IV. Guidelines for Supporting and Accommodating English Language Learner (ELL) Students

An English language learner student is defined in two West Virginia Board of Education (WVBE) policies: Policy 2340, West Virginia Measures of Academic Progress (WV-MAP); and Policy 2417, Programs of Study for Limited English Proficient Students. These policies are based on the federal government definition as described in Public Law 107-110, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), also known as the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). According to this definition, a student with limited English proficiency is classified as one

- who is age 3 through 21
- who is enrolled or preparing to enroll in an elementary school or secondary school; and
- who was not born in the United States or whose native language is a language other than English; or is an American Indian or Alaska Native or a native resident of outlying areas
  - 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;
  - who is migratory, whose native language is a language other than English and who comes from an environment where a language other English is dominant
- whose difficulties speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language are significant enough to deny the individual
  - the ability to meet the state's proficiency level of achievement on state assessments;
  - the ability to achieve successfully in classrooms where the language of instruction is English; or
  - the opportunity to participate fully in society.

Federal Inclusion Requirements for English Language Learner Students

Federal provisions for inclusion and accommodation of English language learner students were first required in the 1994 reauthorization of ESEA, The Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 (IASA) and then updated in 2001 in NCLB.

According to a guidance document from the U. S. Department of Education (2007, p. 3), Under Title I of ESEA, states must include English language learner students in their assessments of academic achievement in reading/ language arts and mathematics, and must provide English language learner students with appropriate accommodations including, to the extent practicable, assessments in the language and form most likely to yield accurate data on what English language learner students know and can do in the academic content areas until they have achieved English language proficiency.

West Virginia Inclusion Requirements for English Language Learner Students

All English language learner students (ELLs) — participate in WV-MAP at the grade level in which they are enrolled. English language learners with disabilities have an individualized education plan (IEP). For English language learners with disabilities it is recommended that IEP committees include both a special educator and an English language learner specialist.

The role of the ELL committee in assigning designated supports

The provision of testing accommodations is one of the primary strategies for increasing the likelihood that English language learners are tested on their knowledge of the content rather than

their proficiency in English. Effective designated supports for ELL students address the unique linguistic and sociocultural needs of the student by reducing construct- irrelevant variance due to language, without altering the test construct. Decisions about designated supports should not be made by an individual. Decisions should be made by the ELL committee responsible for planning the student's academic program. The role of the ELL committee is to discuss the designated supports that a student may need for state testing, decide which designated supports will be offered to the student, and document the process. The committee should coordinate with all teachers of English language learners to ensure that these students use the designated supports as part of classroom instruction. The day of the assessment should not be the first time an ELL student uses the accommodation(s) called for in his or her ELL plan.

Making Accommodations Decisions: Three Steps

The following guidance is for ELL committees as they assign accommodations for ELL students. Recommended steps for matching designated supports with specific characteristics of individual English language learners are described, including specific directions for providing each designated support.

Step One —Select appropriate accommodations

When making decisions about accommodations, the ELL committee should consider the student's level of proficiency in both English and his or her native language, asking themselves the following three questions:

Question 1. What is the student's composite English language proficiency level according to ELP assessment?

Is it *Level 1*, *Level 2*, *Level 3*, *Level 4,* or *Level 5*

Question 2. Can the student read or write proficiently in his or her native language?

Research indicates that native language accommodations can validly support English language learner's access to an assessment offered in English.[1] Even if bilingual instruction is not a part of the student's ELL plan, the ELL committees should consider the role of the native language when determining English-as-a-second-language (ESL) services.[2] Baseline information—for example, writing samples the student produced during the initial language proficiency placement and identification process, or in the classroom—can be obtained to indicate whether the student has any proficiency in reading and writing his or her native language. The ELL committee should use this information about the student's native language literacy to determine whether accommodations, such as use of a bilingual word-to- word dictionary or an electronic translator, would be helpful to the student during instruction and assessment. Basic guidelines include the following three native language proficiency categories:

1. *Strong* native language proficiency—The student can speak and read proficiently in his or her native language.

2. *Intermediate* native language proficiency—The student has strong native language oral skills but limited native language reading skills.

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[1] For information, please refer to Francis, Rivera, Lesaux, Kieffer, and Rivera (2006), (http://www.centeroninstruction.org/files/ELL3-Assessments.pdf); and Acosta, Rivera, and Willner (2008) (http://ceee.gwu.edu/sites/files/Acosta.Rivera.ShaferWillner_2008.pdf).

[2] For more information, see page 9 in *Toolkit: Connecting ESL Best Practices and Limited English Proficient Students*, published by WVDE and available at http://wvconnections.k12.wv.us/ documents/WVToolkitConnectingESLBestPracticesSingELLages2009.pdf.

3. Limited native language proficiency—The student has limited native language speaking and reading skills

In summary, the ELL committee identifies both the student's English and native language proficiency levels to select the accommodations that have been identified as best for supporting ELL students.

Question 3. How might you increase the likelihood that the accommodations will be used effectively during the assessment?

Research indicates there are a number of student background factors that can help ensure the usefulness of accommodations to the student. Grade or age, time in U.S. schools, and affective needs may all impact students' ability to use accommodations. For example, older students sometimes refuse accommodations due to the embarrassment of receiving additional support in front of classmates. Students who have just arrived in the U.S. need to gain familiarity with U.S. testing practices and expectations. Anxiety can raise an English language learner's affective filter and impact test performance. To ease these barriers consider taking the following approaches:

- Include the student in the process of assigning accommodations to ensure use of the accommodation and student understanding of its use.

- If the student is unfamiliar with standardized testing, provide test preparation activities prior to the assessment. Offer opportunities to use the accommodation(s) available to the student prior to the assessment, during classroom instruction and assessment.

- When appropriate, administer tests in special settings with specialized personnel, in small groups or individually. While not *accommodations*, such arrangements are standard administration *options* that might be helpful for increasing students' level of comfort, facilitating test administration, and ensuring more accurate test results.

Step Two - Document the Reasons for Designated Supports Selected

After assigning designated supports by category (Step One), be sure to consider other student background characteristics such as (a) time in the United States, (b) student's affective needs, (c) student's academic capacity, (d) age and maturity, (e) sociocultural background, and (f) transitory or migrant status.

In the documentation, the committee must articulate the reasons for differentiating designated support for this student by providing answers to the following questions:

1.   What does this individual student need to show us what he or she really knows?

2.   If provided, will the designated support change what the test is trying to measure?

3.   If appropriate, has the student had prior experience using this designated support?

Step Three – Submit ELL Assessment Participation Form

Document the designated support(s) selected in the student's ELL Personal Needs Profile Form included in this document. Review administrative directions or requirements that should be communicated to the school/ district test coordinator or the person administering the test to the student. The designated supports selected on the ELL Personal Needs Profile Form should be transferred to the WOW ELL Screen in order for the students to access the assigned items on the actual assessment.

Providing Supports for the English Language Proficiency Assessment

Both Titles I and III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) require states and local education agencies to assess annually the English language proficiency of all ELLs in the state enrolled in public schools in grades kindergarten through twelve in the domains of Speaking, Listening, Reading, and Writing (Sections 1111(b) (7) and 1123(b)(3)(D) of the ESEA).

West Virginia's English Language Proficiency Assessment provides a series of universal features (available to all students) and designated supports (available for individual students that must be assigned to students in advance of the testing) that seek to enhance the accessibility of the assessment for English language learners.

Universal features are accessibility tools of the ELPA21 assessment that are either provided digitally through the assessment technology (embedded) or non-digitally at the local level (non-embedded). Universal features are available to all students based on student preference and selection.

Table 1 lists the embedded universal features available to all students for digitally-delivered ELPA21 assessments. It also includes a description of each feature. Although these features are generally available to all students, educators may determine that one or more might be distracting for a particular student, and thus might indicate that the feature should be turned off for the administration of the assessment to the student.

Embedded Universal Features

Table 1. Embedded Universal Features Available to All Students	Description
Amplification	The student raises or lowers the volume control, as needed, using headphones.
Answer choice eliminator	The student uses this feature to eliminate those answer choices that do not appear correct to the student.

Audio support	The student uses this feature to hear pre-recorded audio of most tasks. With the exception of the text in drag-and-drop text and the text in a word bank, audio support is available for the following: **Speaking** – all tasks have audio support for all components; **Listening** – all tasks have audio support for all components; all tasks can be replayed one additional time unless the student is assigned an unlimited replays accommodation; **Writing** – all tasks have audio support for all components except for inline editing tasks; and **Reading** – audio support is available only for read-along tasks and for all kindergarten tasks and items.
Digital notepad	The student uses this feature as virtual scratch paper to make notes or record responses. The digital notepad is item-specific and is available through the end of each test domain. Notes are not saved when the student moves on to a different test domain or after a break of more than 20 minutes.
Expandable passages	The student is able to expand each passage so that it takes up a larger portion of the screen as the student reads. The student can then retract the passage to its original size.
Flag for review	The student is able to flag items for future review during the assessment. Markings are not saved when the student moves on to another test domain, or after pausing the test for more than 20 minutes.
Highlighter	The student uses this digital feature for marking desired text, items, or response options with the color yellow. Highlighted text remains available throughout the test.
Keyboard navigation	The student is able to navigate throughout test content by using a keyboard, e.g., arrow keys. This feature may differ

	depending on the testing platform.
Writing tools	The student uses writing tools to format and edit written responses, including cut and paste, copy, underline, italicize, bold, and undo/redo. These features may differ depending on the testing platform.
Zoom (item-level)	The student can enlarge the size of text and graphics on a given screen. This feature allows students to view material in magnified form on an as-needed basis. The student may enlarge test content at least fourfold. The system allows magnifying features to work in conjunction with other accessibility features and accommodations provided.

Non-Embedded Universal Features

Some universal features may need to be provided locally outside of the computer administration system. These features are shown in Table 2. They can be made available to any student.

Table 2. Non-embedded Universal Features Available to All Students Universal Feature	Description
Scratch paper	The student uses scratch paper or an individual erasable whiteboard to make notes or record responses. All scratch paper must be collected and securely destroyed at the end of each test domain to maintain test security. The student receives one sheet (or more as needed) of scratch paper (see Appendix A for an example of an optional scratch paper log). A marker, pen, or pencil should be provided as well. The student can use an assistive technology device to take notes instead of using scratch paper as long as the device is approved by the ELPA21 consortium. Test administrators have to ensure that all of the notes taken on an assistive technology device are deleted after the test.

Embedded Designated Features/Supports

Designated features/supports for the ELPA21 assessments are those features (embedded and

non-embedded) that are available for use by any student for whom the need has been indicated by an educator (or team of educators including the parent/guardian and student). Designated features/supports must be assigned to a student in advance of test administration by trained educators or teams using a consistent process. Table 3 shows the ELPA21 embedded designated features/supports. It includes a description of each feature along with recommendations for when a student might benefit from using the feature.

Table 3. Embedded Designated Features/Supports Identified in Advance Designated Feature/Support	Description	Recommendations for Use
Answer masking (P37)	The student is able to block off answer choices.	Students with attention difficulties may need to mask answer choices that may be distracting during the assessment. This feature also may be needed by students with print disabilities (including learning disabilities) or visual impairments.
High color contrast (P28)	The student is able to adjust the text color and screen background color based on the student's need. The color contrast options, in addition to the default black text on white background, include: 1) black text on cream background; 2) black text on light blue background; 3) black text on light pink background; 4) yellow text on blue background; and 5) white text on black background.	Students with attention difficulties may need this feature for viewing test content. It also may be needed by some students with visual impairments or other print disabilities (including learning disabilities). Choice of colors should be informed by evidence that specific text and background color combinations meet the student's needs.

General masking (P37)	The student is able to block off content that is not of immediate need or that may be distracting. Masking allows students to hide and reveal individual answer options, as well as all navigational buttons and menus. The student is able to focus his/her attention on a specific part of a test item by masking.	Students with attention difficulties may need to mask content not of immediate need or that may be distracting during the assessment. This feature also may be needed by students with print disabilities (including learning disabilities) or visual impairments.
Line reader (P44)	The student is able to use this feature as a guide when reading text.	Students with attention difficulties or reading disabilities may need assistance with tracking where they are reading.
Print on request (P40)	The student uses paper copies of individual test items.	This feature is contingent on state policy or practice. Students may not be able to interact with items online (due to visual impairments, lack of familiarity with the computer-based format, or other cultural reasons), and as a result may need a paper copy of test items. The use of this accommodation may result in the student needing additional time to complete the assessment. A very small percentage of students should need this designated feature. Educators should follow security procedures when administering this feature.

	This feature allows disabling any universal feature that might interfere with student performance, or be distracting to the student.	Students who are easily distracted (whether or not designated as having attention difficulties or disabilities) may be overwhelmed by some of the universal features. Having evidence of which specific features may be distracting is important for determining which features to turn off.
Turn off universal features (P33)		
Zoom (test-level) (P22)	The test platform is pre-set to be enlarged for the student before the test begins.	Students with visual impairments may need to increase the size of text and other item features beyond the 4X zoom universal feature provided by the test platform. A larger computer screen may be needed for this feature to function effectively.

Non-Embedded Designated Features/Supports

Some designated features may need to be provided outside of the digital-delivery system. These features are shown in Table 4. They are to be provided locally for those students unable to use the embedded designated features. These are identified in advance of testing.

Table 4. Non-embedded Designated Features/Supports	Description	Recommendations for Use
Color overlay (P39)	The student is able to overlay a semitransparent color onto paper-based test content.	This feature only works with black text on white background.
Magnification device (P23)	The student adjusts the size of specific areas of the screen (e.g., text, formulas, tables, and graphics) with an assistive technology device. Magnification increases the size beyond the zoom.	Students with visual impairments may need to increase the size of text and other features beyond the 4X zoom.

Native language translation of directions (P30) Directions presented through certified sign language (P16)	Translation of general test directions (not item prompts or questions) is a language support available to students prior to starting the actual test. Test directions can be provided either by being read aloud or signed by a test administrator who is fluent in the language. Translations may be provided by a human or the test platform. The following are the languages in which directions are provided: American Sign Language (ASL)*, Arabic, Chinese (Cantonese and Mandarin), Karen, Korean, Marshallese, Russian, Somali, Spanish and Vietnamese. *ASL directions are classified as a designated support for ELPA21. WV used P16 for this accommodation. ASL directions should be recorded as P16.	Students who have limited English language skills can use the translated directions feature.
Noise buffer (P42)	The student uses noise buffers to minimize distraction or filter external noise during testing. Noise buffer must allow the student to hear listening items).	Students who are distracted by external noises within the testing environment may need noise buffers (e.g., mufflers, student spacing).
Paper-and-pencil test (P19)	The student takes a paper-and-pencil version of the test.	Due to cultural considerations, some students may need to take paper-and-pencil versions of ELPA21 assessments. This option should be based on a student's individual needs and should not be applied on a group basis.

Human read aloud (P02)	The student has test content that is provided by an audio file in a computer-based test, read by a qualified human reader.	Students who use the paper-and-pencil version of the test can have the same test content read aloud that is supported through audio in a computer-based version. With the exception of the text in drag-and-drop text and the text in a word bank, audio support is available for the following: **Speaking** – all tasks have audio support for all components; **Listening** – all tasks have audio support for all components; **Writing** – all tasks have audio support for all components except for inline editing tasks; and **Reading** – audio support is available only for read-along tasks and for all kindergarten tasks and items. If a human reader is selected, that person must have appropriate experience providing read aloud support and must sign a document verifying adherence to state policy or practice to ensure test security and ethical practices.
Student reads test aloud (T09)** ** *Please note that T09 represents separate setting. This support should be selected in order for a student to read the test aloud.*	The student reads the test content aloud. This feature must be administered in a one-on-one test setting.	Students who are beginning readers may need to hear themselves read in order to comprehend text. Students who tend to rush through assessments and not read text fully may need to read the test aloud.

What Are Accommodations?

Accommodations are changes in procedures or materials that increase equitable access during the ELPA21 assessments and generate valid assessment results for students who need them. Accommodations are for students for whom there is documentation of need on an IEP or 504 accommodation plan so that these students show what they know and can do on the ELPA21 assessments.

Who Makes Decisions About Accommodations?

IEP teams and educators for 504 plans make decisions about accommodations. For ELLs with disabilities, these teams should include an expert in the area of English language acquisition. These decision makers provide evidence of the need for accommodations and ensure that they are noted on the IEP or 504 plan. Decision makers are responsible for entering information on accessibility features and accommodations for ELPA21 from the IEP/504 plan into the PNP so that all needed features and accommodations can be activated prior to testing. This can be accomplished by identifying one person (for example, a team member or a test coordinator who will follow the state's security guidelines) to enter information into the PNP prior to testing.

Embedded Accommodations

Table 5 lists the embedded accommodations available for the ELPA21 assessments for those students for whom the accommodations are identified on an IEP or 504 plan. The table includes a description of each accommodation along with recommendations for when the accommodation might be needed and how it can be used.

Table 5. Embedded Accommodations Available with an IEP or 504 Plan	Description	Recommendations for Use
Unlimited rerecording's (R22)	The student is able to rerecord answers in the speaking domain an unlimited number of times.	Students whose disabilities who need multiple opportunity to record their answers (as available in the non-accommodated version of the test).
Unlimited replays (P45)	The student is able to replay items in the listening domain an unlimited number of times.	Students whose disabilities preclude them from being able to respond to a listening item on the first or second attempt (as available in the non-accommodated version of the test) may need to replay items multiple times.

Non-Embedded Accommodations

Table 6 shows the ELPA21 non-embedded accommodations. The table includes a description of each accommodation, along with recommendations for when the accommodation might be

needed and how it can be used.

Table 6. Non-embedded Accommodations Available with an IEP or 504 Plan	Description	Recommendations for Use
Assistive technology (R11)	The student is able to use assistive technology. For example, typing on customized keyboards, assistance with a mouse, mouth or head stick or other pointing devices, sticky keys, touch screen, and trackball, speech-to-text conversion, or voice recognition. Appendix D includes the screen, and trackball, speech-to-text conversion screen, and trackball, speech-to-text conversion, or voice recognition. Appendix D includes the preliminary list of assistive technology devices available on the ELPA21 assessments.	Students who have difficulty manipulating a mouse or standard keyboard may need an alternative device.
Braille paper (P03)	A raised-dot code that individuals read with the fingertips. Graphic material (e.g., maps, charts, graphs, diagrams, and illustrations) is presented in a raised format (paper, thermoform, or refreshable braille). Both contracted and un-contracted braille (English Braille, American Edition) are available; Unified English Braille will be adopted for future assessments.	Students who are blind or have low vision may read text via braille. Tactile overlays and graphics also may be used to assist the student in accessing content through touch. The use of this accommodation may result in the student needing additional overall time to complete the assessment.

Paper test/ large print(P19)	A large print form of the test that is provided to the student with a visual impairment. The font size for the large print form is 18 point on paper sized 11 x 17.	Students with visual impairments who may not be able to use zoom or magnifying devices to access the test and may need a large print version of the form.
Scribe (R04)	The student dictates her/his responses to an experienced educator who records verbatim what the student dictates. Appendix E provides scribe guidelines for ELPA21 assessments.	Students who have documented significant motor or language processing difficulties, or who have had a recent injury (such as a broken hand or arm) that makes it difficult to produce responses may need to dictate their responses to a human, who then records the students' responses verbatim either in the test platform or on paper. The use of this accommodation may result in the student needing additional time to complete the assessment. For these students, dictating to a scribe is the only way to demonstrate their composition skills.
Speech-to-text (R21)	The student uses an assistive technology device to dictate responses or give commands during the test.	Students who have documented motor or processing disabilities (such as dyslexia) or who have had a recent injury that make it difficult to produce text or commands using computer keys may need alternative ways to work with computers. If students use their own assistive technology devices, all assessment content should be deleted from these devices after the test for security purposes.

ELPA 21 Assessment Participation Form

Personal Needs Profile (PNP)

Personal Needs Profile (PNP) Template

Universal Features

These features are available by default to all students. As designated features, uncheck the selected features if they should not be made available. Uncheck all that apply.

Embedded Universal Features	Non-embedded Universal Features
☐ amplification ☐ answer choice eliminator ☐ audio support ☐ digital notepad ☐ expandable passages ☐ flag for review ☐ highlighter ☐ keyboard navigation ☐ writing tools ☐ zoom (item-level)	☐ scratch paper

Designated Features

These features are identified in advance by an informed educator. These features are not available unless selected. Check all that apply.

Embedded Designated Features	Non-embedded Designated Features
☐ P37-answer masking ☐ P28-high color contrast ☐ P37-general masking ☐ *P44-* line reader ☐ P40-print on request ☐ P33-turn off universal features ☐ P22-zoom (enlarge text on screen test-level)	☐ P39-color overlay ☐ P23-magnification device ☐ P30-native language translation of directions ☐ P42-noise buffer ☐ P19-paper-and-pencil test ☐ P02- human read aloud (paper-and-pencil test) ☐ T09-student reads test aloud

Accommodations

These are identified in advance by an IEP or 504 team. These accommodations are not available unless selected. Check all that apply.

Embedded Accommodations	Non-embedded Accommodations
☐ R22-unlimited re-recordings ☐ P45- unlimited replays	☐ R11-assistive technology ☐ P03-braille paper ☐ P16-direction provided through certified sign language ☐ P19-large print test booklet ☐ P14-read aloud (electronically-delivered test) ☐ R04-scribe ☐ R21-speech-to-text

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