



English Learner Frequently Asked Questions

Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC)

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IV. English Learner Services

A. General

IV. A-1. What is the role of sheltered instruction in programs for English learners?

In any program for English learners, sheltered instruction plays a vital role by making content comprehensible while supporting language development. Even though the term *sheltered instruction* is not directly named in TAC Chapter 89, Subchapter BB, elements of sheltered instruction are evident in various requirements for English learners, such as the connection of content and language integrated instruction as provided through the English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS). Particularly, sheltered instruction encompasses the specific terms that are addressed in TAC Chapter 74.4 ELPS, Part B for linguistically accommodated instruction that is communicated, sequenced, and scaffolded, which is required in all content areas for ELs regardless of program model.

Furthermore, although sheltered instruction is not explicitly addressed in TAC Chapter 89 1210 (d) in the ESL program model descriptions, linguistically and culturally responsive teaching are addressed, which compose essential elements in sheltered instruction. Additionally, 1210 (b) indicates that both bilingual and ESL programs shall address the affective, linguistic, and cognitive needs of ELs in all content areas, which also formulate key elements of sheltered instruction, including second language acquisition methods.

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IV. A-2. Can students who have met reclassification criteria continue in a bilingual or ESL program, and if so, what is the appropriate PEIMS coding?

Yes. If an English learner meets reclassification criteria, he or she can continue in the bilingual or ESL program with parental approval. Typically, this would be most applicable for students participating in a dual language immersion (DLI) program, due to the design of the program. In fact, based on the nature of the program, a dual language immersion program (one-way or two-way) is the only type of program for which the LPAC would recommend continuation after reclassification.

It is important to note that English proficient students enrolled in bilingual or ESL programs cannot exceed 40% of the total number of students enrolled in the program district-wide (TAC 89.1233).

This [Code Guide](#) resource provides details on how to code students in PEIMS after reclassification, specifically addressing students who exit program services and those who continue program services as well as if and to what extent these students generate Bilingual Education Allotment (BEA) funding.

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IV. A-3. Can a school district concentrate the bilingual or ESL program at a limited number of schools within the district in order to provide the bilingual or ESL program? If so, is transportation required?

Yes. School districts can locate their bilingual or ESL program on specific campuses within the district for the purpose of combining resources to support a full and equitable program. The decision on whether to provide transportation to these campuses is a local education agency decision. However, it is important that districts provide equal educational opportunity to every student and in recognition of the educational needs of English learners (TEC 29.051).

Typically, districts provide ESL program services at all campuses where ELs are enrolled and are more likely to concentrate their bilingual program into specific campuses to maximize staff and resources. In a district that is required to offer the bilingual program, the parent of an identified EL in the elementary grades must be offered the bilingual program, even if the program is provided on a campus other than the child's home campus. If the parent chooses to remain at the campus without the bilingual program, the parent would need to deny the bilingual program and accept the ESL program provided at the home campus. The PEIMS Parent Permission code for this situation is – A. Parents must be made aware of the benefits of each program in order to make an informed decision, and the school district needs to make every effort to ensure equitable access to the required programs.

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IV. A-4. Can students who are English proficient participate in a bilingual education or ESL program?

Per TAC 89.1233, with the approval of the school district and a student's parents/guardians, students who are not English learners may also participate in a bilingual education or ESL program with the understanding that the integrity of the program model is upheld. The number of participating students who are not English learners may not exceed 40% of the number of students enrolled in the program district-wide. It is important to emphasize that 60% English learners and 40% English proficient student participation refers to the district-wide program and not the campus or classroom level implementation.

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IV. A-5. Are there grading exemptions for newcomer English learners who have recently enrolled in U.S. schools?

No. Grading exemptions for newcomer ELs are not appropriate. The focus should be on instructional and classroom assessment practices for newcomer ELs that facilitate access to the curriculum and opportunities for varied methods for demonstrating content knowledge for grading purposes. Limited language proficiency in English should not be a basis for failure or retention.

Resource:

The United States Department of Education (USDE) provides a [Newcomer Toolkit](#) resource for programmatic and instructional support for newcomer English learners.

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IV. A-6. How are the grade levels, course schedules, and English learner program placement handled for newcomer ELs, particularly those at the secondary level with little prior schooling documentation and limited proficiency in English?

Grade placement of any student is a local decision. Districts and charters should NOT factor in English language proficiency when placing a student into an appropriate grade placement, as determined by age or prior school setting. However, there are several important factors to consider when determining grade placement for newcomer ELs:

- Prior schooling documentation from their home country that demonstrates grade completion,
- Current age of the student and estimated age of graduation (students can be enrolled in high school through age 21 as described in the [Student Attendance Accounting Handbook](#) in section 3.2.3 on Age Eligibility),
- Social-emotional factors associated with appropriate age placement.

Newcomer ELs should have equitable access to the same grade level courses as their peers without restrictive requirements for pre-requisite courses that do not generate credits toward graduation. Furthermore, the interests of the student should be taken into consideration in order to provide opportunities for course participation that ignites intrinsic motivation.

Language program placement for newcomer ELs should maximize the services provided through the ESL program, or the bilingual education program as available at the secondary level. In grades three through twelve, ELs at a beginning or intermediate English language proficiency level should receive focused, targeted, and systematic language instruction (TAC 74.4 (b)(4)). This means that LEAs should strategically place ELs at these levels with more robust services than their EL peers. The USDE resource listed below provides further information on language services for newcomer ELs.

Resource:

The United States Department of Education (USDE) provides a [Newcomer Toolkit](#) resource for programmatic and instructional support for newcomer English learners.

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IV. A-7. What is the appropriate PEIMS coding for English learners and English proficient students participating in bilingual education or ESL programs? How are the following codes utilized: Alternative Language Program, Former EL, Bilingual/ESL Funding?

The following resources provide details on the Texas Student Data System (TSDS) Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) updates related to English learners and bilingual and ESL programs, that went into effective in the 2019-2020 school year.

- [Explanatory video](#) of revisions (Running time: 29:58)
- [PowerPoint](#) used in explanatory video
- LEP/EL [Decision Chart](#) for the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) with PEIMS codes (includes accessible version of flowchart)
- [Code Guide](#) for Bilingual and ESL Program Association
- [TSDS Web-Enabled Data Standards](#)

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B. Bilingual Education

IV. B-1. Should districts that have been required to offer a bilingual education program in previous years continue to offer the bilingual education program if their English learner enrollment falls below the minimum requirement per TEC 29.053 (c)?

Per TEC 29.053 (c), a school district is required to offer a bilingual education program when enrollment of English learners is at or above 20 students from the same language classification and same grade level across the district. If enrollment of English learners fluctuates below the requirement of 20 students, the district is not required to provide the bilingual education program but may continue to do so. It is strongly encouraged that districts maintain continuation of program services for students who have been participating in the bilingual program. Additionally, it is recommended that the district continues to seek appropriately certified bilingual teachers in the case that their enrollment of English learners fluctuates above the requirement of 20 students.

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IV. B-2. Does Texas offer a Seal of Biliteracy?

Texas offers a performance acknowledgement for bilingualism and biliteracy as indicated in Chapter 74. Curriculum Requirements, Subchapter B. Graduation Requirements ([§74.14, Relating to Performance Acknowledgements](#)).

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IV. B-3. Can students who participate in a dual language immersion program have the opportunity to obtain Languages other than English (LOTE) credit?

Yes. TAC 74.12 (b)(5)(F) provides the requirements for students who have successfully completed a dual language immersion/two-way or dual language immersion/one-way program in accordance with TAC 89.1210 (c)(3) and (4), 89.1227, and 89.1228 at the elementary level to satisfy one credit of the two LOTE credits required in a language other than English. Successful completion includes students who

- have participated in a dual language immersion program for at least five consecutive school years;
- achieve high levels of academic competence as demonstrated by performance of meets or masters grade level on the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) in English or Spanish, as applicable; and
- achieve proficiency in both English and a language other than English as demonstrated by scores of proficient or higher in the reading and speaking domains on language proficiency or achievement tests in both languages.

Keep in mind that the LOTE credit for completion of a dual language immersion program at the elementary level may not be awarded retroactively, meaning the credit must be awarded at the time of completion of the above requirements.

Resources:

- [Languages Other Than English FAQs – TEA Curriculum Division](#)
- [TAC Chapter 74 Subchapter B – Graduation Requirements](#)

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IV. B-4. Our school district provides a dual language immersion (DLI) program model at the middle and high school levels. What does DLI look like at secondary? What are the certification requirements for DLI teachers at middle and high school? And in which instances would an application for a bilingual exception or an ESL waiver be required for DLI teachers at the secondary level?

As per TAC 89.1205 (g), LEAs are authorized to establish a bilingual education program at grade levels beyond elementary school, including DLI programs. When an LEA opts to provide bilingual education programming at the secondary level, it is required to adhere to all program requirements as described in §§89.1210, 89.1227, 89.1228, and 89.1229.

In DLI programs, as per TAC89.1210(c)(3) and (4), instruction in the partner language never falls below 50% of the overall instructional time. At the secondary level, the minimum expectation for DLI instruction in the partner language equates to 50% of the total number of core content periods, e.g. two courses per academic year delivered in the partner language. In summary:

- a minimum of two courses to be provided in the partner language at each grade level for the duration of the secondary DLI program; and
- a minimum of one language/literacy/ communication course to be provided in English at each grade level for the duration of the DLI program.

All DLI teachers shall be appropriately certified for the content area/grade level they are assigned to teach. Additional certification requirements for teachers providing DLI instruction to English learners through secondary DLI programming are provided in the chart below:

Secondary DLI Programming: Minimum Yearly Coursework and Certification Requirements for Teachers of English Learners Served Through DLI Programming

Grade Level	2 Courses in Partner Language (offered at each secondary grade level, for duration of the DLI program)	1 Course in English (offered at each secondary grade level, for duration of the DLI program)	Certifications Required for teachers serving English learners through secondary DLI programming
Grades 6 – 12, or grades 7 – 12, when grade 6 is clustered with the elementary grades	<p>Course 1: Language/literacy (e.g. Spanish Language Arts, Pre-AP/AP Spanish Language, Pre-AP/AP Spanish Literature, etc.)</p> <p>Course 2: LEA-determined content course (math, science, social studies), OR LEA-determined elective (e.g. health sciences, ethnic studies, medical translation, legal aide, bilingual education, etc.)</p>	<p>Course: English Language Arts/Reading (ELAR), and other* related English language/literacy/communications course (e.g. ESOL 1, ESOL 2, speech, debate, journalism, etc.)</p>	<p>All DLI teachers: Certified for content area/grade level</p> <p>DLI partner language teachers (serving English learners): Also certified in bilingual education</p> <p>DLI ELAR/other* teachers (serving English learners): Also certified in ESL</p>

The guidance provided in this FAQ question reflects best practices identified in the research regarding effective secondary DLI program model implementation, namely:

- Provision of language/literacy/communications instruction in the partner language and in English at every grade level, to address the DLI program bilingualism/biliteracy goal
- Flexibility in elective programming, to encourage local decision-making, promote responsiveness to local needs, and allow for student choice, which are all practices associated with DLI program sustainability at the secondary level

If an LEA does not have the appropriately certified staff to implement the secondary DLI program model, the LEA shall submit a bilingual exception (not an ESL waiver) in accordance with TAC 89.1207. This requirement applies to teachers assigned to deliver instruction in the partner language (bilingual exception for a teacher lacking the appropriate bilingual education certification) and to teachers assigned to deliver instruction in English (bilingual exception for a teacher lacking the appropriate ESL certification).

IV. B-5. What is the appropriate procedure for a student who registers at his/her zoned campus (home campus), is identified as an English learner (EL), and is eligible for placement in the district's bilingual education program, but the bilingual program is located on another campus?

- The LPAC at the home campus
 - includes (at a minimum) the LPAC administrator, an ESL certified teacher, and an LPAC parent. It is not necessary to include a bilingual certified teacher if one is not present on the home campus.
 - should be able to explain the benefits of the bilingual program and why it is recommended for the student. Parents must be fully aware of access to and benefits of the bilingual program in order to make an informed decision.
 - should not hesitate to recommend the bilingual education program even though it is not offered on the home campus. There should be a district procedure for connecting the family to the appropriate bilingual campus (clear communication between the two campuses, busing information, knowledge about exact location of bilingual campus, etc.).
 - should not present both the bilingual education and ESL program simultaneously to the parents, especially when both programs are not available on the home campus, because bilingual and ESL program placement is an LPAC recommendation. The LPAC should make its recommendation based on the best program for the student, not the program's location.
- If parents
 - accept bilingual program placement, the home campus should ensure a smooth transition between the home and bilingual campus.
 - deny bilingual program placement, denial of program services paperwork should be signed. Then the home campus should explain the benefits of the ESL program provided on the home campus and offer parents the opportunity for ESL program participation.

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C. English as a second language (ESL)

IV. C-1. Do all teachers of English learners need to be ESL certified? Do all English Language Arts and Reading (ELAR) teachers need to be ESL certified?

TAC 89.1210 (d) provides the descriptions for the two state-approved ESL program models that apply to ESL programs in prekindergarten through twelfth grade: ESL content-based and ESL pull-out.

- To meet compliance standard for an ESL content-based program, ELs would need to receive all content instruction by an ESL certified teacher(s), which includes ELAR, mathematics, science, and social studies.
- To meet compliance standard for an ESL pull-out program, ELs would need to receive ELAR instruction by an ESL certified teacher(s). The pull-out model compliance standards can be met in three ways
 - The ELAR teacher is also ESL certified and provides the ESL support within the classroom.
 - The ELAR teacher co-teaches with an ESL certified teacher who provides the full-time ESL support within the classroom.
 - If the ELAR teacher is not ESL certified, ELs have an additional ESL course that provides ELAR instruction by a teacher who is certified in ELAR and ESL.
- Important notes:
 - For ESL pull-out and ESL content-based, when the ELAR TEKS are split between two teachers, an English language arts (ELA) teacher and a reading teacher, ESL certification is required for both the ELA teacher and the reading teacher if no other ESL support is provided through co-teaching by an ESL teacher or pull-out by an additional ESL course. This only applies when the required ELAR TEKS have been split and are taught by two teachers in order to meet the required curriculum (typically in 7th grade, for example); this does not apply to additional reading intervention courses that are not part of the required curriculum.
 - English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) I and ESOL II must be taught by ESL certified teachers.

Resources:

- [ESL Waiver Scenario Chain](#): *This resource explains the various ways in which an ESL program can be implemented at the elementary and secondary levels, including appropriate PEIMS coding.*
- [Teacher Assignments: TAC 231](#)

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IV. C-2. When and how are the ELLA and ELDA courses administered?

The English Learners Language Arts (ELLA) TEKS for grade 7 (TAC 128.22) and grade 8 (TAC 128.23), adopted in 2017, were available for implementation in classrooms beginning in the 2019-2020 school year. The ELLA TEKS address all of the Chapter 110 English Language Arts and Reading TEKS for grades 7 and 8 and have additional student expectations to support second language acquisition.

The English Language Development and Acquisition (ELDA) TEKS, adopted in 2017 (TAC 128.36), are available for implementation in classrooms beginning in the 2020-2021 school year. They have been designed to provide instructional opportunities for recent immigrant students with little or no English proficiency.

The ELDA course satisfies elective credit requirements for graduation. The course must be taken concurrently with a corequisite language arts and reading course. Students may take this course with a different corequisite for a maximum of two credits. The recommended corequisites are ESOL I and ESOL II, though the course may be paired with other state-approved English or Spanish language arts and reading courses as appropriate.

Resources:

For more information or questions related to the ELLA or ELDA courses, contact the TEA Curriculum division at curriculum@tea.texas.gov or (512) 463-9581.

For information on instructional materials for these courses, contact the TEA Instructional Materials Division (512) 463-9601 or instructional.materials@tea.texas.gov.

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IV. C-3. Can a teacher who holds a TESOL certification only teach in an ESL program?

No. TESOL certification is not listed as an approved certification for teaching in an ESL program in Texas. TAC 231 provides the Requirements for Public School Personnel Assignments that delineates the teacher assignments with allowable certificates for all grade levels and subject areas.

Resource:

TAC 231: <http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/sbecrules/tac/chapter231/>.

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IV. C-4. How many minutes are required for the ESL pull-out program?

There is not a set minutes requirement for ESL pull-out programs. It is up to the district to justify and ensure that the amount of time provided for the ESL pull-out program is equitable to the ELAR instruction of English proficient students. It is important to note that if students are physically pulled out of the classroom for ESL support, ELs should not be taken out of content instruction nor should ELs lose equitable access to subjects such as art, music, and physical education.

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IV. C-5. When will the newly adopted ESL certification standards be implemented? When will the ESL Supplemental certification test change?

The [new ESL Supplemental certification standards](#) were adopted to be effective July 21, 2019. However, the TEA is in the process of facilitating development for a new TExES ESL Supplemental #154 test framework and test items.

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D. Bilingual Education Exceptions / ESL Waivers

See the [Bilingual Education Exceptions and ESL Waivers FAQ](#)

IV. English Learner Services

E. Assessment / LPAC Decision-Making

IV. E-1. Can an English learner, particularly a newcomer, be exempt from taking the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR)?

Generally speaking, ELs cannot be exempt from taking STAAR, even as newcomers. However, if an English learner, in grades 3 through 8 only, is documented as an unschooled asylee/refugee in his or her first year in U.S. schools, the student can be exempt for that first school year as determined by the LPAC (TAC 101.1005).

Resource:

For more information, see the LPAC Decision-Making Resources on the [TEA Student Assessment website](#).

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IV. E-2. What schools are considered in the calculation of years in U.S. schools data collection?

For purposes of calculating years in U.S. schools, only schools (including home schools and private schools) based within the 50 states, Washington D.C., and U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) schools are to be considered U.S. schools.

Resource:

The Instructions for Years in U.S. Schools Data Collection document is located on the [TEA Student Assessment LPAC Resources website](#).

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IV. E-3. If an EL has met all curriculum course requirements for graduation but is enrolled in school for special education transition services only, is the student required to take TELPAS?

No. If an English learner has met all curriculum course requirements for graduation and is only receiving transition services through special education, he or she is not required to take TELPAS. TELPAS is only for ELs enrolled in grades K-12, and a student receiving transition services only is likely not coded at any of these grade levels.

Similarly, if an EL has met all curriculum course requirements for graduation but is in school only for STAAR EOC completion requirements, the student would not be required to take TELPAS.

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IV. E-4. For the English Language Proficiency Assessment portion of the English learner reclassification criteria, can the TELPAS composite score be utilized to meet this criterion?

No. The student would need to reach **Advanced High in each** TELPAS domain of Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing to meet the English Language Proficiency Assessment portion of the [reclassification criteria](#).

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VII. Resources

A. Texas Education Agency

English Learner Support Web Resources

- [Supporting English Learners in Texas \(EL Portal\)](#)
- [TEA Bilingual and ESL Programs](#) webpage
- [LPAC Framework](#)
- [Title III, Part A](#) webpage

Quick Access to Key Resources

- [Parent Brochures](#) for Bilingual Programs and ESL Programs in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese
- [Building Bilingual and ESL Programs](#) LEA Leader Tool
- House Bill (HB) 3 Bilingual Education Allotment [Video](#)

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English Learner Support Division

- EL Support Email: EnglishLearnerSupport@tea.texas.gov
- LPAC Framework questions: lpac@tea.texas.gov
- Phone: 512-463-9414
- Julie Lara-Martinez, Director of English Learner Support: Julie.Martinez@tea.texas.gov
- Amy Johnson, Bilingual Program Coordinator: Amy.Johnson@tea.texas.gov
- Roberto Manzo, English Learner Program Coordinator: Roberto.Manzo@tea.texas.gov
- Rickey Santellana, Title III Program Coordinator: Rickey.Santellana@tea.texas.gov
- Xóchitl Anabel Rocha, Dual Language Coordinator: Xochitl.Rocha@tea.texas.gov
- Carlene Thomas, ESL Program Coordinator: Carlene.Thomas@tea.texas.gov

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Assessment Division

- [Student Assessment](#) webpage
- [Information on State Assessments for English Learners](#) webpage
- [LPAC Student Assessment Resources](#) webpage
- General Email: student.assessment@tea.texas.gov
- State Assessments for English Learners Email: assessment.specialpopulations@tea.texas.gov
- Phone: 512-463-9536

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Curriculum Division

- [TEA Curriculum](#) webpage
- General Email: curriculum@tea.texas.gov
- Phone: 512-463-9581
- Spanish Language Arts and Reading ([SLAR](#)) [TEKS Resources](#)

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Certification Division

- [TEA Certification](#) webpage:
- General Email: curriculum@tea.texas.gov
- Phone: 512-936-8400

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B. State Statute and Rule	
Texas Education Code	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 29, Subchapter B: Bilingual Education and Special Language Programs 	
Texas Administrative Code	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 89, Subchapter BB: Commissioner's Rules Concerning State Plan for Educating English Learners • Chapter 231. Requirements for Public School Personnel Assignments 	
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C. Professional Development and Certification	
Pearson	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Texas Educator Certification Examination Program 	
Texas Gateway	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home webpage • Sheltered Instruction Training Series • Title III Early Childhood Education for English Learners • Title III, Part A: Strengthening and Increasing Parental Outreach 	
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D. English Learner Data	
PEIMS Standard Reports	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ELL Student Reports by Category and Grade • ELL Student Reports by Language and Grade 	
Texas Assessment Management System – Analytic Portal	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data Intersection for Texas Student Assessments 	
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