

# **THE LANDSCAPE OF K-12 EL TESTING IN THE UNITED STATES: IMPLICATIONS FOR STATE EDUCATION ASSOCIATIONS, EL ADMINISTRATORS, TEACHERS, AND RESEARCHERS**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*Per the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), reauthorized with the Every Student Succeed Act (ESSA) of 2015, states are responsible for annually assessing the progress of their English learners (ELs), determining what level of proficiency constitutes a student's ability to succeed in mainstream classes, and reclassifying proficient students. However, as test measurements and state needs change with time, the landscape of K-12 EL testing in the United States resembles a moving target, seemingly hard to understand holistically. In this paper, the current landscape of K-12 assessment and how one critical aspect of EL services, reclassification, looks across state lines is discussed. Possessing a working knowledge of the similarities and differences of other states' practices can help EL administrators and stakeholders alike make better decisions about what their assessments and reclassification practices should look like for their ELs and better understand their out-of-state transfer students' abilities.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

The United States consists of a patchwork of high-stakes K-12 English learner (EL) assessments, each state determining how to fulfill federal guidelines of accurately reporting English learner growth. As required in Title I, Section 1111(b)(7) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), reauthorized as the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.), state educational agencies (SEAs) must annually assess the adequate yearly progress (AYP) of all students through their local educational agencies (LEAs) to determine their ability to meet the state's academic achievement standards (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). Furthermore, under 1111(c)(4)(A)(ii), SEAs must assess English learners (ELs) to determine to what extent their ELs are making progress towards proficiency in English.

Given that states approve their own plans with the Department of Education for meeting federal requirements outlined in Title I and Title III (U.S. Department of Education, 2019) there are differences in how states assess ELs to demonstrate their English growth and proficiency. These differences can result in varying ways that students are reclassified once English proficiency has been reached. Additionally, these differences can prove challenging to teachers and administrators when working with out-of-state transfer students who have been assessed in varying ways. Moreover, being able to see all 50 states and D.C. compared side-by-side might allow SEAs to strengthen their own EL policies. Given this backdrop, and the desire to better understand the EL assessment requirements on a holistic, country-wide level, the following research questions are posed:

1. What is the current landscape of annual K-12 EL assessments used in the United States for federal compliance?
2. How do states differentially use testing data for reclassifying students?

## CURRENT LANDSCAPE OF ESL TESTS USED IN THE UNITED STATES

Information available from each of the 50 states and the District of Columbia's Department of Education website was used to identify the test administered by states to annually assess the English language proficiency of ELs in K-12 schools<sup>1</sup>. Ten different tests were identified which are visualized in Figure 1. As illustrated by the map, WIDA's ACCESS 2.0 is the overwhelming choice for 35 states. Five states use ELPA21. The rest utilize a mix of WIDA's assessment and ELPA21 as is the case of Washington state<sup>2</sup>, their own state-developed test<sup>3</sup> (AZELLA [Arizona], ELPAC [California], KELPA [Kansas], ELPT [Louisiana], OELPA [Ohio], TELPAS [Texas], NYSESLAT [New York]), or lesser-used tests (LAS Links [Mississippi and Connecticut]). Interestingly, as noted by Huang and Flores (2018), ELPA21 was originally used by 11 states, namely "Iowa, Washington, Louisiana, West Virginia, South Carolina, Arkansas, Ohio, Nebraska, Kansas, Florida, and Oregon" (p. 434). However, the researchers noted that in 2018 Florida, South Carolina, and Kansas no longer used the test. As of 2021, it appears that Florida and South Carolina had opted to join WIDA's consortium while Kansas chose to develop their own assessment.

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<sup>1</sup> For this paper, screener tests and alternative tests for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities were excluded.

<sup>2</sup> ELPA21 is given to all students who qualify for English language development services while WIDA's Alternate ACCESS is offered to students with significant cognitive disabilities. In 2022, Washington state will exclusively use the WIDA ACCESS Assessment (Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2021).

<sup>3</sup> These state tests are typically developed in collaboration with other institutions (e.g., Louisiana and Ohio collaborated with the ELPA21 consortium to develop their own state specific annual summative test).

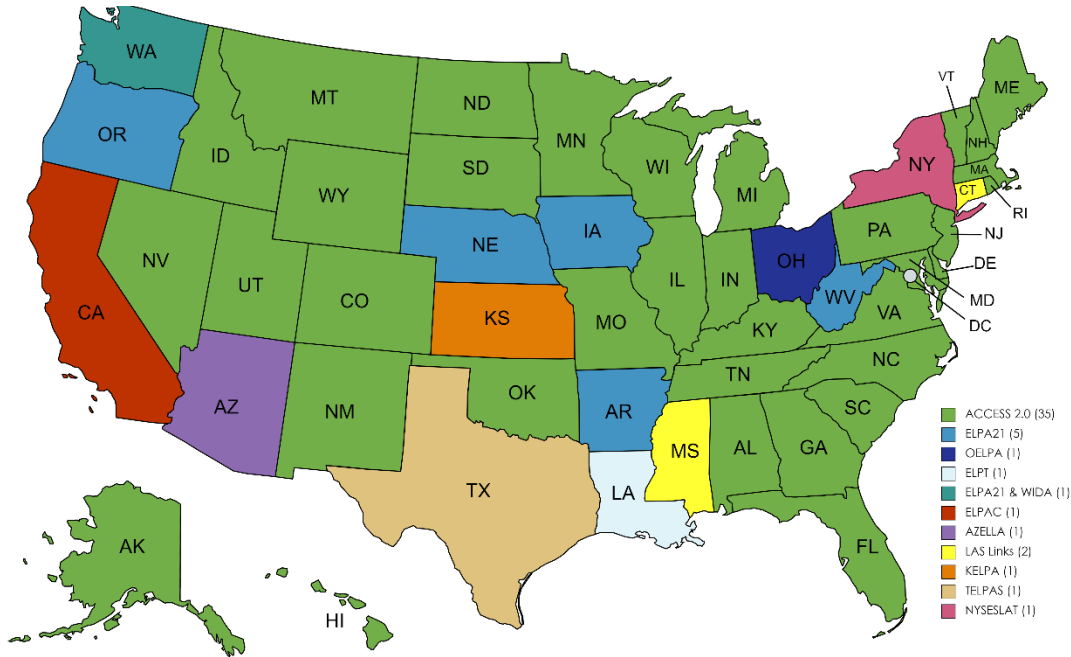


Figure 1. Map of tests used to assess ELLs in each U.S. state.

Another observation of note is that traditional gateway states, states that “have historically been the preferred settlement locales for newcomers” to the U.S. (Hilburn, Journell, & Buchanan, 2016, p. 235) such as California, Texas, and New York, seem to administer their own tests. Hilburn (2014) suggests that traditional gateway states have the experience necessary to educate immigrant students; perhaps this is one reason the aforementioned states prefer their own assessment. However, use of state-developed tests is not restricted to traditional gateway states. Kansas, Ohio, and Arizona, which are considered non-gateway states (states with historically low immigration rates; Hempstead, 2007) also utilize English language proficiency tests specific to their state.

As for the skills assessed by the different tests used, generally, the tests assess ELLs’ English language proficiency in four different domains: reading, writing, speaking, and listening

(see Table 1). As of 2021, tests are nearly all computer-based—with the exception of NYSESLAT—and paper-based tests are typically used for accommodation purposes. In terms of scale differences, the tests have varying numbers of scale levels and labels attached to those levels. ACCESS 2.0 has the highest number of scale levels (six), and the rest have four or five levels. At a glance, the scale descriptors for each test seem to focus on different aspects of the domain assessed. For example, ACCESS 2.0 scale descriptors highlight proficiency in academic language and what they can communicatively accomplish in the academic context while ELPA21 highlight competency in grade-level English language skills and whether or not learners will benefit from English language program support.

States with their own assessments directly tie their EL assessments with their specific state standards. The NYSESLAT, for instance, is aligned to the linguistic demands of grade-level instruction based on New York’s learning standards (New York State Education Department, 2021). State standard alignment can be seen even in states that have recently moved to having their own EL assessment. Louisiana’s ELPT, for instance, measures a student’s language proficiency relative to the Louisiana Connectors (expectations) for English Learners (Louisiana Department of Education, n.d.). Directly connecting EL assessment with state standards may result in more precise measures of EL ability as it relates to the daily instruction they will receive in a SEA’s schools, which may be one strong factor for a state to implement its own test.

**Table 1**

*Summary of Test Characteristics*

Test	Format	Domains Assessed	Scale
ACCESS 2.0 (Assessing Comprehension)	Paper and computer-based	Listening, Reading, Speaking, and Writing	1-6 (‘Entering’ to ‘Reaching’)

and  
Communication  
in English  
State-to-State  
2.0)

ELPA21 (English Language Proficiency Assessment for the 21st Century)	Computer-based (Paper and braille available for students with needs)	Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening	1-5 (‘Beginning’ to ‘Advanced’)
ELPAC (English Language Proficiency Assessments for California)	Computer-based (Writing for kindergarten through grade two is a paper-based)	Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing	1-4 (‘Beginning to Develop’ to ‘Well Developed’)
AZELLA (Arizona English Learner Assessment)	Computer-based	Reading, Writing, Listening, and Speaking	1-4 (‘Pre-emergent/Emergent’ to ‘Proficient’)
LAS Links	Computer-based, paper-based, or blended (mix of paper and computer; paper-based testing considered an accommodation)	Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing	1-5 (‘Beginning’ to ‘Above Proficient’)
KELPA (Kansas English Language Proficiency Assessment)	Computer-based (kindergarten and grade two complete paper-based items)	Reading, Listening, Speaking, and Writing	1-4 (‘Beginning’ to ‘Early Advanced’)
ELPT (English Language Proficiency Test)	Computer-based	Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing	1-5 (‘Beginning’ to ‘Advanced’)
OELPA (Ohio English Language Proficiency Assessment)	Computer-based (paper-based test considered an accommodation)	Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing	1-5 (‘Beginning’ to ‘Advanced’)
TELPAS (Texas	Paper and	Listening, Speaking,	1-4

English Language Proficiency Assessment System)	computer-based	Reading, and Writing	(‘Beginning’ to ‘Advanced High’)
NYSESLAT (New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test)	Paper-based	Listening, Reading, Speaking, and Writing	1-5 (‘Entering’ to ‘Commanding’)

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## How scores are used to reclassify ELLs

In addition to the array of tests used to assess ELs, discrepancies exist between the level at which an EL must perform in order to qualify for reclassification. Students in WIDA states must receive a composite score between 4.0 (expanding) or 5.0 (bridging) on the six-point scale to be reclassified (see Table 2) while ELPA21 and LAS Links states define proficiency in terms of scoring 4’s or 5’s on their five-point scales (see Tables 3 and 4). In contrast, individual state assessments utilize the highest proficiency bands for determining reclassification (Arizona State Legislature, §15-756.05B, n.d.; California Department of Education, 2021; Kansas State Department of Education, 2020; New York State Education Department, 2015; Texas Education Agency, 2021).

Differences also exist in what additional evidence, if any, is required for reclassification. While some states have set a proficiency score as a standalone determiner for reclassifying ELs, other states use test scores in conjunction with other pieces of evidence. Test providers such as WIDA recommend using ACCESS 2.0 scores as part of a larger pool of evidence when reclassifying, such as schoolwork, teacher observations, and in-class assessments (WIDA

Interpretive Guide, 2020) whereas certain states clearly instruct administrators to only consider test scores for reclassification purposes for consistency and impartiality (i.e., Mississippi Department of Education, 2018; Oregon Department of Education, 2018). Materials or other criteria used to determine proficiency vary by state but can include a teacher's observations (e.g., Texas Education Agency, 2021), language use inventories (e.g., Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2021), Building Leadership Team or Student Improvement Team recommendation (Kansas State Department of Education, 2020), a state reading assessment (e.g., Texas Education Agency, 2021), evidence related to a single domain the student received a low score in (Minnesota Department of Education, 2017), or evidence such as student work, grades, or other relevant data (e.g., Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2019). Pennsylvania is unique in that a student assessment score is combined with the scores from two language use inventory rubrics, completed ideally by an ESL teacher and content teacher. Totaling the three scores together, the state sets the threshold for reclassification at a score of 10.5 (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2021).

### ***WIDA Consortium states***

Further practices by states can be categorized by the assessment which states use to determine EL proficiency. In terms of reclassification, WIDA states seem to vary the most and represent some of the lowest acceptable scores, with composite scores ranging a minimum of 4.0 (expanding) to a maximum of 5.0 (bridging). Furthermore, many states have set the composite score needed for reclassification at a 0.1 point increment at the expanding level (i.e. 4.2, 4.5) (see Table 2). Currently, no state utilizes the top score of 6.0 (reaching) for reclassification purposes.



In comparing state ACCESS 2.0 score usage, one or more scores may be used to make reclassification decisions. While all states specify an overall or composite score needed to reclassify a student, some states specify minimum scores for each domain. Of the four states that set specific domain requirements, Idaho requires a minimum speaking score of 1.0 and 3.5 in listening, reading, and writing (Idaho State Department of Education, 2020); Minnesota requires three or more domains with scores of 3.5, with evidence provided if a single domain is less than 3.5 (Minnesota Department of Education, 2017); North Dakota requires a score of 3.5 in each domain (North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, 2019); and South Carolina requires a 4.0 in each domain (South Carolina Department of Education, 2021).

In addition, some states set minimum scores for certain domains in addition to the composite score. Minimum domain scores required for reclassification are set in states for reading (Florida Department of State, §6A-6.0903, 2017; Florida Department of State, §6A-6.0902, 2017; State of Vermont Agency of Education, 2017), writing (State of Vermont Agency of Education, 2017), and literacy (Colorado Department of Education, 2018; Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2019; Tennessee Department of Education, 2018; Wyoming Department of Education, 2020). To determine a composite literacy score, WIDA calculates it as 50% of the students' reading score and 50% of their writing score (WIDA Interpretive Guide, 2020). As states are required to annually assess all students on English language arts (ELA), as part of ESSA testing provisions (U.S. Department of Education, 2017), determining specific scores requirements for these domains may help states align EL assessment with their state achievement test.

Beyond setting a composite score (and domain) scores for students, a few states have created alternative pathways for reclassifying students. These alternate pathways are generally for students who scored 0.1-0.7 points below the state’s required composite score and are separate from any procedures used to reclassify students with disabilities. Georgia, which requires a 5.0 for reclassification, allows students with composite scores of 4.3-4.9 to be reclassified through procedures that the LEA establishes (Georgia Department of Education, 2021). Missouri, which requires a 4.7 for reclassification, allows districts to compile a “traditional or digital portfolio” with evidence that low domain score(s) are not indicative of a student’s ability (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, n.d.). Nevada allows students who do not meet their 4.5 requirement to reclassify with a score of 4.0 if they “met content proficiency on the State ELA and math assessment,” are on track to graduate, and have evidence that they will succeed academically without EL services (Nevada Department of Education, n.d.). Finally, Wisconsin, which requires a 5.0 for reclassification, will reclassify students with 4.5-4.9 scores with additional evidence (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2020).

**Table 2***WIDA Consortium State Proficiency Requirements*

State	Proficiency Score(s)	Notes
Alabama	<a href="#">4.8</a>	
Alaska	<a href="#">4.5</a> <sup>1</sup>	
Colorado	<a href="#">4.0; 4.0 literacy</a>	Can reclassify scores less than 4.0 with one piece of evidence
Delaware	<a href="#">4.7</a>	

District of Columbia	<a href="#">5.0</a>	
Florida	<a href="#">4.0; 4.0 in reading</a>	
Georgia	<a href="#">5.0</a>	Can reclassify 4.3-4.9 with procedures
Hawaii	<a href="#">5.0</a>	
Idaho	<a href="#">4.2; (3.5 in listening, writing, and reading, 1.0 in speaking)</a>	
Illinois	<a href="#">4.8</a>	
Indiana	<a href="#">5.0</a>	
Kentucky	<a href="#">4.5</a>	
Maine	<a href="#">4.5</a>	
Maryland	<a href="#">4.5</a>	
Massachusetts	<a href="#">4.2; literacy 3.9</a>	In addition to other relevant data
Michigan	<a href="#">4.8</a>	
Minnesota	<a href="#">4.5; scores in three or more domains &gt;3.5</a>	Additional evidence required for the domain below 3.5
Missouri	<a href="#">4.7</a>	Can reclassify below 4.7 with a traditional or digital portfolio
Montana	<a href="#">4.7</a>	
Nevada	<a href="#">4.5</a>	Can reclassify 4.0 with additional evidence
New Hampshire	<a href="#">4.5</a>	
New Jersey	<a href="#">4.5</a>	
New Mexico	<a href="#">5.0</a>	
North Carolina	<a href="#">4.8</a>	
North Dakota	<a href="#">5.0; 3.5 in each domain</a>	
Oklahoma	<a href="#">4.8</a>	

Pennsylvania	<a href="#">4.5</a>	In addition to language use inventories completed by an ESL teacher and content teacher
Rhode Island	<a href="#">4.8</a>	
South Carolina	<a href="#">4.4 and 4.0 on each domain</a>	
South Dakota	<a href="#">5.0</a>	
Tennessee	<a href="#">4.2; 4.0 literacy</a>	
Utah	<a href="#">5.0</a>	
Vermont	5.0; 4.0 reading and writing <sup>2</sup>	
Virginia	4.4 <sup>3</sup>	
Wisconsin	<a href="#">5.0</a>	Can reclassify <a href="#">4.5-4.9 with additional evidence</a>
Wyoming	<a href="#">4.6 and literacy 4.3</a>	

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<sup>1</sup> Information from [EL Student Identification, Assessment & Data Reporting](#).

<sup>2</sup> See Revised State Template for the Consolidated State Plan (ESSA) (2017).

<sup>3</sup> See Guidelines for English Learner Participation in the Virginia Assessment Program (2019).

In investigating state scores required for reclassification, it was found that several states issued correspondence concerning lowering ACCESS 2.0 reclassification scores during the 2016-2017 school year. Undoubtedly, similar correspondence was sent in other states; however, Maine and Massachusetts will be highlighted due to their retaining these documents online.

Maine noted that prior to 2017, they were the only state where a composite score of 6.0 was required for reclassification. Maine lowered their required score in 2017 due to the ACCESS 2.0 scoring system changing, which made it more difficult to reach 6.0. In the year that this documentation was published (n.d.), Maine further lowered their composite score requirement to 4.5 after comparing their state academic test and SAT scores with ACCESS 2.0 scores. The state found that “[a] little more than half of students who scored 4.5 on ACCESS met or exceeded

state expectations for English Language Arts on State-required academic assessments, which is about the same as how non-EL students performed” (Maine Department of Education, n.d.).

In 2017, Massachusetts stated that ACCESS 2.0’s new standards require a higher level of achievement than ACCESS 1.0, providing an equivalency chart (Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2017). The letter mentions using three methods for ensuring validity: equipercentile linking, the WIDA score look up calculator, and comparing the percentages of students attaining Level 5.0 on ACCESS 1.0 (Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2017). Earlier, in response to the results of WIDA’s standard setting study which found that certain scores were inflated, for the 2016-2017 academic year Massachusetts modified its reclassification criteria to scores of 4.0 in writing and speaking and 5.0 in listening or reading for reclassification purposes (Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2016).

Though just two examples, these documents reveal the decision-making progress that SEAs undertook in response to changes in tests and standard setting. These findings might shed light on the range of ACCESS 2.0 scores seen across the U.S. in WIDA Consortium states.

### ***ELPA21 Consortium***

Reclassification standards are very consistent across all ELPA21 consortium states. Each state requires students to be determined as “proficient” by the exam, which entails receiving scores of four or five (see Table 3). ELPA21 defines Level 4 (early advanced) by stating that a student at this level “demonstrates English language skills required for engagement with grade-level academic content instruction at a level comparable to non-ELs”; a Level 5 (advanced)

student “exhibits superior English language skills, as measured by ELPA21” (Arkansas Department of Education, 2020).

Notably, none of the ELPA21 states use other evidence such as other assessments or teacher observation forms. This, in part, may be due to the way in which ELPA21 describes its performance levels. Compared to the descriptions of Level 4 and Level 5 performance, a Level 3 (intermediate) score indicates that a student “applies some grade level English language skills and will benefit from EL Program support” (Arkansas Department of Education, 2020).

**Table 3**

*ELPA21 Consortium*

State	Test	Required Level	Required Profile
Arkansas	<a href="#">ELPA21</a> (English Language Proficiency Assessment for the 21st Century)	<a href="#">Proficient</a>	<a href="#">Level 4 or higher in all domains</a>
Iowa	<a href="#">ELPA21</a> (English Language Proficiency Assessment for the 21st Century)	<a href="#">Proficient</a>	<a href="#">Level 4 or higher in all domains</a>
Louisiana	<a href="#">ELPT</a> (English Language Proficiency Test)	<a href="#">Proficient</a>	<a href="#">Level 4 or higher in all domains</a>
Nebraska	<a href="#">ELPA21</a> (English Language Proficiency Assessment for the 21st Century)	<a href="#">Proficient</a>	<a href="#">Level 4 or higher in all domains</a>
Ohio	<a href="#">OELPA</a> (Ohio English Language Proficiency Assessment)	<a href="#">Proficient</a>	<a href="#">Any score combination of 4s or 5s across all nonexempt domains.</a>
Oregon	<a href="#">ELPA21</a> (English Language Proficiency Assessment for the 21st Century)	<a href="#">Proficient</a>	<a href="#">Level 4 or higher in all domains</a>

Washington	<a href="#">ELPA21 &amp; WIDA</a> (English Language Proficiency Assessment for the 21st Century & World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment)	<a href="#">Proficient</a>	<a href="#">Level 4 and/or 5 in all domains</a>
West Virginia	<a href="#">ELPA21</a> (English Language Proficiency Assessment for the 21st Century)	<a href="#">Proficient</a>	<a href="#">Level 4 and 5 range are categorized as Proficient</a>

The ELPA21 Consortium has demonstrated a commitment to consistently using ELPA21 scores for reclassification. Interestingly, Oregon once allowed portfolio submissions to be used in tandem with ELPA21 scores, releasing an executive memo in 2018; however, the SEA dissolved the use of portfolios for consistency purposes, noting that all students would only be exited from EL services with an ELPA score of proficient (Oregon Department of Education, 2018).

***Individual State Assessments***

A total of five U.S. states utilize their own state-specific assessment for measuring proficiency and reclassifying ELs. Three of these states primarily use their test in conjunction with other sources of evidence to determine if a student is ready for reclassification. Additional requirements include the recommendation from a team of educators (Kansas State Department of Education, 2020); teacher evaluations, parent consultation, and comparing a student’s basic skills to English proficient students (California Department of Education, 2021); and a teacher evaluation and standard reading assessment (Texas Education Agency, 2021). States that use assessment scores as the standalone factor for determining reclassification are Arizona and New

York (Arizona State Legislature, §15-756.05B, n.d.; New York State Education Department, 2015).

Acceptable test scores for reclassification are in the highest band of each of the tests’ scales. Each state labels their levels differently, the highest level being called: “advanced high” (Texas Education Agency, 2021); “commanding/proficient” of the NYSESLAT (New York State Education Department, 2015); “proficient” (Arizona State Legislature, §15-756.05B, n.d.; Kansas State Department of Education, 2020); and the “proficiency level (PL) 4” (California Department of Education, 2021).

New York is the only state that has additional criteria that can be used to determine if a student can be reclassified if the student does not score the highest level of the state’s assessment. New York will accept an expanding/advanced score for grades 3-8 for reclassification if the student scored a three or above on the state’s ELA assessment the same school year; for grades 9-12, a student needs a score of 65 or above on the Regents Exam in English (New York State Education Department, 2015).

**Table 4**

*States With Their Own EL Assessment*

State	Test	Requirements for Reclassification
Arizona	<a href="#">AZELLA</a> (Arizona English Language Learner Assessment)	<a href="#">Proficient overall (requires proficient reading and writing scores)</a>
California	<a href="#">ELPAC</a> (English Language Proficiency)	<a href="#">ELPAC Overall Performance Level (PL) 4. This is one of four reclassification criteria.</a>



	Assessments for California)	
Kansas	<a href="#">KELPA</a> (Kansas English Language Proficiency Assessment)	<a href="#">Proficient score and Building Leadership Team (BLT) or Student Improvement Team (SIT) recommendation</a>
New York	<a href="#">NYSESLAT</a> (New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test)	<a href="#">Commanding/Proficient (grades K-12) or Expanding/Advanced with score of 3 or above on NYS ELA (grades 3-8) or 65 or above on the Regent's Exam in English (grades 9-12)</a>
Texas	<a href="#">TELPAS</a> (Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System)	<a href="#">Advanced High score in each domain, plus standard reading assessment (varies by grade) and teacher evaluation</a>

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## ***LAS Links***

LAS Links is used by two states for state summative assessment purposes. While LAS Links presents itself as an assessment solution for school districts, with its arsenal of tests and resources including a placement test, annual progress monitoring, Spanish language proficiency, PreK assessment, among others, (LAS Links, 2021), its use by two states shows its versatility as a state assessment as well.

For reclassification purposes, LAS Links states are consistent in requiring an overall score of 4 or higher as well as requiring scores of 4 or higher for reading and writing on their five-point scale (see Table 5). In addition, both states use LAS Links scores as the standalone

determining factor in whether to reclassify a student or not (Connecticut State Department of Education, n.d.; Mississippi Department of Education, 2018). In fact, Mississippi’s guidance document specifically states that LEAs should not use additional criteria for exit requirements, citing ESSA’s need for states to have uniform exit criteria (p. 19).

**Table 5**

*LAS Links*

State	Proficiency Score
Connecticut	<a href="#"><u>Score of 4 or higher overall and 4 or higher in reading and writing</u></a>
Mississippi	<a href="#"><u>Overall proficiency 4 or 5; reading and writing scores of 4 or 5</u></a>

As a final point of interest, due to the impact of COVID-19 and the severe winter storms in Texas, the Texas Education Agency authorized the use of LAS Links for the purpose of assessing students solely for reclassification purposes (Texas Education Agency, 2020). As LAS Links can be administered remotely (LAS Links, 2020), students with missing or partial TELPAS scores were able to still meet the assessment requirements necessary for reclassification (Texas Education Agency, 2020). While remote tests can pose challenges to validity (Roever, 2001; Wagner, 2020), given the unprecedented events, administering remote exams appeared justified to ensure that eligible ELs still had the opportunity to be reclassified.

**CONCLUSION AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

The current landscape of K-12 EL assessments in the U.S. represents a continuum of assessments and reclassification requirements. While all tests, even large providers, are aligned to state standards as per ESSA (WIDA Standards Framework, 2021, pp. 263-265), conducting a

state-specific test could provide the benefit of locally developed test items and support. Choosing a test provider with a larger network of state users may provide additional resources and consistent measurement scales between states for transfer students while a smaller-scale test provider may meet the exact needs of an SEA. Consistency across SEAs in reclassification requirements provides a unified approach to establishing the proficiency necessary for reclassification while the ability to adjust state requirements with more ease, or pinpoint areas that students must achieve before exiting (i.e., reading, writing, or literacy scores), may provide more state-tailored criteria.

By observing all state tests and requirements side by side, the test providers they utilize, and factors considered for reclassification, stakeholders throughout the United States may consider how their states' reclassification requirements align with others and how best to ensure students remain in EL services the appropriate amount of time. Furthermore, it is hoped that through this fine-grained look at the landscape of EL K-12 testing in the United States, SEAs can see the importance of providing easily accessible information, creating handbooks for stakeholders, dating all documentation, and uploading key correspondence online. By doing this, not only will states exude transparency, but out-of-state administrators, teachers, researchers, and other stakeholders can come to a better consensus of how to best serve students.

As outsiders, the researchers of this study were only privy to information that was available online; any misrepresentations of state procedures are the researcher's responsibility, perhaps due to a lack of familiarity with state websites. Misrepresentations, however, may also be indicative that current and accessible information may be missing or not publicly available. In order to aid in transparency, all citations used to find information were included with hyperlinks

provided in tables where appropriate. In some cases, a single state handbook provided all of the information sought by this study; in other situations, several separate sources were needed: one to confirm the assessment used, one to confirm what the reclassification requirements were, and sometimes a third source to confirm the actual numerical score needed for reclassification.

Though this project was quite extensive, with countless hours digging around state websites and through legislation, there are several possible future directions moving forward. Ideas include how each state handles student transfers within and out-of-state, from consortium members or otherwise, and how each state assesses and reclassifies special education ELs. The more holistically U.S. EL practices can be analyzed, the more best practices can be moved forward.

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