

**Collaborative for the Alternate Assessment of English Language Proficiency (CAAELP)**

**Abstract**

Iowa, the lead state for the Collaborative for the Alternate Assessment of English Language Proficiency (CAAELP) project, is applying for funding under Title VI, Part A, Subpart I, Section 6112: Enhanced Assessment Instruments. CAAELP includes the states of Arizona, Arkansas, Louisiana, Nebraska, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Washington, and West Virginia. The state partners, along with the National Center on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing at UCLA as project management partner, and experts from leading educational organizations and institutes of higher education propose to design a summative alternate English language proficiency assessment (ALT-ELPA) for those English Learners with Significant Cognitive Disabilities (herein referred to as ELSCDs), which is required by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (2015).

The CAAELP Project meets the following **Absolute Priorities**: Absolute Priority 1 — Developing or improving assessments for English learners, including assessments of English language proficiency; Absolute Priority 3 — Developing or improving assessments for children with disabilities, including alternate assessments aligned to alternate academic achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities; Absolute Priority 4 — Allowing for collaboration with institutions of higher education, other research institutions, or other organizations to improve the quality, validity, and reliability of State academic assessments; and Absolute Priority 6 — Evaluating student academic achievement through the development of comprehensive academic assessment instruments ... that emphasize the mastery of standards and aligned competencies in a competency-based education model.

Many states lack an assessment of ELP for their ELSCDs and therefore are out of compliance with this federal requirement for such an annual assessment. Thus, to help states meet this requirement, CAAELP proposes to design and develop the ALT-ELPA, along with related professional development services intended to lead to improvements in practice among the recipients of those services, and plans for sustaining the assessment program. The ALT-ELPA will be accessible to ELSCDs so that they can fully demonstrate what they know and can do, this assessment will measure students' progress toward ELP, and its outcomes will inform appropriate program placement and targeted instruction for students.

The ALT-ELPA will be based on ELP standards (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2019) that include knowledge and skills derived from the four recognized domains of speaking, listening, reading, and writing and adjusted in terms of depth, breadth, and complexity to be grade-appropriate for ELSCDs (e.g., Quenemoen & Thurlow, 2015). It will include technology-enhanced items and will be delivered online. The digital delivery of ALT-ELPA affords a range of accessibility features and tools to meet students' individual needs. The assessment outcomes aim to inform targeted instruction of ELSCDs. Generally, state partners will gain insights on the meaning and application of information from ALT-ELPA scores to improve instruction of ELSCDs, ensure fidelity of implementation of standards and assessment, and contextualize information to state factors, policies, and practices. The CAAELP project builds local capacity at the state level to provide, improve and expand services for ELSCDs through a number of key ways outlined in this proposal. Through extensive dissemination efforts and our broad-based stakeholder engagement, the CAAELP Project will contribute to a comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning for ELSCDs and support the implementation of alternate ELP standards that the ALT-ELPA will be aligned to.

### **Advancing ALTELLA: Alternate Assessment Redesign**

The Minnesota Department of Education, in collaboration with, and on behalf of the WIDA Consortium at the Wisconsin Center for Education Research at the University of Wisconsin–Madison along with the Texas Education Agency, proposes to develop a redesigned alternate English language proficiency (ELP) assessment for English learners with the most significant cognitive disabilities. This project, known as Advancing ALTELLA: Alternate Assessment Redesign, will leverage the lessons learned from the Alternate English Language Learning Assessment (ALTELLA) enhanced assessment grant as well as the knowledge gained from the six years of the WIDA Consortium’s administration of the Alternate ACCESS assessment. This assessment was given to approximately 25,000 students in the 2017-18 school year across the 39 WIDA states and territories as well as in the state of Washington. This redesigned alternate ELP assessment will be anchored in the most current English language development standards that are aligned with college and career ready standards and are supported by rigorous ongoing research and other instructional supports.

The Advancing ALTELLA project is a collaboration of states and organizations that will build on WIDA’s successful foundation that include (a) a consortium approach in which representatives from all participating states will have an active voice in the design and direction of the project; (b) an assessment use argument approach in which the assessment use claims will drive the development of the assessment; and (c) a “can do” approach that supports educators’ building on students’ assets to develop English proficiency, access grade-level content, and reach language goals that provide access to college, community, and career ready goals for English learners with significant cognitive disabilities.

To accomplish these goals, the proposed project will undertake the following activities:

- (1) Develop an ELP screener for English learners with significant cognitive disabilities;
- (2) Develop an updated annual alternate ELP assessment, including new specifications, new items, and a kindergarten form;
- (3) Create professional development materials to support the implementation and administration of the new and updated assessments;
- (4) Conduct classroom observations, research and evaluation, including psychometric analyses, cognitive labs and technology explorations of item types;
- (5) Disseminate project materials and findings.

This project meets the following Absolute Priorities: **Absolute Priority 1**—Developing models to measure and assess student progress or growth, **Absolute Priority 2**—Developing or improving models to measure and assess student progress or growth, **Absolute Priority 3**—Developing or improving assessments for children with disabilities, **Absolute Priority 4**—Allowing for collaboration, **Absolute Priority 5**—Measuring student academic achievement using multiple measures, and **Absolute Priority 6**—Evaluating student academic achievement through the development of comprehensive academic assessment instruments.

The Advancing ALTELLA: Alternate Assessment Redesign project is a critical next step in promoting equitable educational outcomes for English language learners who have significant cognitive disabilities. The project will provide enhancement in the large-scale summative assessment of the language development of this small, but important and chronically underserved population of students, and it will also provide key insights on the English language growth and development of these students so that educators and Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams can make informed decisions about the student’s English language goals. Furthermore, the products and services developed through this grant will offer educators more knowledge and resources to serve their students and to guide program development and educational policy.

**Evaluating English Language Progress Models:**

**The Sensitivity of Claims about Progress across State Models**

This proposed project addresses Absolute Priority 2: Developing or improving models to measure and assess student progress or student growth on state assessments under section 1111(b)(2) of the ESEA and other assessments not required under section 1111(b)(2) of the ESEA. It is designed to be a research, development, and application project.

**Goal 1: Help states effectively measure English learner growth towards English language proficiency.** The project will examine critical features of English language proficiency (ELP) assessments as they are related to growth models, the variability of results of seven participating states' growth models, the impact of both of ELP cut scores and state expectation of time to achieve ELP among growth models, and the sensitivity of growth models, including the ability to differentiate school performance.

**Goal 2: Help states understand the relationship between English learner progress and EL program implementation.** This project will develop an EL Program Implementation Survey to provide additional validity evidence with respect to growth model and ELP indicator results and to examine how various growth and progress model results inform inferences about school implementation of EL programs.

**Goal 3: Support participating states in improving their own growth models and in using ELP assessment data to inform school improvement efforts.** This project will produce a comprehensive comparative data analysis report of growth model results for participating states to refine analysis methodology, provide recommendations on how states can use the EL Program Implementation Survey to help districts and schools to improve EL programs, and provide

consultation on how to interpret and apply research results in the state context. Each participating state will receive on-site state-specific technical assistance.

**Goal 4: Inform the field’s understanding of effective measures of growth towards English language proficiency and provide resources that states can customize and use.** This project will provide new growth model options and an EL Program Implementation Survey that all states can use as well as resources that show states how to evaluate their own growth models using research results.

This project will result in five meaningful outcomes: (1) Disseminate research findings on existing models of measuring and assessing ELP; (2) Develop new criterion growth models that can improve and broaden the array of accountability modeling options; (3) Produce recommendations on using growth and ELP indicator results effectively to monitor programs for English learners; (4) Disseminate the EL Program Implementation Survey and findings to help states understand how ELP indicator and growth results relate to the EL program implementation that student receive; and (5) Produce a technical report that documents the research design, processes, analysis procedures, findings, and lessons learned.

The project is a collaboration among seven states (Arizona, Arkansas, Michigan, Mississippi, Ohio, Washington, and Wisconsin), the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), the California State University Northridge, the Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST) at the University of California Los Angeles, Com-Link, LLC, and national experts to design and implement the project, produce outcomes, and disseminate resources to all states, researchers, and educators. The seven states serve approximately 462,000 English learners.