California Department of Education

Executive Office

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# **MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** June 7, 2018

**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

This Memorandum provides a summary of the main activities and developments related to the English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC), including the Initial ELPAC Student Score Report (SSR), as well as updates on the Summative Threshold Validation Study and Summative Cognitive Lab Study. Included in Attachment 2 is a list of the 2017–18 Outreach and Professional Development Activities for the ELPAC.

### Initial ELPAC Student Score Report

Educational Testing Service (ETS), in collaboration with the Sacramento County Office of Education (SCOE) and with input from stakeholders, has developed an SSR for the Initial ELPAC. This Information Memorandum highlights the key input considered in the development of the SSR (Attachment 1).

#### Stakeholder Input

The California Department of Education (CDE) held meetings, as well as communicated through other means, with a variety of stakeholders in February and May 2018. The meetings provided the CDE with actionable feedback on the language, graphics, and general layout of the Initial SSR.

The meetings and communications took place as follows:

* On February 16, 2018, the CDE had a phone conference with representatives from the California School Boards Association, California Association for Bilingual Education (CABE), Californians Together, and the California State Parent Teacher Association to receive feedback on the graphics and layout, and to produce parent-friendly reporting performance level descriptors (PLDs) that would be included on the Initial SSR.
* On February 23, 2018, the SCOE, in collaboration with ETS and the CDE, conducted two parent/guardian feedback sessions in the Williams Unified School District. Twelve parents/guardians from Williams Elementary School were given the opportunity to provide input on the same draft versions of the Initial SSR that were viewed by the various stakeholders on February 16, 2018. A facilitator and Spanish interpreters from CABE and ETS, as well as a staff member from the school, 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 SSR.
* On May 16, 2018, the CDE presented the Initial SSR to the Regional Assessment Network.

### Changes to the Draft Initial SSR Based on Input

As the CDE collected input on the 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 Initial SSR:

* 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
* Graphics that are clear and make connections between the ELPAC reporting levels and the 2012 *California English Language Development Standards* proficiency levels

### Resulting Final Design of the Initial SSR

After discussion with and consideration of the feedback from stakeholders, the CDE approved the attached Initial SSR, which attempts to respond to the feedback from the various stakeholder groups. Attachment 1 provides the sample of a student’s SSR based on an Initial ELPAC administration. The front side of the SSR is in English, and if the student’s primary language is Spanish, the back side includes the same information in Spanish. The following are descriptions of how the sections are displayed based on stakeholder input:

* The reporting layout for the Overall and Oral/Written Language follows the State Board of Education (SBE) approved reporting hierarchy.
* The “hierarchy design” with connecting lines for the Overall Score, Oral Language Score, and Written Language Score sections show the relationship between the Oral/Written Language to the Overall Performance Level.
* The table of performance levels and corresponding reporting descriptors reflect reviewers’ feedback:
  + Descending order of the performance levels.
  + Bolded English proficiency descriptors for each performance level (e.g., **well developed**).
  + Arrow with “Your child is here” next to the student’s overall level.
  + A note stating that the overall score is a combination of oral and written language with percentages.

### Update on the Summative ELPAC Threshold Validation Study

In December 2017, the CDE provided the SBE with information on the Summative ELPAC threshold validation study. There are two parts to this study: (1) teacher judgments of students’ English language development (ELD) compared to student performance on the ELPAC; and (2) supplemental empirical analyses to evaluate the level four threshold score based on matched English learners’ Smarter Balanced English Language Arts results.

Part one of the study is progressing. Feedback from the ELPAC Technical Advisory Group helped guide the CDE’s recruitment plan to focus on recruiting a geographically representative sample of 100 teachers per grade (see Table 1 for a summary by grade). These teachers represented local educational agencies (LEAs) and charter schools in the northern, central, and southern regions of California. As of May 15, 2018, there were 436 LEAs that had agreed to participate, and 102 had returned their student ratings with a total of 6,556 student ratings collected.

#### Table 1. Validation Study Teacher Recruitment

| **Grade** | **Teachers Participating** |
| --- | --- |
| K | 129 |
| 1 | 140 |
| 2 | 134 |
| 3 | 138 |
| 4 | 133 |
| 5 | 144 |
| 6 | 131 |
| 7 | 124 |
| 8 | 98 |
| 9 | 112 |
| 10 | 108 |
| 11 | 94 |
| 12 | 77 |
| **Total** | **1,562** |

Prior to the administration of the Summative ELPAC, teachers were asked to evaluate the ELD of their students by classifying them on the basis of the ELPAC General PLDs. For part one of this study, these data will be compared empirically to student performance on the Summative ELPAC to yield valuable information about the convergence of teacher judgments and student performance on the assessment.

Table 2 displays a current timeline for the study.

#### Table 2. Threshold Validation Study Timeline

| **Milestone** | **Timeline** |
| --- | --- |
| Summative ELPAC Field Test | Spring 2017 |
| Summative ELPAC Standard Setting | October 2017 |
| SBE approval of threshold scores | November 2017 |
| Part One Threshold Validation Study | January 2018–August 2018 |
| Part One Webcast posted for teacher training | January 2018 |
| Operational 2018 Summative ELPAC administered to students | February 1, 2018–May 31, 2018 |
| Score reporting for operational 2018 Summative ELPAC | March 2018–July 2018 |
| Part One Threshold Validation Study Report to the CDE from ETS | Tentative September 2018 |
| Part Two Threshold Validation Study Report to the CDE from WestEd | Tentative September 2018 |
| SBE approve the CDE’s adjustments to the threshold scores, if necessary | Tentative November 2018 |

Part two of the study will begin in late summer 2018. Using data from students in grades three through eight and grade eleven, student performance on the Summative ELPAC will be compared to performance on the 2018 Smarter Balanced English language arts/literacy assessment in order to re-evaluate the placement of the Summative ELPAC threshold scores. Taken together, empirical data from parts one and two of the study will inform CDE’s review of the Summative ELPAC preliminary threshold scores to determine if any adjustments should be made to the threshold level cut scores.

## Cognitive Lab Study

In an effort to increase accessibility to the ELPAC, the CDE is collaborating with ETS to conduct a cognitive lab study. The goal of this cognitive lab study is to evaluate current ELPAC accommodations for potential or already-identified English learner students with disabilities. Findings have the potential to inform future item development work for the Initial and Summative ELPAC and accompanying materials and provide guidance on accommodations for the ELPAC.

The study is currently in progress with students representing specific disability groups only in kindergarten through grade eight, as the task types in grades nine through twelve are similar to those in grades six through eight. The sessions are being conducted using interviewer/student pairs. Students interact with items across the listening, speaking, reading, and writing test domains. Students are observed and interviewed about their experience interacting with the test materials.

Current groups in the study include students with: (a) severe learning disabilities, (b) speech and language impairment, (c) hearing impairments, and (d) visual impairments. Feedback from this study group will provide us with information needed to increase the accessibility on the ELPAC.

Information from the study will inform the ELPAC regulations in July as well as an SBE Memorandum in fall 2018.

## Attachment(s)

* Attachment 1: California Unified Initial English Language Proficiency Assessments for California Student Score Report (2 Pages)
* Attachment 2: ELPAC Outreach and Professional Development Activities (10 Pages)

**Attachment 2: ELPAC Outreach and Professional Development Activities**

The California Department of Education (CDE), in coordination with English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC) contractor, Educational Testing Service (ETS), has provided a variety of outreach activities, including in-person workshops, focus group meetings, and presentations throughout the state to prepare local educational agencies (LEAs) for the administration of the Initial and Summative ELPAC. In addition, the CDE continues to release information regarding the ELPAC, including weekly updates on its Web site and through listserv e-mail. The following tables provide descriptions of outreach and professional development activities from May 2017 through May 2018.

## Table 1. Trainings

| **Date(s)** | **Location** | **Estimated Number of Attendees** | **Description** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 10/10/17 | Online | 550 | Summative ELPAC Test Material Ordering Webcast.  Provided training to LEAs on how to place ELPAC test material orders through the Test Operations Management System. |
| 10/24/17 through 12/13/17 | Various locations throughout California | 1,500 | Administration and Scoring Training (AST) for the Summative ELPAC.  Goals of the AST:   1. Standardize the administration of the ELPAC at all domains (i.e., Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing) 2. Train Test Examiners to score the Speaking items accurately and reliably 3. Train LEA trainers to train other qualified persons locally to administer and score the ELPAC |
| 11/6/17 through 11/9/17 | Sacramento | 18 | Item Writer Training Meeting.  Test items written by educators were reviewed and revised by ETS assessment specialists and educators on the Content Review Panels (CRP) and Bias and Sensitivity Review Panels (BSRP) before final approval by the CDE. |
| 4/10/18 through  5/24/18 | Various locations throughout California | 1,500 | AST for the Initial ELPAC.  Goals of the AST:   1. Standardize the administration of the ELPAC at all domains (i.e., Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing) 2. Train Test Examiners to score the Speaking items accurately and reliably 3. Train LEA trainers to train other qualified persons locally to administer and score the ELPAC |
| 4/19/18 | Sacramento | 25 | Advisory Commission on Special Education (ACSE) Meeting.  Requested input from ACSE members on the CDE’s efforts to increase accessibility resources for the ELPAC. |
| 5/16/18 | Online | 1,200 | Initial ELPAC Local Scoring Tool (LST) Webcast.  Provided training to LEAs on the use of the LST. Approximately 70 questions were answered during the Webcast. The archived Webcast will be posted on [www.elpac.org](http://www.elpac.org/) for future viewing. |

## Table 2. Advisory Panel/Review Committee Meetings

| **Date(s)** | **Location** | **Estimated Number of Attendees** | **Description** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 7/20/17 | Sacramento | 10 | Assessment Stakeholder Meeting.  CDE staff provided results of the ELPAC field test survey taken by California educators who administered the field test. |
| 8/7/17 | Sacramento | 4 | ELPAC Technical Advisory Group (TAG) Teleconference Meeting.  Members of the TAG provided guidance related to psychometric and measurement topics. |
| 8/20/17 | Sacramento | 10 | Assessment Stakeholder Meeting.  CDE staff provided an update on the ELPAC performance level descriptors (PLDs) and the proposed reporting hierarchy. |
| 10/17/17 through 10/26/17 | Sacramento | 74 | Summative ELPAC Standard Setting.  California educators developed specific performance level threshold score recommendations that were presented to the State Board of Education (SBE) in November 2017. Educators reviewed, discussed, and provided feedback on the specific performance level thresholds based on results from the Summative ELPAC field test. |
| 10/19/17 | Sacramento | 12 | Assessment Stakeholder Meeting.  CDE staff provided information on the Summative ELPAC student score report. |
| 10/31/17 through 11/3/17 | Sacramento | 56 | Initial ELPAC Field Test Writing Range Finding.  California educators used ELPAC rubrics for writing items to score student responses from the Initial ELPAC field test to:   * Identify anchor/benchmark samples specific to each test item * Select training samples that would represent each score point for training each ELPAC task type   This helped ensure that all constructed-response items would be scored consistently and reliably for the writing domain. |
| 11/7/17 | Sacramento | 8 | ELPAC TAG Meeting.  Members of the TAG provided guidance related to psychometric and measurement topics. |
| 12/6/17 | Sacramento | 12 | Assessment Stakeholder Meeting.  CDE staff provided updates on the ELPAC. |
| 1/22/18 through 1/31/18 | Sacramento | 23 | Initial ELPAC Speaking Range Finding.  California educators identified anchor responses for the operational ELPAC Examiner’s Manuals as well as speaking- response audio tracks used in training. This helped ensure that all constructed-response items would be scored consistently and reliably for the speaking domain. |
| 1/24/18 | Online | 10 | Initial ELPAC WebEx.  California educators provided feedback on the accuracy of the language of the Initial ELPAC domain- and grade span-specific PLDs. |
| 1/25/18 | Sacramento | 7 | Assessment Stakeholder Meeting.  CDE staff provided an update on the development of the Initial ELPAC. |
| 2/6/18 through 2/15/18 | Sacramento | 62 | Initial ELPAC Standard Setting.  California educators developed specific performance level threshold score recommendations that were presented to the SBE in May 2018. Educators reviewed, discussed, and provided feedback on the specific performance level threshold scores based on results from the Initial ELPAC field test. |
| 2/16/18 | Sacramento | 4 | Stakeholder Teleconference Meeting.  The CDE conferred by phone with representatives from the California School Boards Association, California Association for Bilingual Education (CABE), Californians Together, and the California State Parent Teacher Association to receive feedback on the graphics and layout, and to produce parent-friendly reporting PLDs that would be included on the Initial SSR. |
| 2/19/18 through 2/22/18 | Sacramento | 38 | Test item CRP and BSRP Meetings.  The CRP reviewed ELPAC test items to ensure that:   1. Test items were aligned with the *California English Language Development Standards: Kindergarten Through Grade 12* and the grade/grade spans as identified in the test blueprints 2. Items were appropriate for the grade/grade span 3. Items addressed the construct being tested 4. Selected-response items designated the correct answer and all distractors were plausible yet wrong-answer options   The BSRP reviewed ELPAC test items for “… language, illustrations, graphics, and other representations that might be differentially familiar or interpreted differently by members of different groups and for material that might be offensive or emotionally disturbing to some test takers.” (*Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing*, 2014, p. 55). |
| 2/23/18 | Williams | 13 | Parent/Guardian Focus Group on the Initial ELPAC Student Score Report (SSR) in Williams Unified School District.  ETS received feedback on the layout and content on the SSR. Participating parents/guardians were English and Spanish speakers with children at different grade levels. A member of the CABE attended the focus group. |
| 3/22/18 | Sacramento | 7 | ELPAC TAG Meeting.  Members of the TAG provided guidance related to psychometric and measurement topics. |
| 3/22/18 | Sacramento | 8 | Assessment Stakeholder Meeting.  CDE staff provided information on the Initial ELPAC SSR. |
| 3/22/18 through 3/27/18 | Sacramento | 28 | Summative ELPAC Speaking Range Finding for Embedded Field Test Items.  California educators identified anchor responses for the ELPAC Examiner’s Manuals and the Speaking response audio tracks used in training. This helped ensure that all constructed-response items would be scored consistently and reliably for the speaking domain. |
| 4/19/18 | Sacramento | 9 | Assessment Stakeholder Meeting.  CDE staff provided information on the accessibility resources available on the ELPAC |

## Table 3. Presentations by CDE Staff

| **Date(s)** | **Location** | **Estimated Number of Attendees** | **Description** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 6/28/2017 through 6/30/2017 | Austin, TX | 15 | Two Innovative Approaches: Score Reporting on English Language Proficiency Assessment Aligned to new English language development (ELD) Standards  Due to the travel ban, CDE did not travel to Austin, TX. ETS presented on behalf of the CDE on the approach that was used to allow the integrated standards to be included in the standard setting process. |
| 9/8/17 | Sacramento | 28 | Bilingual Coordinators Network (BCN) Meeting.  Topics included the Initial ELPAC reporting hierarchies, the PLDs, and changes to test materials based on educator feedback. |
| 11/3/17 | Sacramento | 25 | BCN Meeting.  CDE staff presented on the ELPAC student score report, state trainings, and weightings for the ELPAC. |
| 11/29/17 | Anaheim | 100 | California Education Research Association.  CDE staff hosted an “ELPAC Academy” as an interactive meeting for participants to connect the ELPAC with teaching and learning in the classroom. |
| 12/4/17 | Los Angeles | 15 | Accountability Leadership Institute for English Learner, Immigrant, and Migrant Student Programs.  Topics included the ELPAC administration, practice tests, SSRs, trainings, and upcoming educator opportunities. |
| 1/16/18 | Sacramento | 12 | State Parent Advisory Council Teleconference Meeting.  CDE staff presented a high-level overview of the ELPAC. |
| 1/24/18 | Sacramento | 11 | Regional Assessment Network (RAN) Meeting.  CDE staff presented key information on the Initial ELPAC and the ELPAC regulations. |
| 3/2/18 | Sacramento | 22 | BCN Meeting.  Topics included key information on the Initial ELPAC, ELPAC regulations, and the SSRs. |
| 3/17/18 | Sacramento | 100 | State Parent Advisory Council Teleconference Meeting.  CDE staff presented the differences between the California English Language Development Test and the ELPAC, as well as information on the SSRs, initial identification of English learners, and correction of classification. |
| 3/28/18 | Sacramento | 35 | CABE Conference.  CDE staff presented several updates on the Initial and Summative ELPAC including administration, scoring, reclassification, and regulations. |
| 5/4/18 | Sacramento | 20 | BCN Meeting.  Topics included the accessibility resources available on the ELPAC and the local scoring of the Initial ELPAC during the summer. |
| 5/16/18 | Sacramento | 9 | RAN Meeting.  CDE staff presented on a timeline of upcoming ELPAC activities, parent/guardian notification of testing, and the local scoring process. |