

## ATAC English Language Learners (ELL) Workgroup – Template for Workgroup Proposal

### Introduction:

The workgroup looked at the ways that the ELL student population could be included in state accountability.

The English Language Workgroup developed a recommendation to include English Language Learners in Texas to the new state accountability system. The proposal includes a chart depicting the recommendation and a rationale narrative to address the relevant issues regarding English Language Learners in state accountability.

### Relevant issues:

- \*Students in their First Year in U. S. Schools
- \*Students in their Second and Third Years in U. S. Schools
- \*Students in their Fourth Year or more in U. S. Schools
- \*An appropriate measure of progress for ELL students
- \*Special Circumstances
  - Students with interrupted schooling
  - Asylees and refugees
  - High school level recent immigrants
  - ELL students who receive Special Education services

The workgroup attended a webinar on **June 27** with Pearson and the ELL Focus Group. Three different models for developing a Progress Measure for ELL students were presented addressing Performance Index 2: Student Progress.

Feedback was provided on each of the three models:

**Members of the ELL Workgroup:** Cathy Ashby, Sue Thompson, Sara Arispe, Kelly Legg, Francisco Rivera, Janet Wallace, Julie Conde, Lelah Mosely and Michael Bohensky

**In addition to the WebEx meeting with the ELL Focus Group and Pearson on June 27<sup>th</sup>, the ELL Workgroup conducted conference calls on July 9<sup>th</sup>, July 12<sup>th</sup>, July 25<sup>th</sup>, August 2<sup>nd</sup>, and August 13<sup>th</sup>.**

A phone conference was held on July 9, 2012 at 1:00 pm. Ester Regalado from TEA was present and gave instructions, explanations, and answered questions from the workgroup members.

Members of the group have much diversity in their experiences with ELL populations. Members of the ELL workgroup originate from Fort Worth ISD, Abilene ISD, San Saba ISD, Responsive Education Solutions, Dumas ISD, Seguin ISD, La Joya ISD, Yselta ISD, and Midland Academy Charter School. The group represents a diverse perspective in regard to the needs of ELLs in Texas. The term “ELL”, English Language Learner, represents a vast number of students in Texas schools. The proposal presented intends to address the diversity of English Language Learners enrolled in Texas schools. Members of the group were encouraged to solicit feedback on the proposal. Administrators and other personnel in members’ districts have made comments that were shared through email and conference calls. An honest effort to give every member a voice and an opportunity to provide input has been made.

ELL Students	ELLs With No Special Circumstances					ELLs With Special Circumstances			
	ELL Yr 1 in US Schools	ELL Yr 2 in US Schools	ELL Yr 3 in US Schools	ELL Yr 4 in US Schools	ELL Yr 5 or more in US Schools	ELLs Yr 5 or more in US Schools by Grade 3	Unschool ed Asylees and Refugees:	Recent Immigrants Entering in Grade 9 or Above	ELL receiving Special Education services
	<b>Recommendation: One year in U.S. schools = student enrolled on Snapshot Date and student enrolled on test date</b>								
<b>Performance Index I: Student Achievement</b>			Included in PERFORMANCE in ALL STUDENTS using either the Level II standard or alternate measure = Met based on ELL Progress Model.	Included in PERFORMANCE in ALL STUDENTS using either the Level II standard or alternate measure = Met based on ELL Progress Model.	Included in PERFORMANCE in ALL STUDENTS using the Level II standard	Included in PERFORMANCE in AllStudents using the Level II standard			Included in PERFORMANCE in ALL STUDENTS using the Level II standard
	Included in PARTICIPATION by RACE/ETHNICITY	Included in PARTICIPATION by RACE/ETHNICITY	Included in PARTICIPATION by RACE/ETHNICITY	Included in PARTICIPATION by RACE/ETHNICITY	Included in PARTICIPATION by RACE/ETHNICITY	Included in PARTICIPATION by RACE/ETHNICITY	Included in PARTICIPATION by RACE/ETHNICITY	Included in PARTICIPATION by RACE/ETHNICITY	Included in PARTICIPATION by RACE/ETHNICITY
<b>Performance Index 2: Student Progress</b>	Baseline established	Included in % of students in each RACE/ETHNICITY who met the growth standard from Level I to II or III using growth = 1 from ELL Progress Model selected	Included in % of students in each RACE/ETHNICITY who met the growth standard from Level I to II or III using growth = 1 from ELL Progress Model selected	Included in % of students in each RACE/ETHNICITY who met the growth standard from Level I to II or III	Included in % of students in each RACE/ETHNICITY who met the growth standard from Level I to II or III	Included in % of students in each RACE/ETHNICITY who met the growth standard from Level I to II or III	Included in % of students in each RACE/ETHNICITY who met the growth standard from Level I to II or III using growth = 1 from ELL Progress Model selected	Included in % of students in each RACE/ETHNICITY who met the growth standard from Level I to II or III using growth = 1 from ELL Progress Model selected	Included in % of students in each RACE/ETHNICITY who met the growth standard from Level I to II or III
					Included in % of ALL STUDENTS who met the growth standard from Level II or III	Included in % of ALL STUDENTS who met the growth standard from Level II or III			Included in % of ALL STUDENTS who met the growth standard from Level II or III
					Included in % of ALL STUDENTS at Level III who maintained Level III	Included in % of ALL STUDENTS at Level III who maintained Level III			Included in % of ALL STUDENTS at Level III who maintained Level III
				Included in Progress of previous EOC failers	Included in Progress of previous EOC failers			Included in Progress of previous EOC failers	

ELL Students	ELL Yr 1 in US Schools	ELL Yr 2 in US Schools	ELL Yr 3 in US Schools	ELL Yr 4 in US Schools	ELL Yr 5 or more in US Schools	ELLs Yr 5 or more in US Schools by Grade 3	Unschool ed Asylees and Refugees:	Recent Immigrants Entering in Grade 9 or Above	ELL receiving Special Education services
<b>Performance Index 3: Closing Performance Gaps</b>	Included in calculating the # of % pts difference between student performance of Gap Group and ALL STUDENTS using growth = 1 from ELL Progress Model selected	Included in calculating the # of % pts difference between student performance of Gap Group and ALL STUDENTS using growth = 1 from ELL Progress Model selected	Included in calculating the # of % pts difference between student performance of Gap Group and ALL STUDENTS using growth = 1 from ELL Progress Model selected	Included in calculating the # of % pts difference between student performance of Gap Group and ALL STUDENTS using growth = 1 from ELL Progress Model selected	Included in calculating the # of % pts difference between student performance of Gap Group and ALL STUDENTS	Included in calculating the # of % pts difference between student performance of Gap Group and ALL STUDENTS	Included in calculating the # of % pts difference between student performance of Gap Group and ALL STUDENTS using growth = 1 from ELL Progress Model selected	Included in calculating the # of % pts difference between student performance of Gap Group and ALL STUDENTS using growth = 1 from ELL Progress Model selected	Included in calculating the # of % pts difference between student performance of Gap Group and ALL STUDENTS
<b>Performance Index 4: Postsecondary Readiness</b>					Include in 4 and 5 year graduation rates by ALL STUDENTS and RACE/ETHNICITY	Include in 4 and 5 year graduation rates by ALL STUDENTS and RACE/ETHNICITY			Include in 4 and 5 year graduation rates by ALL STUDENTS and RACE/ETHNICITY
	Include in dropout rates by ALL STUDENTS and RACE/ETHNICITY	Include in dropout rates by ALL STUDENTS and RACE/ETHNICITY	Include in dropout rates by ALL STUDENTS and RACE/ETHNICITY	Include in dropout rates by ALL STUDENTS and RACE/ETHNICITY	Include in dropout rates by ALL STUDENTS and RACE/ETHNICITY	Include in dropout rates by ALL STUDENTS and RACE/ETHNICITY	Include in dropout rates by ALL STUDENTS and RACE/ETHNICITY	Include in dropout rates by ALL STUDENTS and RACE/ETHNICITY	Include in dropout rates by ALL STUDENTS and RACE/ETHNICITY
					Include in % students graduating under RHSP and Adv HSP by ALL STUDENTS and RACE/ETHNICITY	Include in % students graduating under RHSP and Adv HSP by ALL STUDENTS and RACE/ETHNICITY			
				Include in % of students who met Level III performance on one or more tests by ALL STUDENTS and RACE/ETHNICITY	Include in % of students who met Level III performance on one or more tests by ALL STUDENTS and RACE/ETHNICITY				

**TEA Comments:**

Comment 1: Development of the ELL progress measure is ongoing therefore the ELL Workgroup will need to consider revisions to their proposal in the next few months as details of the ELL progress measure are provided by the testing contractor.

Comment 2: The proposal for Index 2 and Index 4 recommends including certain ELLs in the Racial/Ethnic student groups and excluding them from the All Student category. Many small campuses will be evaluated only on their All Student category; therefore, students evaluated in each of the racial/ethnic student groups must be included in the All student group evaluation.

## Rationale

### Rationale for Performance Index 1

#### Student Achievement (ELL)

**Policy** – Policy requiring annual performance gains is addressed through Performance Index 2.

**Incentives** – The proposed ELL indicators in the performance index framework allow for adequate acquisition of academic language within the generally accepted time frame. However, campuses will still be held accountable for making sure students are making adequate progress through Performance Index 2 even though we are not having them meet performance targets during those first 2 years.

**Instruction** – In theory, the proposed ELL indicators in the performance index framework provide the opportunity to balance language acquisition and academic content acquisition by not forcing measurement of achievement before fluency is attained. Unfortunately, in practice, expediency in the classroom could result in the neglect of one of the two areas.

**Communication** – The proposed ELL indicators in the performance index framework reduces the anxiety of all stakeholders by providing adequate time for academic language acquisition. An unintended consequence is that the reduced anxiety may make stakeholders complacent about the academic achievement of these students.

**Accountability Development and Implementation** – The proposed ELL indicators in the performance index framework allow students to be measured on an equal playing field with regards to academic performance in a given content area because the confounding factor of language acquisition is effectively removed from the equation.

### Rationale for Performance Index 2

#### Student Progress (ELL)

**Policy** – The inclusion of ELLs in Performance Index 2 - Student Progress - is perhaps the most important means of addressing the stated policy goals of progress for all students by ensuring that this special student group demonstrates progress in attaining proficiency in English at the same time as growing proficiency in content.

**Incentives** – The proposed ELL indicators in the performance index framework offer the incentive to maintain focus on BOTH the language and academic progress of ELLs. A potential unintended consequence might be greater focus on language development vs. core academic content in years 1-3; this should be addressed through the progress measure; lack of progress is unacceptable for any group regardless of the additional needs of that group.

**Instruction** – The proposed ELL indicators in the performance index framework will inform school and classroom practice by balancing the responsibility for developing English proficiency simultaneously with responsibility for educating in core academic content.

**Communication** – The proposed ELL indicators in the performance index framework should contribute to an understanding of extra challenges inherent to ELLs in learning and attaining proficiency in English while also learning academic content. Additional communication regarding these very real

challenges for this group will need to be considered for various audiences: parents, teachers, school administrators, policymakers, and the general public.

**Accountability Development and Implementation** – One disadvantage is the possible time lag between required implementation of the new state accountability system and the development of the proposed ELL progress measure. For appropriate inclusion of all students in the performance index framework, the ELL progress measure provides the most meaningful measure for new ELLs.

### Rationale for Performance Index 3

#### Closing Performance Gap (ELL)

**Policy** – The inclusion of ELLs in Performance Index 3 –The Performance Index Workgroup set the definition for the Gap Group. Gap Group=ECD student group or lowest 25% where ECD and All Students are largely duplicated or ECD does not meet minimum group size. Policy states that “Closing Performance Gap TBD.” Measure must be developed but policy doesn’t designate a separate indicator for ELL gaps in comparison with All Students or other student populations ELL students are reported as a separate group for participation and reporting purposes only. ELL students will be included in the Gap group and the All Student Group taking into account each student’s level of proficiency in English using the standards established by the ELL progress measure.

**Incentives** – Providing accountability measures to ensure successful instruction for ELL students can narrow the gap between lower 25% of students and top 25% of students. One concern is that the Economically Disadvantaged Student Group and the lowest 25% Student Group might be the same homogenous group. The opportunity to evaluate accountability based on a growth measure is encouraging. Information for campuses can use growth as a positive result. The system of assigning significance to a growth model will provide accountability for ELL instruction. We must keep in mind that “The performance results of recent immigrant ELL students are enrolled in their second or third school in U.S. schools must be included in AYP”; therefore, state accountability measures to provide incentives for growth can ultimately benefit both systems.

**Instruction** – The ELL framework proposal will include calculating the number of percentage-point difference between student performance of Gap Groups and the All Student Groups. Instruction should focus on bringing students to a language acquisition level to meet state academic standards. Both must be considered when targeting instruction. ELL students will be reported through the All Student and Racial/Ethnic student groups. ELL student groups can be analyzed and evaluated under accountability for reporting purposes only.

**Communication** – ELL students will be identified in the Performance Index 3 proposal. The rationale from the Performance Index 3 stated that “Including a Gap Closure indicator ensures attention to differences in performance between high performing and historically disadvantaged students.” The ELL proposal is to report students through All Student and Racial/Ethnic student groups.

Communication to parents, students, teachers, administrators, and community will be available through participation and reporting.

**Accountability Development and Implementation** – We are still working on being able to communicate implementation and look at accountability development based on definitions for years in U.S. schools. Implementation also depends on which ELL progress measure model is selected. Once development is decided, the time before first accountability ratings are issued is very short.

**Rationale for Performance Index 4****Postsecondary Readiness (ELL)**

**Policy** – The inclusion of ELLs in Performance Index 4 – Postsecondary Readiness – will occur through their inclusion in All Student and Racial/Ethnic student groups. Use of All Student and Racial/Ethnic student groups insures that small schools who do not meet minimum size criteria for any race/ethnicity will be evaluated for graduation rate and dropout rate.

**Incentives** – The proposed ELL indicators in the postsecondary readiness index framework offer the incentive for schools and districts to monitor the progress of ELL students by including them in the Racial/Ethnic student groups for dropout rates and graduation rates. Special provisions are recommended for asylee and refugee students and ELLs who enter school districts in 7<sup>th</sup> grade or later. While school districts should encourage this special group of students to achieve at the highest levels, the inherent challenge of these students should be noted for campuses and campuses should not be negatively impacted by this student population. Qualified teachers in languages other than Spanish and instructional materials in these languages added to the lack of prior educational opportunities for many of these students makes graduation for this group of students arduous in the best of circumstances.

**Instruction** – The proposed ELL indicators in the postsecondary index framework allows for ELL students to be disaggregated under the All Student and Racial/Ethnic student groups. This data will adequately inform school and classroom practice and enable campuses to address individual student deficiencies in their graduation pathways.

**Communication** – The proposed ELL indicators in the performance index framework should contribute to an understanding of extra challenges inherent to ELLs in learning and attaining proficiency in English while also learning academic content. Additional communication regarding these very real challenges for this group will need to be considered for various audiences: parents, teachers, school administrators, policymakers, and the general public. The particularly difficult charge for school districts with asylees/ refugees and ELLs entering in 7<sup>th</sup> grade and beyond should be noted in the postsecondary readiness category.

## **Addendum/Additional Information**

### **English Language Learners and the STAAR Program**

The number of English language learners (ELLs) in Texas public schools has risen steadily during the past decade from about 570,000 in 2000 –2001 to more than 800,000, or about 1 in 6 students, by the 2009–2010 school year. ELLs are a diverse group of students who know English to varying degrees when they enter U.S. schools and may have widely varying educational and sociocultural backgrounds. Both state and federal regulations require ELLs to be taught and tested over the same grade-level academic skills as other students.

For the STAAR program, TEA will develop Spanish versions of STAAR in grades 3–5 in accordance with state statute. Spanish versions of STAAR will be operational in spring 2012. In addition, plans include development of online versions of STAAR with built-in, standardized linguistic accommodations for eligible ELLs in grades 3–8 and high school. TELPAS will continue to measure the progress ELLs make in learning Spanish.

**Assessments Used for Accountability.** TEC §39.053(c) requires the use of assessments under §39.053(a), (c) and (l) [STAAR grade 3–8 English, EOC, and grade 3–5 Spanish] in determining acceptable and unacceptable performance. However, TEC §39.202(l) requires the use of assessments under §39.023(a), (b), (c), and (l) [STAAR modified and alternate assessments in addition to grade 3–8 English, EOC, and grade 3–5 Spanish] in determining ratings of recognized and exemplary. In 2011, the TAKS–M and TAKS–Alt assessments were included in the base rating used for the state accountability ratings. How the modified and alternate assessments for STAAR will be used in the indicators for ratings and distinction designation will be addressed during the accountability development process.

In 2011, the ELL Progress Measure was incorporated in the state accountability system to evaluate progress towards reading proficiency in English for current and monitored limited English proficient (LEP) students. The commissioner shall determine how the STAAR and TELPAS assessment results for ELLs will be used to determine ratings in the new accountability system.