



# **Toward a “Common Definition of English Learner”:**

**Guidance for States and State Assessment  
Consortia in Defining and Addressing Policy  
and Technical Issues and Options**

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# Consortia members required to adopt common definition of English learner



Each consortium “must define the term in a manner that is uniform across member states and consistent with section 9101(25) of the ESEA” (USED, 2010, p. 20)

# Permutations of Consortia

**NOTE: Membership Changes Continually**

Figure 1. Permutations of Cross-Consortium Participation as of June 21, 2013

Academic/ELP	ASSETS	ELPA21	Stand-Alone
<b>Smarter Balanced</b>	DE, ID, ME, MI, MO, MT, NV, NH, NC, ND*, PA*, SC+, SD, USVI, VT, WI, WY	IA, KS, OR, SC+, WA, WV	AK, CA, CT, HI
<b>PARCC</b>	CO, DC, IL, KY, MA, MD, MS, NJ, NM, ND*, OK, PA*, RI, TN	AR, FL, LA, OH	AZ, GA, IN, NY
<b>Stand-Alone</b>	AL, MN, UT, VA	NE	TX

\*Currently advisory states in Smarter Balanced and PARCC

+ Listed as ASSETS and ELPA21

Sources: Smarter Balanced; Achieve, Inc.; WIDA; and CCSSO

# Permutations of Consortia

**NOTE: Membership changes frequently; this table is as of July 22, 2014.**

<b><i>Content/ELP</i></b>	<b>ASSETS</b>	<b>ELPA21</b>	<b>Stand Alone</b>
<b>PARCC</b>	CO, DC, IL, MD, MA, MS, NJ, NM, PA, RI	AR, LA, OH	NY
<b>Smarter Balanced</b>	DE, ID, ME, MI, MO, MT, NH, NC, ND, NV, PA, SD, VT, WI, WY	IA, OR, WA, WV	CA, CT, HI**
<b>Stand Alone</b>	AL, AK, KY, MN, OK, SC, TN, UT, VA	KS, NE, SC	AZ, FL*, GA**, IN*, TX

\* Adopted WIDA Standards, \*\* Current WIDA State, not committed to ASSETS

Sources: PARCC, Smarter Balanced, ASSETS, ELPA21, and state websites

# Who is an English Learner?

Legal roots of protected class status

- National origin-minority or language-minority students (Civil Rights Act–Title VI, 1964)
- Right to supports “to overcome language barriers that impede equal participation by [students] in [an educational agency's] instructional programs” (EEOA, 1974)
- **“Limited English proficient” is defined in ESEA** (BEA, 1978; IASA, 1994; NCLB, 2001)

# Federal Definition of LEP

## ESEA, 9101(25)

The term limited English proficient...means an individual —

- A. who is aged 3 through 21;
- B. who is enrolled or preparing to enroll in an elementary school or secondary school;
- C. (i) who was not born in the United States or ***whose native language is a language other than English***; (ii)(I) who is a Native American or Alaska Native, or a native resident of the outlying areas; and (II) ***who comes from an environment where a language other than English has had a significant impact on the individual's level of English language proficiency***; or (iii) who is migratory, ***whose native language is a language other than English, and who comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant***;

**and...**

# Federal Definition of LEP

## ESEA, 9101(25), cont'd.

- D. whose difficulties in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language **may** be sufficient to deny [them]:
- the ability to ***meet the State's proficient level of achievement*** on State assessments;
  - the ability to ***successfully achieve in classrooms*** where the language of instruction is English; or
  - the opportunity to ***participate fully in society***.

# 4 Stage EL Definition Process

## 1. Identify Potential EL

## 2. Classify as EL

## 3. Define ELP Performance Standard

## 4. Reclassify

Administer Home Language Survey (HLS) at entry

Do HLS criteria indicate a potential EL?

YES

Administer initial ELP screener / assessment

Meet initial English proficient criterion?

NO

English Learner

Determine placement & appropriate instr. svcs

NO

Assess/monitor each reclass criterion at least annually

Meet EL exit criteria (ELP perf. std, other criteria & evidence)

YES

Exited & reclassified fluent English proficient

NO

ELP not tested (False Negative?)

YES

Initial fluent English proficient (No LIEP provided)

Monitor academic progress for two (2) years to ensure no further specialized services are needed

# Activities to Date

- September 2013 – CCSSO\* sponsored session discussing Stages 1 & 3
  - Published paper on Home Language Survey
  - Published paper on Reference performance level descriptors
- May 2014 – CCSSO\* sponsored session discussing Stage 2
  - Paper on EL classification in process
- Fall 2014 – CCSSO\* proposed session discussing Stage 4

\* Supported in part by the Carnegie Corporation of New York

# Home Language Survey Paper – Stage 1

Reprising the Home Language Survey:  
Summary of a National Working Session on  
Policies, Practices, and Tools for Identifying  
Potential English Learners

January 2014



- Clarifying the Construct
- Explicit statement of purposes & uses
- Description of what the HLS is not
- Sample questions
  - *Which language(s) does your child currently understand and speak?*
  - *Which language(s) does your child most often use at home, in school, outside school?*
  - *Which language does your child most often hear at home, in school, outside school?*

# C. Draft Revised HLS Questions

(5/7/14)

Current  
languages used

Frequency of  
English use

Frequency of  
English exposure

1. *Which language(s) does your child **currently**...*
  - a. understand?
  - b. speak<sup>1</sup>?
  - c. read [for Grades 1 and higher]?
  - d. write [for Grades 1 and higher]?
2. *Which language does your child **usually use**...*
  - a. at home with **parent(s)/guardian(s)**?
  - b. at home with brothers and sisters **(if applicable)**?
  - c. at home with other family members **(if applicable)**?
  - d. in school, **including preschool if enrolling kinder** (if applicable)?
  - e. **in other places, with friends and others (if applicable)** ?
3. *Which language does your child **usually hear**<sup>2</sup>...*
  - a. at home with **parent(s)/guardian(s)**?
  - b. at home with brothers and sisters **(if applicable)**?
  - c. at home with other family members **(if applicable)**?
  - d. in school, **including preschool if enrolling kinder** (if applicable)?
  - e. **in other places, with friends and others (if applicable)**?

<sup>1</sup> For American Sign Language (ASL) users, to “speak” means to sign using ASL.

<sup>2</sup> For ASL users, to “hear” means to view ASL being signed.

# Reference Case Scenarios, cont'd.

## 3. **The Williams Family: Enrolling a kindergartener**

- Child understands and speaks English; understands Mandarin
- English-only is spoken in the home by all family members
- Child was schooled in a Mandarin-English preschool setting
- Some activities with friends are in both Mandarin and English

## 4. **The Talavera Family: Enrolling a third-grader**

- Child understands and speaks Spanish and English
- Spanish is spoken in the home by father and grandmother; mother and siblings speak English predominantly
- Child is transferring from Illinois where he was schooled in a TBE program
- Almost all activities with friends are in English

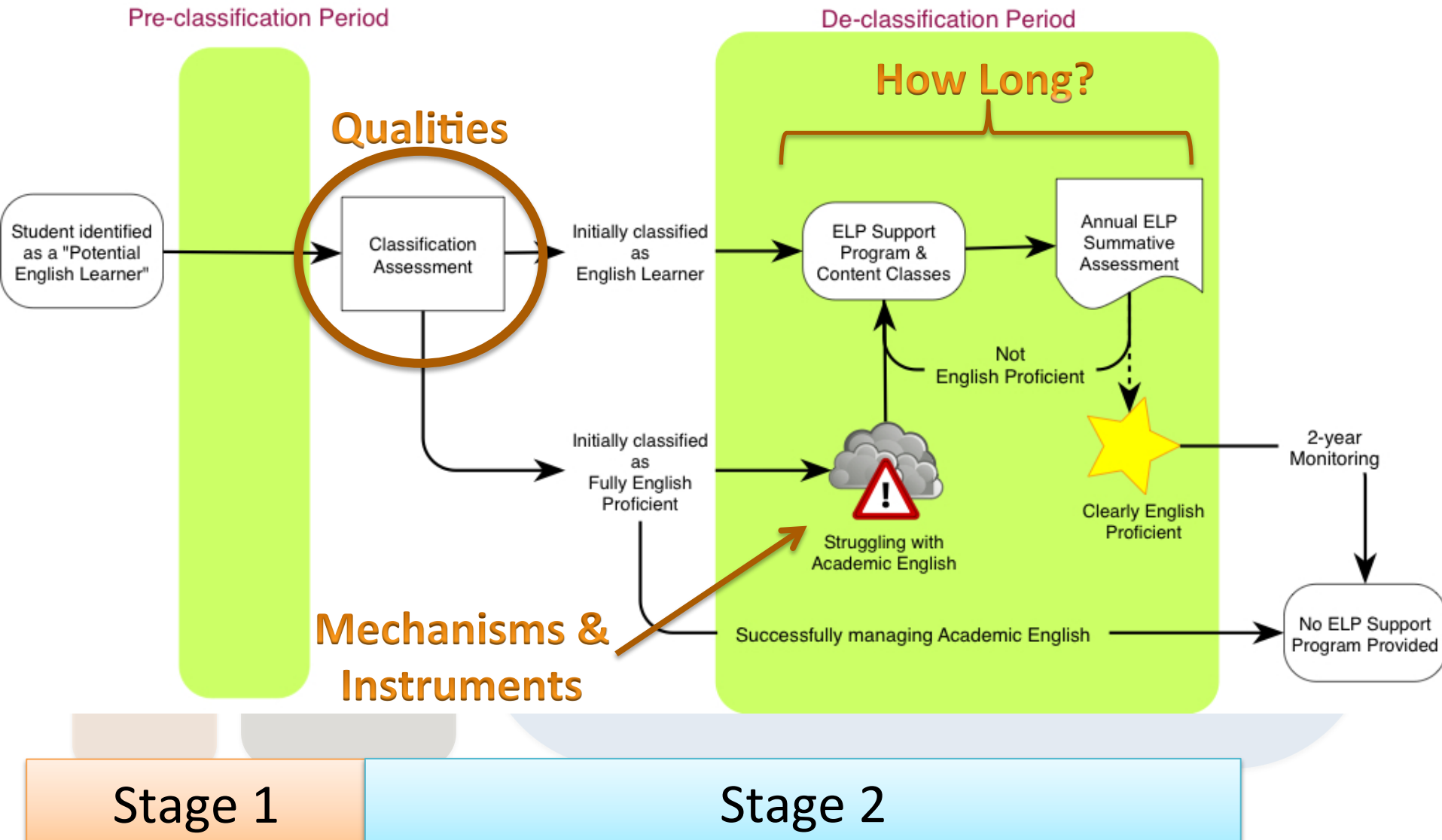
# Interpretation/Decision Process

## Response Pattern

1. *Which language(s) does your child **currently**...*
  - a. understand?
  - b. speak<sup>1</sup>?
  - c. read [for Grades 1 and higher]?
  - d. write [for Grades 1 and higher]?
2. *Which language does your child usually **use**...*
  - a. at home with **parent(s)/guardian(s)**?
  - b. at home with brothers and sisters **(if applicable)**?
  - c. at home with other family members **(if applicable)**?
  - d. in school, **including preschool if enrolling kinder** (if applicable)?
  - e. outside of home and school **with friends and others**?
3. *Which language does your child usually **hear**<sup>2</sup>...*
  - a. at home with **parent(s)/guardian(s)**?
  - b. at home with brothers and sisters **(if applicable)**?
  - c. at home with other family members **(if applicable)**?
  - d. in school, **including preschool if enrolling kinder** (if applicable)?
  - e. outside of home and school **with friends and others**?

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# Stage 2 (Classification) – Draft



# Reference PLDs – Stage 3

Reference Performance Level Descriptors:  
Outcome of a National Working Session on  
Defining an “English Proficient” Performance Standard

January 2014



- Examination of common descriptions of ELP performances across states and consortia
- Goal to support cross state & consortia comparisons of ELP

RANGE OF PERFORMANCE IN ENGLISH – descriptors reflect performance at exit stage of each level							
PRODUCTIVE			RECEPTIVE				
	Low	Moderate	High	Low	Moderate	High	
ORAL	Discourse	Engages in basic oral interactions in direct informational exchanges on familiar and routine social and academic topics	Engages comfortably in most social and academic discussions on familiar topics using extended discourse	Produces, initiates, and engages in sustained extended interactions tailored to specific purposes and audiences on a variety of social and academic topics, including new and unfamiliar topics	Understands simple or routine directions and short, simple conversations and discussions on familiar social and academic topics	Comprehends most social and academic discussions on familiar topics and follows discussions related to feelings, needs and opinions in extended discourse	Comprehends longer, elaborated directions, and extended conversations and discussions on familiar and unfamiliar topics in academic and social contexts
	Phrase/Sentence	Uses repetitive phrasal and sentence patterns with formulaic structures common across discipline areas	Uses a variety of sentence structures with varying complexity	Uses a variety of sentence structures with varied levels of complexity tailored to the communicative task	Demonstrates an understanding of repeated phrases and simply-constructed sentences	Comprehends a variety of grammatical constructions and sentence patterns common in spoken language in academic and social contexts	Comprehends a wide variety of complex and sophisticated sentence structures in varied academic and social interactions
	Word	Uses commonly used words and phrases	Uses specific and some technical content-area vocabulary and words or phrases with shades of meaning	Uses a range of abstract, specific and technical content-related vocabulary; uses a range of idiomatic expressions and words or phrases with multiple meanings	Demonstrates an understanding of words and phrases from familiar contexts and previously learned content material	Understands specific and some technical content-related vocabulary, some idiomatic expressions and words or phrases with multiple meanings	Understands a wide range of specific, technical and idiomatic words and phrases; comprehends words and phrases with multiple meanings
TEXT-BASED	Discourse	Produces basic written texts in directed tasks or activities on familiar and routine topics	Produces texts that express ideas to meet most social and academic needs	Produces texts to meet a variety of social needs and academic demands for specific purposes and audiences	Demonstrates an understanding of simple sentences in short, connected texts with visual cues, on familiar topics	Demonstrates comprehension of increasingly complex texts; identifies detailed information on unfamiliar topics with fewer contextual cues	Demonstrates comprehension of a variety of complex texts and identifies general and detailed information in texts on familiar and unfamiliar topics
	Phrase/Sentence	Produces simple sentences	Produces texts that reflect a grasp of basic grammatical structures and sentence patterns with evidence of emerging use of more complex patterns	Produces texts using a variety of grammatical structures and a broad range of sentence patterns matched to purpose	Demonstrates an understanding of basic, routinely used language structures in social and content-area texts	Demonstrates comprehension of a variety of complex grammatical constructions and sentence patterns in social and content-area texts	Demonstrates comprehension of a wide variety of complex and sophisticated sentence structures from varied social and content-area texts
	Word	Uses high frequency and commonly-learned vocabulary and phrases drawn from social contexts and content areas	Uses more varied vocabulary that extends beyond the everyday to include content-specific vocabulary, some idiomatic expressions, and words or phrases with multiple meanings	Uses a broad range of vocabulary, including abstract and technical terms; uses a broader range of idiomatic expressions and words or phrases with multiple meanings appropriate to context	Demonstrates comprehension of frequently occurring content words and phrases in social and content-area texts	Demonstrates comprehension of more varied vocabulary that extends beyond the everyday to include content-specific vocabulary, some idiomatic expressions, and words or phrases with multiple meanings	Demonstrates comprehension of a wide range of vocabulary, including abstract and technical terms; comprehends words and phrases with multiple meanings

# Stage 3 (English proficient) to Stage 4 (Exit)

**Reclassification criteria based on Federal definition:  
English Learner no longer denied...** 9101(25)

1. ability to meet State's proficient level of achievement on State assessments

Empirical Analysis of ELP & Content Assessment results  
→ Determine English Language Proficient Criterion  
→ Establish AMAO 2 Criterion

**Multiple Evidence Sources of ELP**

2. ability to successfully achieve in classrooms where the language of instruction is English

Evidence of receptive & productive language uses to accomplish tasks appropriate to grade level, content areas  
→ Assessment tools supporting and standardizing local criteria & evidence

3. opportunity to participate fully in society in English

Evidence of receptive & productive language uses to accomplish social and occupational goals within & beyond school  
→ Assessment tools supporting and standardizing local criteria & evidence

(Linquanti & Cook, 2013)

# Stage 4 (Reclassification)

**Reclassification criteria based on Federal definition:  
English Learner no longer denied...**

1. ability to meet State's proficient level of achievement on State assessments

Empirical Analysis of ELP & Content Assessment results  
→ Determine English Language Proficient Criterion  
→ Establish AMAO 2 Criterion

2. ability to successfully achieve in classrooms where the language of instruction is English

Evidence of receptive & productive language uses to accomplish tasks appropriate to grade level, content areas  
→ Assessment tools supporting and standardizing local criteria & evidence

3. opportunity to participate fully in society in English

Evidence of receptive & productive language uses to accomplish social and occupational goals within & beyond school  
→ Assessment tools supporting and standardizing local criteria & evidence

**A reclassification meeting is being planned for this fall by CCSSO.**

The image features a light blue rounded rectangle on the right side, containing the text 'THANKS' and 'hcook@wisc.edu'. To the left of this rectangle are two vertical bars: a tan one on the far left and a grey one next to it. The text is rendered in a bold, red, 3D-style font with a slight shadow.

**THANKS**

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