

ELPA 21 Annual Assessment Window

The United States Department of Education (USDE) recently issued guidance around English Language Proficiency (ELP) testing that we would like to share. They have clarified that all students who can safely take the ELPA21 Annual Assessment this year should do so. This guidance is firmly rooted in civil rights and confirmed by the Supreme Court of the United States and the Office of Civil Rights. The use of an objective measure to plan appropriate instruction and place students in meaningful learning contexts is well described, across these rulings, as a matter of equity.

Districts will need to administer the ELPA21 or WIDA Alternate ACCESS assessments under either of the following conditions:

1. If the district has coordinated with their local health authority, and the local school board has deemed it safe for students to return to school for instruction.
2. If families who choose to remain in remote learning opt to have their child assessed at a school site.

Because the federal requirement for ELP testing has not been waived this year, all students who can safely test should be given the opportunity to do so. The assessment window will begin on March 22, 2021 and has been extended through June 4, 2021 (OSPI is working in partnership with its vendors to determine if a further extension to the test window is possible and will communicate a final decision soon). For students who have not yet taken the ELPA Screener, such as those in Provisional Status or those who are newly enrolled, the ELPA21 Annual Assessment score may be used in place of the ELPA Screener if it can be administered within 30 days of the student returning for in-person services.

Frequently Asked Questions

Will I need to record information about families who do not test due to COVID-19?

The OSPI Student Information, Assessment, and Migrant and Bilingual Ed teams are discussing if this is indeed a federal requirement and we understand that this may cause workload issues on our districts. We will communicate that out through our standard channels once we hear from the Dept. of Education.

Should I require a student in distance learning to come to school to test?

No, but districts are required to offer testing opportunities to students participating in remote learning. You should communicate the opportunities to families in their language of choice. You should document these communications in your general CPR records.



If a student with a significant cognitive difficulty is in Provisional Status, which assessments should they take?

If a provisionally identified English learner's IEP team determines that the student is eligible for the WIDA Alternate ACCESS, the student will first need to attempt the ELPA21 screener before completing the annual assessment. The need to assess the student with both tests is two-fold. WIDA Alternate ACCESS is a test format better suited for students with significant cognitive disabilities and can provide needed information for instructional support. However, due to the low incidence of students using the WIDA Alternate ACCESS, OSPI has not established proficiency cut-scores. The ELPA21 Screener has established proficiency scores which can be used to address the student's provisional status.

Must students be tested within the normal school day?

No, districts may offer testing opportunities during the evenings or on weekends if it is safe to do so and if it is within the district's capacity.

Can I use TBIP funds for PPE strictly related to ELPA21/WIDA Alt Access testing of students?

Yes, but Title III funds cannot be used for this purpose, and districts are encouraged to use CARES Act funds and other relief funding resources as a first option.

Must students wear masks while taking the speaking portion of the assessment?

Yes, both ELPA and WIDA consortia have issued statements that mask protocols do not have a measurable impact on test scores.

Where can I find guidance about safety protocols I should follow during test administration?

Please consult your local health department and school board policy for health and safety protocols.

Whom should I contact if I have questions or concerns?

Your Migrant and Bilingual and Assessment teams are ready to support you to the best of our ability during this difficult time. Please feel welcomed to reach out if we can be of service.