

Assessing English Learners Under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as Amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act

English learners are a highly diverse group of students with cultural and linguistic assets, including their home languages. Although English learners come to school with the benefit of speaking a language other than English, they face the challenge of acquiring academic content knowledge in English at the same time as they acquire English language proficiency. Despite this challenge, ELs are held to the same testing requirements as—or, in some cases, more substantial testing requirements than—English-proficient students. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), includes new provisions that are designed to support ELs' participation in statewide testing. To facilitate testing of ELs and to support their testing participation, ESSA includes stipulations for states to administer content assessments in languages other than English. ESSA also requires states to make efforts

to develop state content assessments in languages that are “present to a significant extent” in their student population. As with federally required state content assessments, any assessment developed in a language other than English must meet federal requirements for technical quality and peer review. States can administer an approved content assessment in a language other than English, including Native American languages, to support the participation of all students in statewide testing.

As states consider these new testing provisions, there may be questions about which assessments to administer to ELs, or questions about the development of assessments in other languages. This resource provides an overview of the different assessment requirements for states to consider. The table on page 2 provides details on considerations regarding

ELs and statewide testing, as well as the requirements for state content and language assessments. These requirements include stipulations for the approved use of content assessments in different languages, including those administered in Native American languages. Also included are technical requirements that states must address prior to administering any assessment, including assessments in languages other than English. The flow chart on page 5 can be used to guide understanding of federal testing requirements for students who are identified as ELs, including students who attend a Native American-language school or program. This resource is designed to be shared with state department of education staff and can be used as part of training materials for district and school staff who assess English learners.

	1. READING/LANGUAGE ARTS AND MATHEMATICS ASSESSMENTS	2. SCIENCE ASSESSMENTS	3. CONTENT ASSESSMENTS ² IN A NATIVE LANGUAGE (E.G., SPANISH) FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS	4. CONTENT ASSESSMENTS IN A NATIVE AMERICAN LANGUAGE FOR STUDENTS IN A NATIVE AMERICAN LANGUAGE SCHOOL	5. ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY ASSESSMENTS FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS
A. Required Under ESEA as Amended by ESSA?	Yes	Yes	States must make “every effort” to develop the assessments needed. See individual state plans	No ³	Yes
B. Alignment to Standards	Yes; must be aligned to state-adopted challenging academic standards	See Box B1	See Box B1	See Box B1	Yes; must be aligned to state-adopted challenging English language proficiency standards
C. Administration — Format	State-determined; can be a single summative assessment or multiple interim assessments Must result in a single summative score that provides valid, reliable, and transparent information on student achievement or growth	See Box C1	See Box C1	See Box C1	State must have a uniform statewide English language proficiency assessment ⁴
D. Administration — Student Population	All public elementary school and secondary school students in the state	See Box D1	English learners as appropriate States are responsible for identifying languages that are present to a significant extent, as well as for specifying the grades and content areas that assessments in these languages will be provided for	All students enrolled in a state-funded Native American language school or program that provides instruction primarily in a Native American language	All English learners in grades K–12
E. Administration — Frequency	Annually, in grades 3–8 and at least once in grades 9–12	Annually, at least once in grades 3–5, at least once in grades 6–9, and at least once in grades 10–12	See Boxes E1 and E2	See Boxes E1 and E2 At least once in grades 9–12, states must administer an English-language-only assessment in reading/language arts.	Annually in grades K–12

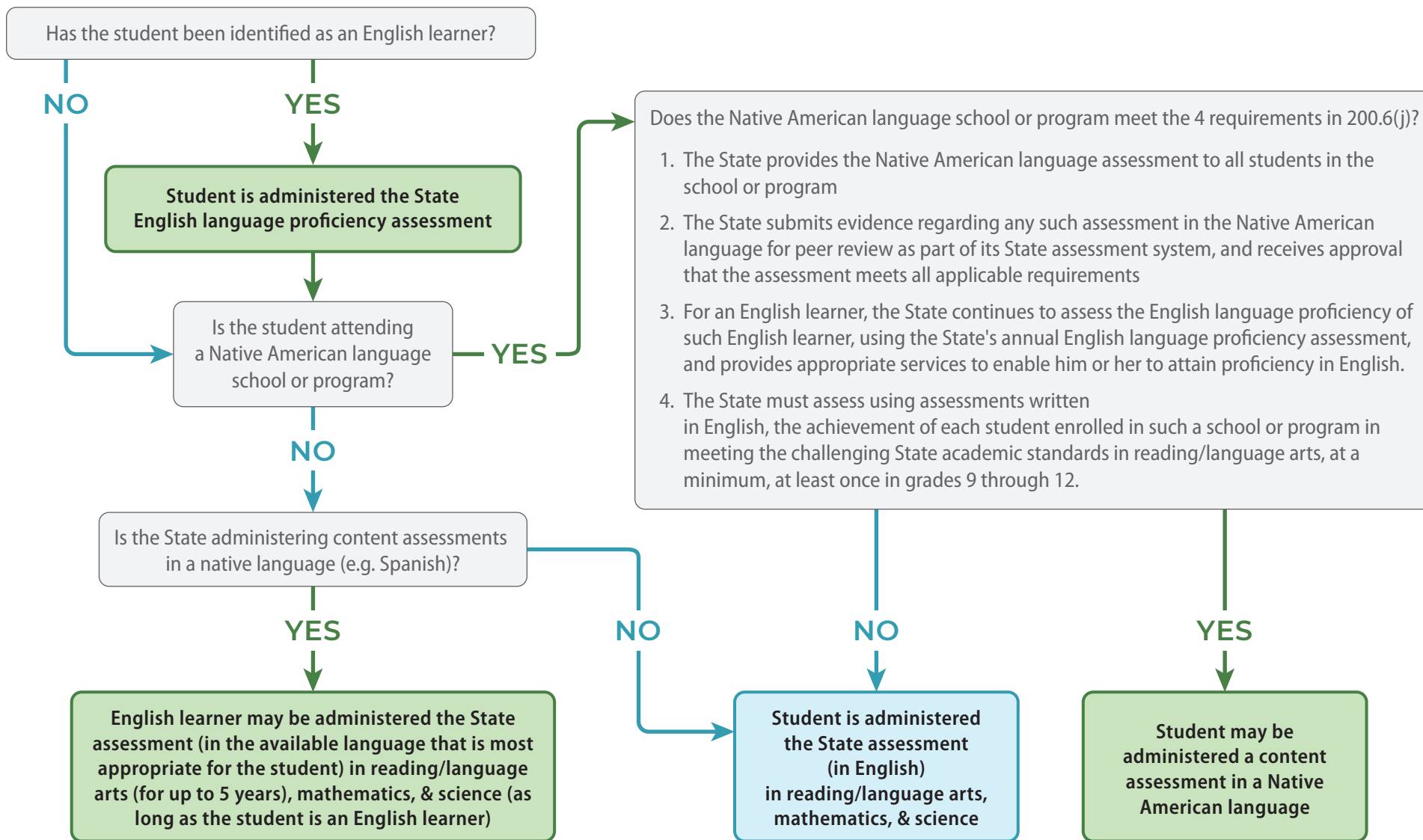
² Content assessments refers to federally-required reading/language arts, mathematics, and science assessments (columns 1 and 2 of the table)

³ See 34 CFR 200.6(j)

⁴ See 34 CFR 200.6(h)(1), ESEA 1111(b)(2)(G)

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F. Administration—Accommodations	<p>Must provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for the participation of all students • appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities • appropriate accommodations for English learners, including assessments in the language and form most likely to yield accurate data on student knowledge and skill, until English learners have achieved English language proficiency • alternate assessment for students with the most significant cognitive 	See Box F1	See Box F1	See Box F1	<p>Must provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities • alternate English language proficiency assessment for English learners with the most significant cognitive disabilities
G. Score Report Requirements	<p>Assessments must produce student-level interpretive, descriptive, and diagnostic reports that provide student achievement information.</p> <p>Results must be disaggregated by district and school, as well as by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • each major racial and ethnic group • economically disadvantaged students, compared to non-economically disadvantaged students • students with disabilities, compared to students without disabilities • English proficiency status • gender • migrant status • status as a homeless child or youth • status as a child in foster care • status as a student with a parent who is a member of the armed forces on active duty or serves on full-time National Guard duty 	See Box G1	See Box G1	See Box G1	

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<p>H. Technical Requirements</p>	<p>Assessments must be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> aligned with the challenging state academic content standards valid, reliable, and fair for the purposes for which they are used consistent with relevant, nationally recognized professional and technical testing standards objective measures of academic achievement, knowledge, and skills supported by evidence, which must be made public, of adequate technical quality for each ESEA-required purpose submitted for peer review 	<p>See Box H1</p>	<p>See Box H1</p>	<p>See Box H1</p>	<p>Assessments must be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> aligned with the state’s English language proficiency standards valid, reliable, and fair for the purposes for which they are used consistent with relevant, nationally recognized professional and technical testing standards supported by evidence, which must be made public, of adequate technical quality for each ESEA-required purpose able to provide coherent and timely information about each student’s attainment of the state’s English language proficiency standards to parents submitted for peer review



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