

**2013-2014**

**100313**

This fact sheet answers some of the commonly asked questions about accommodations for English Language Learners (ELLs) or Limited English Proficient (LEP) students.

A limited English proficient student (LEP) or English Language Learner (ELL) is one who

1. was not born in the United States or whose native language is other than English and comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant; or
2. is a Native American or Alaska Native who is a native resident of the outlying areas and comes from an environment where a language other than English has had a significant

4. Exited an ESL/bilingual program and in the second year of monitoring.
5. Former English Language Learner and no longer monitored.

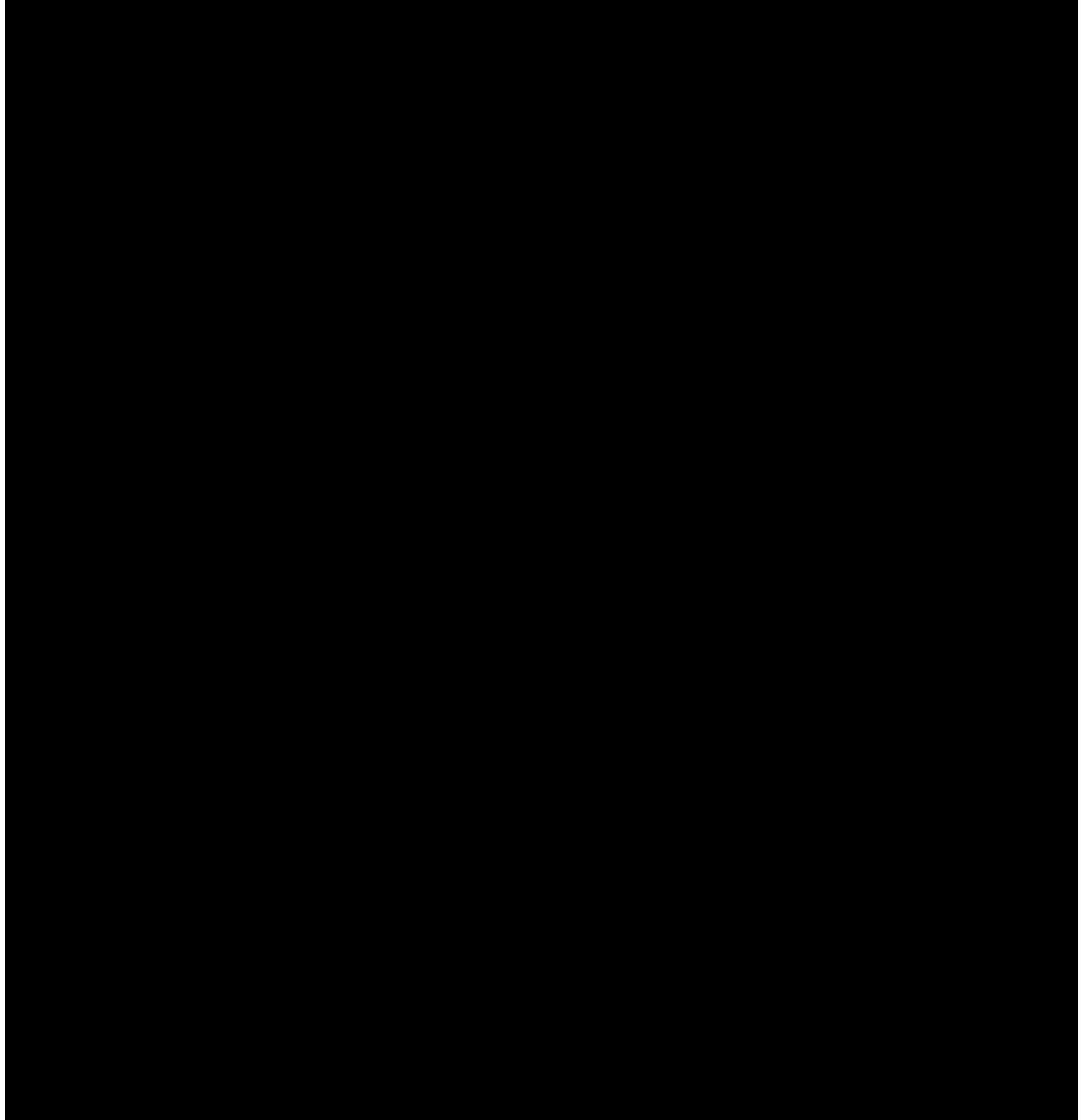
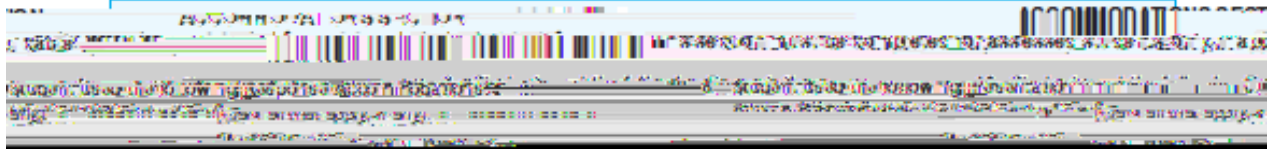
Note that categories 3 and 4 are former ELLs; these exited and monitored students are not part of the group that is administered the ACCESS for ELLs English Proficiency Test.

In 2007 the USDE released guidance on participation of LEP students (ELLs) in state assessments. This flexibility allows ELLs students in their first 12 months of enrollment in U.S. schools an option of taking the Reading PSSA. A student's enrollment in a school in Puer to Rico is not to be considered



Yes. Following the previously discussed exceptions as outlined, eligible ELL's will take the Keystone exams for federal accountability purposes beginning in 2012-2013 and as a graduation requirement effective with the class of 2017.

**FOR SCHOOL PERSONNEL ONLY**





An interpreter works with oral language and a translator works with written language. Another term in use is "sight translator," a person who reads text in one language and renders it into spoken form in another language on the spot. The work that is performed for the PSSA is essentially a *sight translation*. This document uses the word *interpreter* to designate the person who performs the sight translation, translating orally the meaning of the allowable parts and subjects of the PSSA and Keystone Exams and/or clarifying directions, orally, to ELLs. On the allowable parts and subjects of the tests, the interpreter also interprets students' non-English oral responses into written English.

Interpreters may have access to the mathematics and Algebra I tests and the science and Biology tests three days prior to test administration to aid in preparation for translating the assessment. Interpreters may access the assessment only in a secure setting; the assessment may not leave the building and although note-taking is permitted as a translation aid, it is strictly prohibited for the notes to be removed from the building or shared with anyone in a way that would violate the security of the test, and the notes must be securely destroyed after testing has concluded. Interpreters must sign a *Confidentiality Agreement*. Interpreters must be of legal age to sign the *Confidentiality Agreement*. Directions for all assessments are provided to districts prior to the testing window.

Interpreters may work with one student or small groups of students depending on the test setting. They are permitted to:

- Translate the directions on the Writing, Mathematics, Reading, Science, Algebra I, Literature, and Biology exams.
- Translate words or phrases (including test questions) for the Mathematics, Algebra I, Science, and Biology assessments at the students' request.
- Interpret students' non-English oral responses into written English for the Mathematics, Algebra I, Science, and Biology assessments. Interpreters must not change the meaning of the response or make any corrections in the response.
- Translate essay prompts for the Writing assessment.

On the Reading and Literature assessment, only test directions can be translated. Interpreters may not translate any of the reading questions. Interpreters may not translate the reading passage(s).

Interpreters may have access to the assessment only in a secure setting; the assessment may not leave the building and although note-taking is permitted as a translation aid, it is strictly prohibited for the notes to be removed from the building or shared with anyone in a way that would violate the security of the test, and the notes must be securely destroyed after testing has concluded. Interpreters must sign a *Confidentiality Agreement*. Interpreters must be of legal age to sign the *Confidentiality Agreement*. Directions for all assessments are provided to districts prior to the testing window.



Districts should try to provide these accommodations to the extent practicable and to the extent that they are typically used with students during the school year. For a description of these accommodations, see the guidelines available on the PDE website.

Yes, however, the district must certify that the community member is a qualified interpreter through a local process using local criteria and the community member must follow interpreter guidelines as outlined in the above question describing the role of the interpreter.

Community members might need additional training about what is allowable and not allowable on the PSSA and Keystone Exams. It is the district's responsibility to ensure that community members who are deemed qualified interpreters have this training.

Allowing anyone to read aloud any portion of the Reading PSSA or Keystone Literature Exam for ELLs and/or for students with IEPs or 504 plans is controversial because one purpose of the reading test is to ensure that students have the ability to *decode* text. Reading the test aloud, or interpreting the text orally, defeats that purpose.

Another purpose of the Reading and Literature assessments is to determine how well students can understand, or *comprehend*, English passages, including English vocabulary. Translating any portion of the Reading PSSA or Keystone Literature Exam for the student into another language would defeat this purpose.



