

INFORMATION MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 26, 2003

TO: MEMBERS, STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

FROM: Geno Flores, Deputy Superintendent
Assessment and Accountability Branch

SUBJECT: Summary of California English Language Development Test (CELDT)
2003 Annual Assessment

The following information is provided by CTB/McGraw-Hill (CTB), the California English Language Development Test (CELDT) contractor, as a brief summary of some of the important issues relating to the 2003 Annual Assessment of the CELDT.

Improved Form C test design

Significant differences from the 2002 version of the CELDT (Form B) included:

- replacement of the "Story Retelling" task with several shorter types of Speaking items;
- test administration without use of tape recorder or CD;
- reduction of one-on-one testing time to 10 minutes;
- new scoring rubrics including samples and scoring rationales;
- group administered Listening test takes approximately 15 minutes;
- embedded field testing provides psychometric data for items to use in future tests; and
- new Listening and Speaking tasks.

Pre-test training

Because of the new test format, a detailed training program was developed for District and Regional Training Center staffs, to prepare them for training the test-givers in their areas. The program included a one-day instructional presentation, training materials, and instructional videotape. Twelve presentations were delivered in Spring 2003 at the following locations: Santa Barbara, Downey, Culver City, Irvine, San Bernardino, Riverside, San Diego, Redding, Sacramento, Concord, San Jose, and Visalia. Each session was planned for 100 participants, but attendance averaged about 85.

Evaluation of the training overall was very positive. There were many suggestions for improvements. They will be used to help design the training program for the 2004 test cycle.

On-line enrollment process

For the first time this year CTB collected enrollment figures from the districts by electronic files, using a Web site tool accessible to the district coordinators via password and County, District, School (CDS) number. The on-line enrollment site was accessed by only about two-thirds of the districts. Enrollments for those districts not confirming their numbers on the Web site were estimated from the previous year's student testing count.

Delivery of test materials

The shipment of testing materials to the districts was delayed about a week, primarily due to difficulty in implementing the new test formats and items during the first few months of the contract. As a result, some districts were not able to begin testing on July 1, 2003, as planned. CTB worked with several districts to provide partial deliveries via priority shipping as needed. All districts had received test materials by the second week of July. Now that the CELDT improvements are established, CTB expects on-time delivery of test materials in 2004.

Comments on changes to the test

During the pre-test training sessions, a number of people expressed concern that test administration without the use of a tape recorder might affect scoring adversely. CTB addressed these concerns through the careful design of test administration and scoring procedures, corresponding to appropriately revised training requirements. Reports from the field have confirmed that test givers view the freedom from recording equipment as a real benefit with CELDT Form C.

Group presentation of the Listening test has also brought favorable comments from the users. This feature allows more flexibility in scheduling testing, as well as reducing the amount of teacher time required for individual administration.

Initially some expressed concern about the teachers' ability to effectively score the Speaking test without the aid of a recorded sample of the student's speech. Training in the rigorous application of scoring rubrics is an essential element of this task. As test givers gained more experience in the administration of this section, their misgivings were generally alleviated, and the value of reduced time required for scoring the Speaking test has been recognized as a benefit.

Retrieval issues

CTB has developed a Web site tool for districts to use in scheduling the pick-up of their test books for scoring. This has been very effective in helping coordinate and track the shipment/delivery of materials for those districts, which have used the system. CTB has also made an effort to encourage the return of test materials on a monthly basis as a means of avoiding the last-minute jam that has traditionally occurred. Some of the districts have returned tests early; however, the majority have opted to retain all materials until the end of the testing window, October 31, 2003.

As specified in CDE regulations, districts were allowed ten days after the completion of the Annual Assessment window to have test materials ready for pick-up. The schedule was modified this year to accommodate the testing extension for those districts that were impacted by the wildfires in Southern California. Annual Assessment tests that were not delivered to the scoring center by the specified date are being returned to the districts, and will have to be scored locally.

Student counts

Early estimates of the number of student test books that will be returned from the Annual Assessment window, including late receipts from the districts with extensions for wildfires, indicate a total of approximately 1.4 million, which is about 12 percent less than in 2002. If the percentages of test types are roughly equivalent to last year, this number will include about 265,000 Initial Identification assessments.

Customer service calls

The CTB customer service group provided continuous assistance to district coordinators before, during, and after the testing window to resolve a variety of issues. Calls included: requests for additional testing and ancillary materials, inquiries about pre-coded student ID labels, questions regarding testing procedures, requests for interpretation of scoring rubrics, scheduling of pick-ups, and other issues.