassification policies based on the four criteria in state law (*EC* Section 313[f]).

In accordance with federal and state law, the local IEP team may address the individual needs of each English learner with a disability using multiple criteria in concert with the four reclassification criteria in *EC* Section 313(f). These four criteria are the minimal required components that LEAs must include in their local reclassification policy. Other criteria may be used to supplement the four required

criteria to ensure the most appropriate decision is made for each student. Additional information about assessing students with disabilities is available in Section 1 on pages 12–17.

The following are suggestions for applying the four criteria in *EC* Section 313(f) to local reclassification policies regarding English learners with disabilities:

Criterion 1: Assessment of English language proficiency using an objective assessment instrument

Assessment of ELP using an objective assessment, including but not limited to the CELDT, is one of four criteria in state law per *EC* Section 313(f) to be used by LEAs in determining whether or not an English learner should be reclassified as fluent English proficient (RFEP). The IEP team can use the scores from an alternate assessment of ELP for reclassification purposes (see "Assessing Students with Disabilities" on pp. 12–13). An alternate assessment may be used to measure the student's ELP on any or all four domains in which the student cannot be assessed using the CELDT.

For purposes of AMAO calculations and Title III accountability requirements, a student assessed with an alternate assessment or the CELDT with modifications will receive the LOSS on the CELDT for each domain tested with an alternate assessment or the CELDT with modifications. The IEP team, however, may use results from the alternate assessment or CELDT with modifications in conjunction with the other required criteria (i.e., teacher evaluation, parental opinion and consultation, and student's score on an assessment of basic skills) to determine a student's eligibility for reclassification. Although the alternate assessment tests the student's ELP in accordance with the student's IEP, the alternate assessment results are not comparable to CELDT results, in general, or for the purposes of Title III accountability, in particular. They can be used, however, for reclassification consideration, as outlined in this section.

Criterion 2: Teacher evaluation

Use the student's classroom performance information based on his or her IEP goals for academic and ELD.

Criterion 3: Parental opinion and consultation

The parent or guardian is a participant on the IEP team.

Criterion 4: Student's score on an assessment of basic skills

The IEP team should specify in the student's IEP an assessment of basic skills to meet the guidelines for reclassification. Examples of an assessment

of basic skills for students with disabilities are the CMA for ELA and, for students with severe cognitive disabilities, the California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA). The IEP team may consider using other assessments that are valid and reliable and designed to compare basic skills of English learners with disabilities to native speakers of English with similar disabilities to determine if the English learner with disabilities has sufficiently mastered the basic skills for reclassification consideration.

The CDE does not make specific recommendations of alternate assessment instruments and encourages the local IEP team to gather pertinent information regarding the student and assessment needs specific to that student. The IEP team may use this comprehensive approach to make decisions regarding program supports and reclassification that will allow the student to make maximum progress given the student's capacities.

The LEA may be able to reclassify the English learner with a severe cognitive disability even though, for example, the CELDT performance is not at the level suggested for reclassification in the SBE's guidelines due to the identified disability. Therefore, it is recommended to use other language assessments to ensure the student receives appropriate services.