

English Learner FAQ: Section Topics

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English Learner Program Services

1. **Do LEAs have flexibility to discontinue bilingual education and/or English as a second language (ESL) programs during an emergency, such as the COVID-19 pandemic?** *Posted March 22, 2020*

No. Neither state nor federal law provide flexibility to LEAs in times of emergency regarding their obligation to provide equitable access to the curriculum for English learners through bilingual education and ESL programs. If schools are closed, but the LEA continues to provide educational opportunities to the general student population during the closure, the school must ensure that English learners also have equal access to the same opportunities. The LEA must ensure that, to the greatest extent possible, each English learner can be provided language program services commensurate with the student's English language proficiency level.

2. **Are LPACs required to complete the identification process within the four calendar weeks of the students' initial enrollment during school closures?** *Posted March 22, 2020*

LEAs can do the following-

- If the student **has already been assessed** using the appropriate LAS Links/pre-LAS assessment prior to school closure and results are available, the LPAC may be able to meet through alternative meeting methods (phone or video conference) in order to complete the identification. The participation of the LPAC parent is optional through the end of this school year. If the student is identified by the LPAC, the student's parent is notified of identification, and parental approval may be obtained in writing or through an email or documented phone conversation. If the LPAC cannot meet, the LEA will resume the identification process once the LEA resumes to finish out the semester or during the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year.
- If the student has **not yet been assessed** for English proficiency using LAS Links/pre-LAS assessment, the identification process will resume once the LEA resumes to finish out the semester or during the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year.

3. **Will LEAs be able to pre-register prekindergarten students for planning purposes for the next school year's program?** *Posted March 22, 2020*

Please see the [Early Childhood Education Covid-19 Guidance](#) regarding Prekindergarten Registration for the 2020-2021. For the purposes of identifying potential English learners in prekindergarten, virtual assessments are not permissible. Please see the LAS Battery of Assessments – Acceptable Use of Guidelines to assess English learners at the following webpage: <https://laslinks.com/Texas/>.

- 4. Is there a standardized form to include in a student’s permanent record stating why the student was not identified and placed within the required four calendar weeks? *Posted April 7, 2020***

No special form is needed. As with other circumstances beyond the LEA’s control, the LPAC attempts to complete the English learner identification process within the four calendar weeks requirement, as feasible, and documents in the student’s permanent record the reasons for which the timeline was extended.

NEW
4/14/2020

- 5. What will happen with EL initial identification assessment if the district remains closed or we do not return by the beginning of the school year? Will the 30-day extension be extended any further? *NEW April 14, 2020***

At this point, we are anticipating that school will open in the fall. If the public health facts dictate otherwise, we will issue guidance on this issue at that point.

NEW
4/14/2020

- 6. Will LEAs be required to offer ESL/bilingual education to students this summer (per the requirement for students rising to kindergartners and 1st graders), or TEA waive that requirement? *NEW April 14, 2020***

At this point, we are anticipating that school will open for the summer, and so TEA has not waived this requirement. If the public health facts dictate otherwise, we will revisit this issue then.

TELPAS and TELPAS Alternate Assessment Guidance

- 1. Has the TELPAS been waived this year? *Posted March 30, 2020***

The testing windows for the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) and TELPAS Alternate have both been extended through May 29, 2020 to allow a Local Education Agency (LEA) to complete optional testing if it chooses.

- 2. Can the TELPAS Reading and/or Listening & Speaking online tests be administered to students from home? *Posted March 30, 2020***

No, the TELPAS tests must be administered in standardized testing conditions.

- 3. Can TELPAS writing samples be collected via digital learning? *Posted March 30, 2020***

Yes, writing samples should reflect authentic classroom instruction, and that includes remote or digital

learning in the current environment. As a reminder, writing samples in which students relied heavily on editing tools or dictionary use should not be used. Writing samples should not be collected for the sole purpose of assembling TELPAS writing collections.

4. Can teachers continue to collect writing samples through physical paper writing assignments that are sent to students, completed, and returned to the teacher? *Posted March 30, 2020*

Yes, refer to the Logistical Considerations for Paper-Based Packet Pickup to Mitigate Public Health Risks document that is posted on the Coronavirus [Instructional Continuity Planning Framework](#) webpage for additional guidance regarding handling paper material assignments.

5. Can TELPAS raters calibrate from home? *Posted March 30, 2020*

No, TELPAS rater calibration cannot be completed from home. LEAs may choose to use the centralized rater option and have raters who have already completed calibration rate writing collections.

6. Can TELPAS writing collections be rated at home? *Posted March 30, 2020*

Yes, raters may complete ratings of writing collections at home if permitted by their LEA. However, LEAs must ensure that the process is valid and FERPA regulations are maintained. Remember that the TELPAS window has been extended until May 29, 2020.

7. Can holistic domains (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) for grades K and 1 be rated from home? *Posted March 30, 2020*

Yes, as long as raters have sufficient information to designate an accurate rating. LEAs must ensure that the process is valid and FERPA regulations are maintained.

8. Can incomplete TELPAS writing collections be rated? *Posted March 30, 2020*

The TELPAS assessment window has been extended through May 29, 2020 to allow LEAs to complete the administration if the LEA chooses. If a LEA decides to complete ratings for the writing domain, then the current guidelines should be followed, including the requirement for collections to be complete.

9. Do TELPAS writing collections need to be verified if continuing with the rating process? *Posted March 30, 2020*

Yes, LEAs that choose to complete the rating of writing collections should continue to follow the TELPAS administration procedures to ensure validity and reliability; this includes the verification process.

10. Can LEA staff electronically (e.g., text, email, video conferencing software, etc.) share writing samples, writing collections, or rating rosters with verifiers, raters, and other personnel administering TELPAS to complete the administration? *Posted March 30, 2020*

Yes, LEAs may determine locally if electronic tools will be allowed to complete the rating process for this year's TELPAS administration; however, LEAs must ensure all procedures are compliant with FERPA regulations.

11. Can LEA staff return to campuses or LEA offices to pick up writing collections, rating rosters, Observable Behaviors, etc.? *Posted March 30, 2020*

LEAs should consult with local authorities to ensure current regulations are maintained for any building access or materials handling.

12. Can LEAs request a special administration of TELPAS listening and speaking (i.e., holistic rating) if they were not able to complete the online tests before school closure? *Posted March 30, 2020*

No, the special administration process is allowed only when a student needs a testing accommodation that is not possible to provide in an online setting. The special administration is not for situations related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

13. How do I return TELPAS paper reading materials? *Posted March 30, 2020*

If a LEA was approved to administer a TELPAS reading paper test, the deadline to return nonscorable materials is June 5, 2020. Refer to the communication STAAR Alt 2 / TELPAS Material Return that is posted under the Assessment section of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Support and Guidance webpage.

14. What do LEAs need to do if they choose not to complete TELPAS or TELPAS Alternate? *Posted March 30, 2020*

LEAs that choose not to complete TELPAS or TELPAS Alternate are not required to notify the Texas Education Agency. If the LEA wants to receive scores for students who completed all or part of TELPAS, they should make sure that all tests have been submitted or marked complete and stop the test session. If a LEA wants to receive scores for students taking TELPAS Alternate, they will need to make sure that all items have been answered in the score entry screen and have been submitted.

LPAC Guidance on English Learner Reclassification

1. What if some students have not completed all four domains of TELPAS (listening, speaking, reading, and writing)? *Posted March 22, 2020*

As feasible, it is recommended for LEAs to finalize TELPAS when partially completed, **particularly when the only remaining domain to assess is writing and writing collections have already been collected (for grades 2-12)**. Priority should be given to English learners who

- have a high potential for reclassification
- have Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), 504 plans, or other exceptional needs.

2. What if we are unable to complete all four domains of TELPAS? *Posted March 22, 2020*

The English Language Proficiency Assessment component of the reclassification criteria cannot be fulfilled with partial TELPAS data. If all four domains of the 2019-2020 TELPAS cannot be completed, the LEA may administer the [LAS Links Assessment](#) only to English learners **who are potential for reclassification** with an extended testing window through the first 30 calendar days of the 2020-2021 school year (grade 1: listening and speaking; grades 2-12: listening, speaking, reading, and writing). It is important to note that TELPAS and LAS Links scores cannot be combined to meet [reclassification criteria](#).

3. With school closures and some assessment requirements waived, does the LPAC need to convene for English learner (EL) [end-of-year review and reclassification decisions](#)? *Posted March 22, 2020*

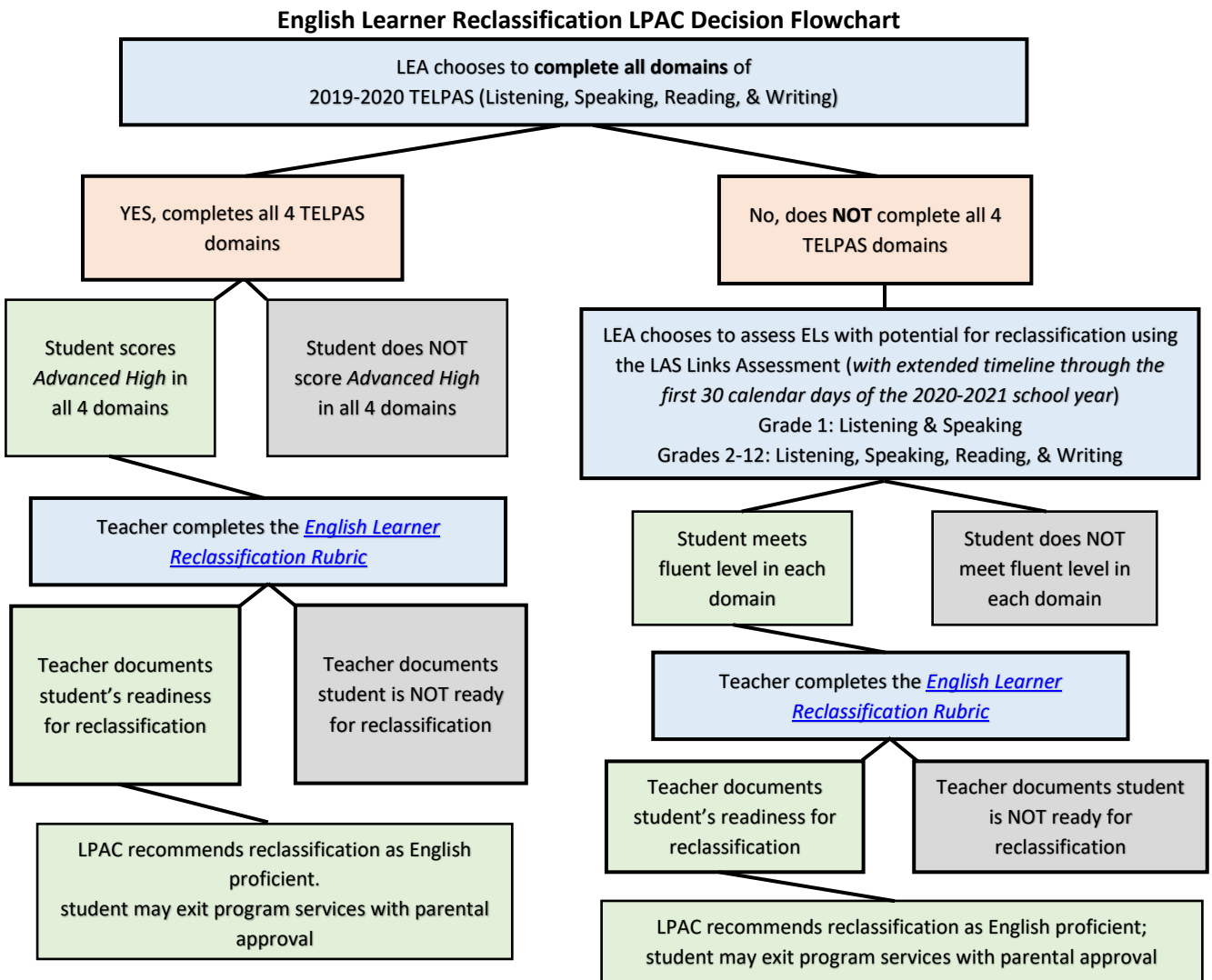
LEAs should determine, to the extent possible, how to proceed with the annual review of progress for all English learners. However, priority should be placed on English learners **who are potential for reclassification**, such as those for whom the LPAC and/or classroom teachers have documented readiness for successful participation in grade-level content instruction delivered with no second language acquisitions supports.

4. How has the State's waiver for the State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR) affected EL reclassification requirements? *Posted March 22, 2020*

All State Standardized Reading Assessment Requirements within the English Learner reclassification criteria have been waived for the 2019-2020 school year, including STAAR Reading (grades 3-8), STAAR English EOC (grades 9-10), and norm-referenced standardized achievement test (grades 1, 2, 11, 12).

5. What are the available options for adjusting the general 2019-2020 English learner reclassification criteria? *Posted March 22, 2020*

The *English Learner Reclassification LPAC Decision Flowchart* below (next page) guides LEAs on how to determine 2019-2020 English Learner reclassification criteria for students in grades 1-12, including the subjective [teacher evaluation](#).



6. What adjustments to the LPAC responsibilities are available for the remainder of the [2019-2020 school year](#)? *Posted March 22, 2020*

The LPAC may use the following provisions:

- **Alternative meeting methods**, such as
 - Phone or video conferencing
 - Use of electronic signatures that adhere with LEA policy
- **Optional LPAC parent representation** (although highly encouraged)

- **Extended timeline** for determining English learner reclassification through the first 30 calendar days of the 2020-2021 school year

7. Can some students within the same LEA have different reclassification criteria based on their situation? [Posted April 7, 2020](#)

The LEA must determine a consistent plan for determining reclassification criteria across the LEA. This plan **may include differences in reclassification criteria for some students based on their situation**. For example, in one grade level at a campus, half of the students completed all four domains of TELPAS prior to school closure, and half of the grade level did not. In this case, the students with completed TELPAS will use TELPAS, whereas those that did not may need to default to LAS Links if the remaining TELPAS domains cannot be completed (keeping in mind that LAS Links would only then be administered to those who are potential for reclassification). Another reason for differences in reclassification criteria among student groups may be due to differences in feasibility for completing TELPAS, such as the completion of holistic ratings for grade 1 versus online testing and writing sample collections in grades 2-12.

The LEA's plan for reclassification criteria should be based on the individual student's situation. If a student has all four domains of TELPAS completed, he or she should NOT take LAS Links simply because other students did not complete TELPAS. Over-assessment of students is not a recommended practice. Providing the option to use LAS Links is only available to ensure that students who are potential for reclassification have access to demonstrate English proficiency when TELPAS cannot be completed in all four domains. Keep in mind that TELPAS and LAS Links scores cannot be combined. The [Revised English Learner Reclassification Chart](#) provides the specific levels needed for meeting reclassification criteria using either assessment.

8. How has the reclassification criteria been adjusted for English learners with *significant cognitive disabilities* who use the [Individualized Reclassification Process](#)? [Posted April 7, 2020](#)

The STAAR Alternate 2 requirements for grades 3-10 have been **waived**. However, due to the nature of the TELPAS Alternate assessment design and the TELPAS holistic ratings for Grade 1, the English Language Proficiency component of the Individualized Reclassification Process for a student with a significant cognitive disability can still be completed for the 2019-2020 school year, even if the student is **not present**. Additionally, the subjective teacher evaluation component of the Individualized Reclassification Criteria can also be completed using the new [English Learner Reclassification Rubric – ALTERNATE](#).

Keep in mind that completion of TELPAS Alternate (grades 2-12) or holistic ratings of TELPAS in grade 1 will be the only way for students who are potential for reclassification to demonstrate their readiness using the Individualized Reclassification Process. There are no other reliable or appropriate measures for determining reclassification for students with significant cognitive disabilities. As noted above, If the LPAC process for determining EL reclassification is unable to be completed by the conclusion of the 2019-2020 school year, an **extended timeline** through the first 30 calendar days of the 2020-2021 school year has also

been provided, which includes students reclassified through the Individualized Reclassification Process.

9. What funds can be used for LEAs who opt to use the LAS Links Assessment for reclassification? *Posted April 7, 2020*

LEAs can use their local funds or Bilingual Education Allotment (BEA) funds. Also, it would be an allowable expense to use Title III, Part A-ELA funds to purchase additional pre-LAS/LAS Links assessments to be used to reclassify English learners only for 2019-2020 school year.

10. Will Data Recognition Corporation (DRC) work with LEAs regarding a discounted price on the LAS Links Assessment used for reclassification? *Posted April 7, 2020*

Data Recognition Corporation (DRC) already provides LEAs a discounted price to purchase the pre-LAS/LAS assessments. Please visit the Texas-dedicated [LAS Links website](#) for additional information.

11. What assistance is provided to LEAs who opt to use the LAS Links Assessment for reclassification in the 2019-2020 school year? *Posted April 7, 2020*

LEAs can score the assessments locally, or DRC is providing the option for LEAs to send them the assessments to be scored for a fee. If LEAs choose to have DRC score the assessments for reclassification, their local funds or Bilingual Education Allotment (BEA) funds can be used. Also, it would be an allowable expense to use Title III, Part A-ELA funds to have DRC score the pre-LAS/LAS Links assessments for reclassification of English learners only for 2019-2020 school year. Please visit the Texas-dedicated [LAS Links website](#) for information on scoring by DRC.