ELs within MTSS, Referral/Evaluation, PPT

Relevant resources on this topic available from CSDE's website:

☐ Chapter 6 of the "English Learner Toolkit" (Office of English Language Acquisition, part of the U.S. Department of Education) https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/chap6.pdf

☐ "English Learners in Connecticut's Public Schools: Guidance for Administrators," (see p20-1) https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/English-Learners/EL_AdminGuidelines.pdf

☐ "SRBI for ELLs: A Handbook to Accompany Connecticut's Framework for RTI" https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/English-Learners/SRBI_ELL.pdf

☐ "English Learners and Special Education: A Resource Handbook" https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/English-Learners/SRBI_ELL.pdf

Determining a distinction between second language acquisition and special education concerns is a gray area that necessitates meaningful communication and collaboration of all stakeholders regarding the analysis of ELs' performance and progress.

(1) ELs' progress and performance must be closely examined relative to their "**true peers**," meaning their EL peers with similar profiles. This is the specialty of EL Staff, who must be an integral part of all communication and data analysis for ELs.

(2) ELs' progress and performance must be examined in full; a single data point (such as the Overall level score on the LAS Links) is insufficient. Progress and performance in all domains and composites of the LAS Links must be explored and examined in comparison with true peers. EL Staff is the primary source for data to address whether ELs *are* or *are not* progressing and performing within expected norms using local and state data patterns of EL peers.

(3) ELs' progress and performance must be discussed and explored *collaboratively as a team.* EL Staff must participate actively in *all* parts of the process (MTSS, referral and evaluation, PPT).

(4) For ELs who are newcomers/beginners in the process of evaluation, thorough testing in both languages establishes most conclusively whether a disability is present; it will emerge in both languages.

(5) ELs who are dually identified *may* or *may not* continue to engage in direct EL services; every child is viewed individually and the team of providers collaboratively agrees upon the most effective plan for each student. EL services are fluid and flexible and can be adjusted at any time based on observations of performance and progress. EL services are always based on the principal of reducing service time as students demonstrate stronger language development and increased independence.

(6) Whether dually identified ELs are receiving direct EL services or are "on monitor," EL Staff is always available for consultation, and all ELs must take the annual ELP assessment (the LAS Links). No students are exempt.

(7) ELs with IEPs in *ALL GRADES K-12* are entitled to appropriate standardized assessment accommodations. Even students in K-2, 9, 10, and 12 *must have* accommodations as appropriate to their needs. Accommodations for the annual ELP assessment, the **LAS Links**, must be entered into the IEP in CT-SEDS in a separate area from other standardized assessment accommodations. Common accommodations available to dually identified ELs for the annual ELP assessment are:

- **Text-to-Speech (TTS) for items *and* passages** (= embedded computer audio on LAS Links)
- **Text-to-Speech (TTS) for items *only*** (= human reader for LAS Links, following CSDE guidelines)
- **Speech-to-Text *as Scribe*** (= human for LAS Links, following CSDE/SBA "Scribe" guidelines)

(8) Dually identified ELs who require an alternate assessment must be identified prior to November 1st to meet state reporting deadlines. Special Education staff may be required to participate in training to proctor the alternate ELP assessment, known as both "Alt ELPA" and "CAAELP."

Prior to and throughout the MTSS process, ongoing robust collaboration takes place among the core team of Classroom Teacher, EL Staff, Literacy Specialist, and parent/guardian. Additionally, ongoing robust collaboration takes place among the Classroom Teacher, EL Staff, Literacy Specialist, School Psychologist, and others as relevant (such as Math Specialist, Social Worker, Speech Pathologist, other) under the oversight and supervision of the Building Administrator. ELs do not arrive at the referral/evaluation process without having already long established throughout the MTSS process that the student is not making the gains expected of their "true peers." By the time they arrive at the referral/evaluation process, this should have been a primary communication point by the collaborative team for many months if not years.

For Teams & Case Managers Completing an IEP in CT SEDS for an EL of *ALL GRADES*:

1. In some cases, EL Staff should be present at the PPT and in other cases advance consultation is adequate. In accordance with state guidance, EL Staff needs to remain part of processes for dually-identified students. Ongoing communication with EL Staff should include a check-in prior to the annual PPT.

2. In CT SEDS for the IEP, you must acknowledge the student's EL status. EL services are fluid and flexible and, therefore, should not be detailed with specificity on the IEP. Consider non-specific language such as… "*ongoing English language services may be provided in consultation with EL Staff,*" or "*grammar, vocabulary development, and comprehension strategies supportive of continued English language development will be addressed within Special Education programming,*" or "*ongoing communication and consultation with EL Staff will continue.*"
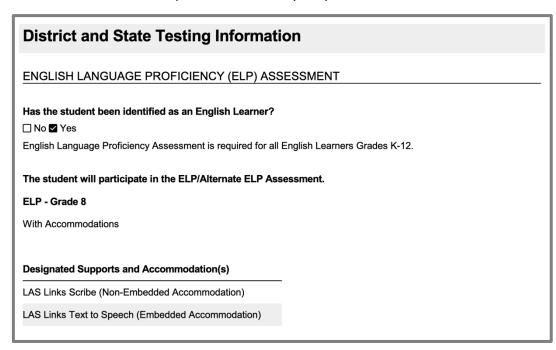

Does the student have limited English proficiency (Student qualifies as an EL)?

☐ No ☑ Yes

The student's native language is
Spanish

The PPT considered the language needs of the student as they relate to the student's IEP and recommends the following

Ongoing consultation as needed with EL coordinator.

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3. In CT SEDS for the IEP, you must complete the ELP Assessment section. No ELs are exempt from annual ELP testing. Connecticut's ELP assessment is called the LAS Links. It is required by federal and state law.

   Prior to completing this, check in with EL Staff as part of ongoing communication to agree on appropriate accommodations and modifications for this section.

   If a student is eligible for accommodations on routine classroom assessments and on standardized assessments such as SBA and NGSS, the student must also have those accommodations for the ELP assessment. *If a dually-identified EL is in grades K-2, this is still applicable.*

   - Click "Yes" to acknowledge this student is identified as an EL and must participate. This applies to every EL in every grade, including grades typically referred to as "non-tested grades." ALL GRADES are tested for ELs.

   - Enter ELP accommodations as applicable. The most commonly used is **Text-to-Speech (Embedded)**; a smaller number of students qualify for **Scribe** (with no embedded Speech-to-Text technology for LAS Links, if a student needs STT for a print-related disability, they would instead have Scribe for LAS Links).

District and State Testing Information

ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY (ELP) ASSESSMENT

Has the student been identified as an English Learner?

☐ No ☑ Yes

English Language Proficiency Assessment is required for all English Learners Grades K-12.

The student will participate in the ELP/Alternate ELP Assessment.

ELP - Grade 8

With Accommodations

Designated Supports and Accommodation(s)

LAS Links Scribe (Non-Embedded Accommodation)

LAS Links Text to Speech (Embedded Accommodation)

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4. Note: the alternate ELP assessment, called the CAAELP or Alt-ELPA, has extensive requirements including training for staff and special documentation. If a student qualifies for an alternate assessment, the EL Coordinator must be notified as soon as possible for a very different set of steps required of both Special Education Staff and EL Staff.