

Executive Numbered Memo 004-2018-19
English Learner Update: English Learner Exiting Policy Change

TO: Superintendents and English Learner Program Coordinators
FROM: Jennifer Patterson, Assistant Superintendent, Office of Teaching, Learning and Assessment
DATE: February 28, 2019
RE: English Learner Exiting Policy Change

To improve learning outcomes for our English Learners (ELs), it is critical that we sustain high expectations for student success and language proficiency. It is our collective responsibility to maintain consistent standards for language learning and, in turn, engage in consistent assessment practices. Our assessment practices must reflect our belief that with appropriate instruction, *all students* are capable of high levels of multilingual proficiency.

In Oregon, we have an opportunity and responsibility to align our assessment practices related to English language proficiency. In order to ensure consistent assessment of English language proficiency, we are moving forward to align *all* exiting criteria to Oregon’s English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA21). This change ensures a consistent method for ELs to exit Oregon EL programs regardless of the school attended and [fulfills the Every Student Succeeds Act \(ESSA\) Title III requirement](#) for common, statewide exiting procedures.

Current practice in Oregon allows districts to use either ELPA21 or a promotion (or portfolio) process as a mechanism for measuring proficiency in English language for students who qualify for EL services. While a portfolio process is not widely utilized statewide, we recognize it holds value for individual districts (especially in districts who have developed an extensive protocol for portfolio review). Within the portfolio process, however, there is no systematic statewide design or rubric that ensures students are held to the same standard across all schools and districts as required by the ELPA21 assessment. Districts may elect to continue using a portfolio process to document student progress, archive student work and demonstrate growth over time. This portfolio process can be an informative and powerful way to document learning, assess language skills and encourage student self-reflection. However, a portfolio review process may no longer suffice as a way to demonstrate English language proficiency with the goal of exiting a student from EL service.

EL Exiting Policy Change

Moving forward, English Learners may only be exited from an EL program if they receive a proficient score on Oregon’s English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA21). ELs who score proficient on ELPA21 will exit the district’s EL program as proficient in English. Students who score proficient on the ELPA21 enter EL Monitoring Status (monitoring year 1) the subsequent school year. The use of the ELPA21 as a consistent measure of English proficiency applies to all ELs in Oregon, including English Learner Students with Disabilities (ELSWD). ELs scoring proficient may not be retained in the EL program, per [executive numbered memo 003-2017-18](#).

This executive numbered memo supersedes [executive numbered memo 006-2015-16](#) regarding exiting or reclassifying ELs.

EL Exiting Procedure

1. Participation in ELPA21
 - ELSWD or ELs with 504 plans may be exempted from one to three language domains based on their Individualized Education Plan (IEP)/504 plan.
2. Scoring proficient on Oregon’s English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA21).
3. Exiting from the EL program.

Partnership and Support

We value your partnership and know this decision may require shifts in current practice. We stand ready to lend technical assistance in any way that may be helpful: communication with schools, determining how/if to continue with portfolios as a value driven practice, and engaging around improved instructional practice. In addition, we will be presenting at the Confederation of Oregon School Administrators (COSA) State EL Alliance Conference on March 13-15 in Eugene, Oregon to provide an in-person opportunity for school and district leaders to ask questions and seek further clarification. Lastly, we have included two attachments that provide important context and additional information around this change. For any additional questions regarding the exiting of English Learners please contact Education Specialists [Kim Miller](#) or [Taffy Carlisle](#). For questions regarding students with disabilities, please contact Education Specialist [Linda Brown](#).

Attachments:

[January 7, 2015 Dear Colleague Letter](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions - Addendum to the September 23, 2016 Non-Regulatory Guidance for English Learners and Title III](#)