



2016 TELPAS Decision-Making Guide for LPACs Overview

This Texas Education Agency (TEA) publication is designed to guide language proficiency assessment committees (LPACs) in making assessment decisions for English language learners (ELLs) with regard to the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) program. TELPAS consists of the following components:

Assessments	Grades and Language Domains
Holistically Rated Assessments	K–1 Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing
	2–12 Listening, Speaking, and Writing
Online Multiple-Choice Assessments	2–12 Reading

More information about the design and uses of TELPAS may be found in the TEA publication titled *Educator Guide to TELPAS* at <http://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/ell/telpas/>.

Participation Decisions

Section 101.1003 of the Texas Administrative Code (TAC) outlines TELPAS participation requirements. The TAC is accessible from the A–Z index of the TEA website at <http://tea.texas.gov/>.

TELPAS fulfills federal requirements for annually assessing the English language proficiency of English language learners enrolled in grades K–12. Accordingly K–12 ELLs are assessed with TELPAS, including ELLs classified as limited English proficient (LEP) in PEIMS whose parents have declined bilingual/ESL program services (PEIMS code C). ELLs are required to be assessed annually until they meet bilingual/ESL program exit criteria and are reclassified as non-LEP.

In rare cases, it may be necessary for the admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee, in conjunction with the LPAC, to determine that an ELL receiving special education services should not be assessed in reading, writing, listening, and/or speaking for reasons associated with the student’s particular disability. Participation must be considered on a domain-by-domain basis. The reason for not assessing the student must be well-supported and documented in the student’s individualized education program (IEP) by the ARD committee and in the student’s permanent record file by the LPAC.

Participation Considerations for Reading in Grades 2–12

TELPAS reading tests for grades 2–12 are designed to determine where ELLs are on the continuum of English language reading proficiency as a measure of annual student progress. The continuum starts with an initial understanding of high-frequency English words and phrases and culminates with the ability to read and understand texts similar to those written for English-proficient students.

Because the span of reading ability is so broad and the purpose is to measure annual growth in English acquisition, these assessments should be appropriate for the vast majority of ELLs who receive special education services.

Exceptions include

- students who need an assessment in braille (Braille versions are not available due to the critical role of visual images in the assessment of English language proficiency.), and
- students unable to read even simple words and phrases because of a significant cognitive disability.

In such rare cases, the LPAC and ARD committee may collaboratively decide that the student’s special education needs prevent an appropriate measurement of growth in English reading proficiency. This decision is recorded at the time of testing, and the student does not participate in the assessment.

Participation Considerations for K–12 Holistically Rated Assessments

TELPAS holistically rated assessments are based on student classwork and ongoing classroom observations of students in daily instruction. For these assessments, trained teachers use proficiency level descriptors (PLDs) from the Texas English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS) to determine students’ English language proficiency levels. The teachers use collections of classroom-based student writing when assessing the English language writing proficiency of students in grades 2–12.

Teachers rate ELLs in accordance with how well the students understand and use the English required by the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) at their grade level. ELLs receiving special education services should be evaluated relative to how well they are able to understand and use English to access the general curriculum at their enrolled grade level in accordance with their IEP.

With rare exceptions, students should be able to be observed and rated meaningfully in each holistically rated domain. If the LPAC and ARD committee collaboratively decide that assessment in a domain is inappropriate because of the severity of a student’s disability, the decision is recorded at the time of testing and the student is not holistically rated.

Accommodation Decisions

For an ELL with a disability, the LPAC is responsible for making and documenting accommodation decisions in conjunction with the ARD committee or Section 504 placement committee, as applicable to the services provided. In the rare case that an ELL with a disabling condition does not receive special education or Section 504 services but meets established eligibility criteria for certain accommodations, the LPAC is responsible for coordinating with the appropriate team of people at the campus level, such as the Response to Intervention (RTI) team or student assistance team, in making accommodation decisions.

For TELPAS the allowable accommodations address needs related to the student’s disability. Linguistic accommodations, which address second language acquisition needs, are not permitted during TELPAS because student progress in second language acquisition is what is being assessed.

Information detailing the accommodations that are allowable for TELPAS can be found in the applicable test administrator manuals.

Documenting Decisions

For each ELL, the LPAC must maintain documentation of TELPAS participation and accommodation decisions in the student’s permanent record file.

- If the ELL receives special education services, documentation of participation and accommodation decisions must also be maintained by the ARD committee in the IEP.
- If the ELL has a Section 504 placement committee, documentation of accommodation decisions must also be maintained by the placement committee in the student’s individual accommodation plan (IAP).
- In the rare case that an ELL has a disabling condition but is not receiving either special education or Section 504 services, documentation of accommodation decisions should also be maintained by the appropriate team of people at the campus level (e.g., RTI team or student assistance team).

Information About ELLs with Significant Cognitive Disabilities

Committees serving the needs of ELLs with significant cognitive disabilities may wish to refer to the documents below for information about appropriate services and collaborative decision-making processes. Both documents are accessible from the TEA Bilingual and English as a Second Language Education Programs webpage at http://tea.texas.gov/Curriculum_and_Instructional_Programs/Special_Student_Populations/Bilingual_and_English_as_a_Second_Language_Education_Programs/.

- *Process for Exiting ELLs Receiving Special Education Services from Bilingual/ESL Programs*
- *Guidance Related to ARD Committee and LPAC Collaboration* (accessible from a link within the document above)