California Department of Education

Executive Office

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# **MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** November 28, 2017

**TO:** MEMBERS, State Board of Education

**FROM:** TOM TORLAKSON, State Superintendent of Public Instruction

**SUBJECT:** Update on the English Language Proficiency Assessments for California.

## Summary of Key Issues

### Summative Student Score Report

Educational Testing Service (ETS), in collaboration with the Sacramento County Office of Education and with input from stakeholders, has developed two versions of the summative assessment score reports (SSRs) for the English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC). The first version will be produced for the first-time the summative ELPAC is administered while the second version displays multiple years of summative ELPAC scores for an English learner (EL). This Information Memorandum highlights the key input considered in the development of the SSRs (Attachments 1 and 2).

### Stakeholder Input

The California Department of Education (CDE) held meetings, as well as communicated through other means, with a variety of stakeholders in August, September, and November of 2017. The meetings provided the CDE with actionable feedback on the language, graphics, and general layout of the summative SSRs.

The meetings and communications took place as follows:

* On August 22, 2017, the CDE worked with representatives from the California School Boards Association (CSBA), California Association for Bilingual Education (CABE), and Californians Together (CALTOG) to produce parent-friendly reporting performance level descriptors (reporting PLDs) that would be included on the summative SSR.
* On September 13, 2017, the CDE provided three revised versions of the summative SSRs to representatives from the three organizations listed above as well as to representatives from the California State PTA.
* On September 18, 2017, the CDE reconvened with the CSBA, CABE, CALTOG, and the California State PTA to discuss the latest versions and receive further feedback on the graphics on the front page of the SSR, illustrating the State Board of Education (SBE)-approved reporting hierarchy, as well as the language on the back page of the summative SSR that describes the ELPAC.
* On September 20, 2017, both versions of the draft summative SSRs were presented to members of the Regional Assessment Network to collect their feedback on the various versions.
* On September 21, 2017, the Sacramento County Office of Education, in collaboration with the CDE, conducted two parent/guardian feedback sessions in the Natomas Unified School District. Parents/guardians from Natomas Park Elementary School, in a morning feedback session, and parents/guardians from Natomas High School, in an afternoon session, were given the opportunity to provide input on both of the same draft versions of the summative SSRs that were viewed by the various stakeholders on September 18. A facilitator and Spanish interpreter guided the parents/guardians through a list of questions (in English and Spanish) that asked for participants’ preferences on the design and language of the SSRs.
* On November 17, 2017, the CDE presented the SSRs to the ELPAC Technical Advisory Group for feedback.

The CDE will revisit the summative SSRs if/when reclassification legislation is enacted, or further guidance on reclassification is established.

### Changes to the Draft Summative SSRs Based on Input

As the CDE collected input on both draft SSRs, a number of recurring themes for revisions were expressed in the meetings. Reflected below are the stakeholders’ preferred characteristics for the layout and content of the summative SSRs:

* Language that is easy to read and parent-friendly
* Language that is familiar to parents/guardians; that is, based on the current score reports for the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP)
* Graphics that are clear and make connections between the ELPAC reporting levels and the 2012 *California English Language Development Standards* (2012 *ELD Standards*) proficiency levels

### Resulting Final Design of the Summative SSRs

After discussion with and consideration of the feedback from stakeholders, the CDE approved the attached summative SSRs, which attempt to respond to the feedback from the various stakeholder groups. Attachment 1 provides the sample of a student’s SSR on his or her first summative assessment administration of the ELPAC. Attachment 2 provides a sample of a student’s summative SSR showing what a report would look like with more than one year of data. The following are descriptions of how the sections evolved based on stakeholder input:

* Front side:
	+ The reporting layout for the Overall, Oral/Written Language, and domains follows the SBE-approved reporting hierarchy.
	+ The “dial gauge graphics” for the Overall Score, Oral Language Score, and Written Language Score sections were chosen because they are unique from other California state assessment score reports, and users found them easy to read and interpret.
	+ The Overall Score History bar charts, on the year-to-year sample version, show student growth and are similar to those for the CAASPP, allowing for consistency between the ELPAC and CAASPP. California schools and districts have invested in teaching stakeholders how to read similar reports on growth for the CAASPP, and stakeholders appreciated keeping the ELPAC SSRs similar.
	+ The domain performance tables (i.e., Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing) use check marks to denote performance levels. There were several suggestions for the descriptors from our stakeholders, but it was important that parents be able to relate their child’s performance to the ELPAC level descriptors on the back of the SSR. Therefore, “Beginning,” “Somewhat/Moderately,” and “Well Developed” were chosen as names for the performance levels.
* Back side:
* The section titled “What Is the ELPAC?” describes what the ELPAC is, who takes it, and provides some examples of how the results may be used. This information was reorganized into bulleted lists to make it easier for parents/guardians to read.
* The section titled “What Students Can Typically Do at Each Level” incorporates the following:
	+ - Descriptors that are in parent-friendly language
		- Corresponding dial gauge graphic next to each level to align with the same gauges on the front
		- Some instructional language from the 2012 *ELD Standards* so parents/guardians can relate the instructional English language development proficiency levels of Emerging, Expanding, and Bridging to the ELPAC performance levels of 1 through 4
* The section titled “How can I help my child?” incorporates suggestions from the various stakeholders that ensures that all parents can actively participate in their child’s language development.

### Summative ELPAC Threshold Score Validation Study and Supplemental Analyses

To collect additional validity evidence, in consideration of the preliminary threshold scores approved by the SBE on November 8, 2017, a threshold score validation study will be conducted January 2018 through August 2018 (Attachment 3). (Please note that this study was incorrectly referred to as a reclassification criteria study in the November 2017 ELPAC SBE Item 08.)

The purpose of the threshold score validation study is to evaluate the degree to which the threshold scores and performance levels of the summative ELPAC accurately distinguish between levels of students’ English proficiency. The results will provide additional information to be used to evaluate the preliminary threshold scores established for the summative ELPAC. Supplemental analyses also will be conducted August 2018 through October 2018 to examine the relationship of English learners’ performance on CAASPP English language arts/literacy (ELA) assessments relative to their ELPAC performance. Validation of threshold scores and empirical analyses of ELPAC to CAASPP ELA are critical for appropriate test use and state-level policy discussions on establishing an ELPAC criterion for reclassification decisions. In particular, the validation study and supplemental analyses will provide policy makers with additional information to consider in deciding whether to continue to maintain the preliminary threshold scores or make adjustments to them. If any modifications are warranted, the SBE will be asked to consider them for approval.

#### Threshold Validation Study

In this study, teacher judgments of students’ English language development will be collected and compared to student performance on the ELPAC. Select teachers will evaluate the English language development of their students by classifying them on the basis of the ELPAC general PLDs. Data will be collected approximately six months into the 2017–18 school year and prior to the administration of the 2018 summative ELPAC. Approximately 500 students in each grade will be evaluated for the study. Participants will be selected to ensure that a representative sample of teachers and students from diverse schools in California is collected.

#### Supplemental Empirical Analyses

Supplemental empirical analyses will examine the relationship of student scores on the first operational summative ELPAC matched to student performance on the spring 2018 CAASPP ELA. These analyses will enable the evaluation of the relationship between English language proficiency score ranges and levels and content achievement score ranges and levels. The analyses will use multiple approaches that are widely used by states to support appropriate decision making on setting an optimal English-proficient performance standard on the summative ELPAC.

### Update on the Initial ELPAC Development

The CDE, in collaboration with its testing contractor, ETS, continues development of the ELPAC initial assessment (IA). The proposed general PLDs are undergoing review by experts and other stakeholders. The general PLDs play a large role in bringing our development of the IA closer to the operational phase. The CDE anticipates seeking the SBE approval of the general PLDs in January 2018, as indicated in the ELPAC development timeline (Attachment 3).

## Attachment(s)

* Attachment 1: (Sample Report for Student’s Summative First-Year Scores) Anita’s Grade 6 Results on the English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (2 Pages)
* Attachment 2: (Sample Report for Student’s SummAtive Year-TO-YEAR Scores) Anita’s Grade 6 Results on the English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (2 Pages)
* Attachment 3: 2017–18 English Language Proficiency Assessments for California Timeline (1 Page)