Identifying and Supporting English Learners with Disabilities

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Overview

The ever-increasing cultural diversity in Arizona enriches our schools by providing students and teachers opportunities to explore languages, customs, and perspectives that contribute to building an inclusive school community. As we nurture individual students, both their strengths and needs must be considered to ensure that they have the necessary access to academic content and the opportunity to progress and succeed in their educational goals. This document is intended to assist educators as they develop their own local policies and procedures to identify and serve their students who may be English learners, identified for special education services, or both.

When students identified as English learners are being considered for special education services, it is essential that the EL Coordinator and other members of the Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team (MET) gather evidence from multiple sources and consider all possible contributing factors affecting the progress of these students to avoid over or under-identifying them as having an English language need and/or a disability. Sometimes students will have been identified as needing special education services who have not yet been tested with Arizona's English language proficiency test, the AZELLA, or evaluated as second language learners. Child Find often identifies students with special needs during their pre-school years for early interventions. As they enroll in the K-12 system, students with second language indicators (PHLOTE information) must be tested to rule out a need for English language instruction.

The U.S. Department of Education published _Tools and Resources for Addressing English Learners with Disabilities_ in November, 2016. This report is an excellent resource for developing policies and procedures for identifying and serving students who may have both a language need and a disability. Chapter Six lists five key points for addressing the needs of those students who may have both EL and special needs:

KEY POINTS
- LEAs must identify, locate, and evaluate ELs with disabilities in a timely manner.
- LEAs must consider the English language proficiency of ELs with disabilities in determining appropriate assessments and other evaluation materials.
- LEAs must provide and administer special education evaluations in the child's native language, unless it is clearly not feasible to do so, to ensure that a student's language needs can be distinguished from a student's disability-related needs.
- LEAs must not identify or determine that EL students are students with disabilities because of their limited English language proficiency.
- LEAs must provide EL students with disabilities with both the language assistance and disability-related services they are entitled to under federal law.

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance so that English Learner Coordinators, Multidisciplinary Evaluation Teams (MET), Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams, and other educators _together_ can make sound identification and programmatic decisions regarding students who may have an English language need and/or a disability. The manual details strategies that may help educators gather pertinent information and tailor plans to meet the unique needs of these diverse

learners, both during interventions prior to formal evaluation, then as best practice following the identification of those students who qualify as both English learners (ELs) and students with disabilities (SwD).

This document was developed through a collaborative effort consisting of staff from the Arizona Department of Education, research from REL West/WestEd, and guided by the CCSSO English Learners with Disabilities Guide:
https://ccsso.org/resource-library/ccsso-english-learners-disabilities-guide

Federal and State Legislation

While several federal and state laws address aspects of identifying and educating English learners and students with disabilities, the common thread among them includes:

- providing all students with equitable access to educational opportunities;
- maintaining high expectations for learning;
- improved academic outcomes and English language proficiency;
- inclusion of these students in the accountability systems; and
- the importance of parent participation in their child's education, facilitated by engagement using a language they understand.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Equal Educational Opportunities Act ensure that EL students who have or are suspected of having a disability under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 are located, identified, and evaluated in a timely manner and that the language needs of students who require disability-related services are considered in evaluations and delivery of services.

The Title VI regulatory requirements have been interpreted to prohibit denial of equal access to education because of a language minority student's limited proficiency in English.

IDEA

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004 includes guidelines addressing English learners with disabilities. These students are afforded all the rights of other students with disabilities, along with some extra requirements:

- Parents must be informed of their rights in the language they understand.
- Evaluation materials are to be selected and administered by trained, knowledgeable personnel in accordance with instructions, and to be non-discriminatory on a racial or cultural basis. Selected instruments must assess areas of specific educational need, and results must accurately reflect student aptitude or achievement rather than disability or language acquisition needs – unless that is what the test purports to measure.
- Formal evaluations of students suspected of having a disability must be "provided and administered in the language and form most likely to yield accurate information on what the

child knows and can do academically, developmentally, and functionally, unless it is not feasible to so provide or administer" (Section 1414.b.3.A.ii).

Evaluation results are to be used for the purposes for which the assessments or measures are valid and reliable.

Definition of an English Learner
Adopted by both IDEA and ESSA, the term "English learner" refers to an individual:

- who is aged 3 through 21;
- who is enrolled or preparing to enroll in an elementary or secondary school;
- who was not born in the United States or whose native language is a language other than English;
- who is a Native American or Alaska Native, or a native resident of the outlying areas;
- who comes from an environment where a language other than English has had a significant impact on the individual's level of English language proficiency; or
- who is migratory, whose native language is a language other than English, and who comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant; and
- whose difficulties in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language may be sufficient to deny the individual
    - the ability to meet the State's proficient level of achievement on the State assessments;
    - the ability to successfully achieve in classrooms where the language of instruction is English; and
    - the opportunity to participate fully in society.

Title I and III
The purpose of Title I, Part A, is to provide all children with opportunities to receive a fair, equitable, and high-quality education, and to close educational achievement gaps. Requirements include the responsibility to identify, assess, and serve students to accomplish this goal. Title III, Part A identifies state and local responsibilities that will ensure that ELs will have the opportunity to attain English Language Proficiency and develop high levels of academic achievement in English and academic subjects to meet the same challenging state academic standards as all students.

All students who enter schools with a primary or home language other than English, regardless of disability, must be assessed to determine whether they have English language development needs in Listening, Reading, Writing, and Speaking. **This includes the full range of students with disabilities, from high incidence to those with significant cognitive disabilities.** The parents of students who are identified must be notified and informed of their child's English language need, as well as offered the English acquisition services and programs available at the school. In Arizona, students will continue to test annually with AZELLA until they reach English proficiency. Some students with special needs may require supplemental evaluation procedures periodically to compare their English language proficiency to that of a like-peer who is a native English speaker.

Under federal law, a school is not required to adopt any one model of instruction, but the selected Language Instruction Educational Program (LIEP) must ensure educational opportunity for English learners. As designated in the Title III grant application, the program must

- be based on sound education theory and include effective approaches and methodologies for teaching ELs (ESEA Section 3115(a));
- increase the English proficiency of ELs by providing effective language instruction that meets the needs of ELs and demonstrate success in increasing (A) English language proficiency; and (B) student academic achievement (ESEA Section 3115(c)(1));
- assist English learners in meeting challenging State academic standards (ESEA Section 3113(b)(3)(E));
- be adequately supported with qualified staff and adequate resources; and
- be evaluated to determine if the program is achieving the desired results.

Accountability

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), 2015, made several adjustments to existing law, such as the inclusion of English language proficiency standards and assessments and the inclusion of progress in attaining English proficiency as separate components of the Statewide accountability system under Title I. These changes help facilitate a unified Statewide approach to supporting ELs across Title I and Title III, and provide a necessary focus on the nation's growing EL population and the need to secure high-quality services for these students.

ESEA

For accountability purposes under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act**,** Section 3121, a Local Education Agency (LEA) must disaggregate results:
- by English learners with disabilities in reporting the number and percentage of ELs making progress toward English language proficiency;
- and in reporting the number and percentage of former ELs meeting State academic standards for each of the four years after they no longer receive Title III services.

Thus, for each of those data elements, an LEA will report in the aggregate (all ELs, including English learners with disabilities) and report separately on English learners with disabilities.

LEAs are encouraged to consider disaggregating, by English learners with disabilities, additional measures that are required under Title III to be reported to States, including attainment of English language proficiency and the number and percentage of ELs who have not attained proficiency within five years of initial classification as an EL. (See ESEA Section 3121).

Such disaggregation of student performance data may provide valuable information on how different subgroups of ELs are performing.

- These data can inform program improvement and help LEAs and States address gaps in achievement among EL subgroups.
- ELs are a highly diverse student population; disaggregated data can provide a more detailed picture of performance variation among different subgroups of ELs including, but not limited to, English learners with disabilities.

For more information about the legal requirements for accountability pertaining to English learners with disabilities, refer to Section K in this US Department of Education publication.

Arizona Proposition 203

With the passage of Arizona Proposition 203, signed into law in December of 2000, Arizona adopted Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) as its standard model of instruction for English learners. Provisions for bilingual instruction are included in this law that include instruction in a student's native language for students with disabilities. Proposition 203 requires that all classes be taught in English and that pupils who are classified as "English Learners" will be educated through sheltered English immersion programs during a temporary transition period. The Sheltered English Immersion programs will provide nearly all classroom instruction and materials in English but may use a minimal amount of the child's native language when necessary. The temporary transition period for Sheltered English Immersion programs will normally not exceed one year. When an English learner has acquired a good working knowledge of English, that pupil will be transferred to a regular English language classroom.

Proposition 203 allows parents to apply for waivers from participation in English immersion programs if their child already knows English, their child is at least ten years of age, or their child has special needs. If the school grants the waiver, the child will be transferred to classes that teach English and other subjects through traditional bilingual education instruction or other generally recognized educational methods that are permitted by law.

ARS 15-756

In 2006 the Arizona State Legislature passed a set of laws to address the needs of English Learners. These laws provide for identification, assessment, instruction, monitoring, reporting, and funding for English learner students.

Language proficiency must be assessed annually with AZELLA, regardless of whether or not the student is enrolled in an English learner program (ARS 15-756.05). The impact of limited English proficiency on the student's progress in the general curriculum must be considered, documented, and addressed.

Early Intervention and Identification

Process for Identification as an English Learner (EL)

The Arizona English Language Learner Assessment (AZELLA) is the Arizona English language proficiency assessment used to identify students in need of EL services. The AZELLA is used to meet state and federal assessment requirements and assesses the 2011 Arizona English Language Proficiency (ELP) Standards. The assessment provides information regarding the student's level of English language proficiency. Upon first enrollment in an Arizona school, if any of the three questions on the Primary Home Language Other than English (PHLOTE) Home Language Survey form or the school enrollment form are answered indicating a language other than English, the student will be administered an AZELLA Placement Test to determine his or her level of English language proficiency.

The three questions are as follows:

1. What is the primary language used in the home regardless of the language spoken by the student?
2. What is the language most often spoken by the student?
3. What is the language that the student first acquired?

Identified students are administered the AZELLA for initial identification and possible placement. If the students test proficient in English, they are classified as Initial Fluent English Proficient (IFEP) students. Otherwise, they are classified as eligible for EL services. Teachers use the AZELLA student results and ongoing classroom assessments in order to make instructional decisions that differentiate instruction and develop student readiness for instruction in mainstream classrooms. The AZELLA is also used for annual reassessment of EL students to measure progress and to exit them from EL services once they receive an overall proficiency score of "Proficient". These students are then classified as Fluent English Proficient (FEP) students and placed into mainstream classes where they are monitored using district-determined processes and offered compensatory instruction as needed, for at least two years.

Some students who have been reported as having a home language other than English may not score Proficient on the AZELLA due to a previously identified disability, such as blindness, deafness, or a significant cognitive disability. When such circumstances exist, the LEA must notify the ADE AZELLA team that the student is unable to access one or more domains of the assessment. The AZELLA team will provide the Test Administrator with specific guidance for completing the test administration.

Cultural Awareness

The complexities associated with socioeconomic, cultural, and linguistic diversity put many minority students at risk of receiving a substandard education or of not receiving the services to which they are entitled. A State must have policies and procedures designed to prevent incidences of over-identification, under-identification, or disproportionate representation by race or ethnicity in place in order to receive federal funding. To address these conditions, LEAs may employ multiple strategies such as

- school-wide cultural awareness and sensitivity;
- response to intervention (RTI) or multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS);
- culturally appropriate assessment and instruction;
- professional development; and
- home/school collaboration.

This comprehensive approach helps uncover the contributing factors to over or under-identification of ELs as having disabilities, indicating the need for policy and practice adjustments.

Strategies for Early Intervention

There is no specific amount of time a teacher must wait before referring a child for a comprehensive evaluation; however, prior to referral, fully-representative teams must assemble a body of evidence consisting of methods, strategies, and interventions that have been employed to address the student's lack of progress. This evidence must demonstrate that the student has had every opportunity to learn academic content while also becoming proficient in English.

Methods of gathering information may include evidence collected through:

- MTSS/RTI Supports
  - Tiered systems that provide targeted interventions and carefully monitor student progress by examining ongoing data and intensifying supports as needed.
  - Each tier should address aspects of both language and academic development.
- Universal Design for Learning
  - Instructional design intentionally planned to include varied presentation, response, and engagement options that ensure access for a range of student needs and interests, including language considerations.
- The Formative Assessment Process
  - Embedded in instruction, these are ongoing opportunities to assess student understandings and respond in real time to address gaps or misconceptions, keeping learning moving forward on the trajectory toward the learning targets.
- Evidence gathered from a variety of sources, including progress and current proficiency in acquiring English, anecdotal notes and classroom assessment results, efforts made to provide culturally-responsive instruction, and parent input. Rule out factors such as the student's physical health, prior and current opportunity to learn, language, home environment, and economic circumstance as primary contributors to the student's academic difficulties prior to referral.

Referral for Special Education Evaluation/Eligibility Determination

Parent permission is not required to administer the AZELLA to a student whose enrollment or PHLOTE form indicates a language other than English on any of the questions on the Home Language Survey. However, permission is required to evaluate a student for a possible disability. The parent(s) must fully understand the evaluation process, including their role and rights in agreeing to the procedures. In addition, they must understand who will have access to the information gathered, and how the information will be used and stored. If, during the process of evaluation, the team determines that additional information is necessary to make an eligibility determination, the parent(s) must provide informed consent prior to any action being taken to that end. Notice and procedural safeguards must be provided to the parent(s) in their native language (or other mode of communication used by the parent), with terminology clearly defined to ensure transparency. If translators are required for parent participation, the provision should be documented in the MET, with the interpreter signing the documents as such. Best practice suggests that translators should be trained in special education regulations and procedures, English learner programming and supports, and be able to interpret both the language and aspects of culture to ensure thorough understandings for all team members.

  - Parents may revoke consent at any time in the evaluation process. Any information collected to the point of revocation remains as part of the student record.

Assembling a Body of Evidence

Parents' Role:

Parents play a vital part in the evaluation process, contributing important historical information about the student as well as descriptions of how the student functions in life activities outside of

school. They may compare the developmental milestones of the student to those of older siblings, detail areas of frustration, share student interests, and provide pertinent information about the family's customs and culture. Gather as much information on the student's language use history as possible, establishing the first language learned, the language most often spoken in the home, what other languages may be spoken in the home and by whom, if there was preschool experience, and the language(s) used by the student.

Additional Sources

"Like Peer" Comparisons:
Monitoring student progress in comparison to English learners with similar background and English language proficiency (ELP) levels helps teams differentiate between language acquisition and disability issues.

Review of Existing Data:
The team of experts comes together to present the evidence they have collected as part of the intervention processes, including the student's current English language proficiency, academic, social, and functional performance.

Beyond scores obtained through evaluation instruments, observations in various settings and a compilation of teacher notes offer valuable insights into the student's current command of English and academic content.

Evaluate Proficiency in All of the Student's Languages:
Determine the student's levels of receptive and productive language in all languages the student is exposed to.

Taken together, such contributions offer perspective and balance as the team considers how these factors may influence learning.

Evaluation Procedures

Obtaining valid and reliable information to determine whether an English learner has a disability requires careful consideration of the tools and procedures to be used. Evaluation instruments appropriate to the population:

- have been normed on a similar population,
- are free of cultural bias (evaluated for language, cultural load, etc.),
- are administered in the language and form most likely to yield accurate information on what the child knows and can do academically, developmentally, and functionally, and
- are administered by a qualified evaluator, preferably one fluent in the student's dominant language.
    - If an interpreter is necessary, teams should ensure that the interpreter is properly informed as to the purpose of the assessment and trained to convey information appropriately to ensure the integrity of the results. Consult the assessment manual for guidance when using an interpreter to ensure that results can be interpreted as valid. Any adaptations used during assessment should be documented in the MET report.
- To help determine whether the student has a disability, best practice calls for comparison of language proficiency in English to that of the student's native language in the areas of reading,

writing, listening, and speaking. A student with a disability will likely have deficiencies in both languages. For students who are not proficient in any language, assess in the language most frequently heard by the student, assess in multiple languages, or use a non-verbal instrument if appropriately normed and validated for this purpose.

- It's important to evaluate the "whole child" in this process, not solely academic and language status. Aspects of developmental and academic history including attendance, the student's personality traits and interests, behaviors, medical background, and cultural factors must be considered to fully understand the student's strengths and needs.

Documentation

- As all sources of information about the student are compiled and reviewed, the Multi-Disciplinary Evaluation Team (MET) documents findings and decides, based on the evidence, whether the student has a disability, a language need, or both.   If the student meets the criteria for disability, it must be determined whether and to what extent that disability is impacting access to and the ability to progress in the general curriculum. When such impact exists, it must then be decided which special education and related services are needed to address the effects of the disability.
    - o In making this determination, the MET provides assurances that learning difficulties are not primarily the result of lack of academic support, limited English proficiency, cultural factors, or other background characteristics. It's important to remember that disabilities are not language-specific. If the student is found to have a disability in English, that same disability should be evident in the student's first language as well. As part of the decision-making, parents should be informed of any implications the determination of disability may have on their child in school programming, meeting graduation requirements, and successful transitioning to adult life activities.

- When the findings indicate a disability, the next step for the team is to develop an Individualized Education Program (IEP) addressing the specific needs of the student. For a student who is both an English learner and a student with disabilities, the IEP present levels of academic and functional performance (PLAAFP) should detail how language development impacts the student's progress in the general curriculum and address programming and goals for both language and disability-related needs. Prior to implementing the IEP, a Prior Written Notice (PWN) is required to be provided to parents explaining the decision(s) of the team and what the local education agency (LEA) proposes or refuses to provide along with a description of why.
- Evaluation results may indicate that the student does not have a disability. EL students who do not meet the criteria for receiving special education services but are struggling academically may have those needs met in a tiered support system. Instruction is guided by ongoing data analysis, intensifying and varying methodologies as needed, to improve academic achievement. English Learner Coordinators in collaboration with the school's academic support teams share the responsibility for programmatic decisions and monitoring.

IEP Development and Programming Decisions

IEP Team members essential to addressing *all aspects* of the student's programming contribute to the present levels of academic and functional performance (PLAAFP) section of the IEP. Members may include related service providers and others who have or will be working with the student to ensure that all have opportunity for input, and that programmatic decisions are shared among team members. Contributions may be based on observations, testing, or interviews with the student or parent(s).

IEP team members must have expertise in the variety of areas necessary to identify the strengths and address the needs of the student. For students with dual labels, the IEP team must include persons with knowledge of the English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS) and expertise in addressing English language acquisition. In addition, the IEP development must be informed by those with knowledge of the demands of the academic standards and who may offer strategies that help make academic content accessible for students with disabilities.

The Importance of Collaboration

Coordination of services is critical, particularly when the student is both an English learner as well as student with a disability. Planning when and where services will take place, and co-planning to ensure that programming addresses student needs in a comprehensive and cohesive manner is critical to the success of the student. Plans must establish ambitious yet realistic goals, monitor progress in both language development and academic areas, and consider all aspects of accessibility, including language needs.

Provision of Services

Both EL and SPED services are required by federal law (Dear Colleague Letter, 2015) for EL students identified as having a disability:

- IEP academic goals must be aligned with ELP objectives.
- techniques and strategies used should be based on established best practice, monitored and adjusted for effectiveness.

Qualified Personnel

Under IDEA, States and LEAs must establish and maintain qualifications to ensure that personnel working with students with disabilities are appropriately trained, including the content knowledge and specific skills to serve children with disabilities. These requirements apply to personnel serving English learners with disabilities.

Models of Structured English Immersion

In Arizona, Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) was adopted as the standard model of instruction for identified English learners (ELs). The structure of the SEI Models consists of multiple elements:

- SEI classroom content,
- SEI classroom program entry and exit,
- student grouping for SEI Classrooms,
- scheduling and time allocations,

- and teacher qualification requirements.

When the numbers of English learners in a school population are not sufficient to create SEI classrooms, educator teams develop an Individual Language Learner Plan (ILLP).

For students who have dual labels (English learners with disabilities), the Individualized Education Program (IEP) details the range of student needs, including those of language acquisition, with the goal of holding these students to the same high standards as native English-speaking students. The IEP will describe the student's present levels of performance in both language and academic areas, then specify the programming necessary to meet the student's specific needs. (See page 29 of Dear Colleague, 2015)

Based on ARS 15-753, students with special needs are eligible for bilingual services. Assessment in the student's native language is a critical component of the evaluation process. It is an acceptable practice in Arizona for the IEP Team to determine that instruction may include the student's native language. Whatever program is provided, instruction must meet the same standards for high quality instruction based on the achievement and ELP Standards as would be provided in English.

In addition to explicit programming based on Arizona's English Proficiency Standards, the following techniques and strategies for working across settings with students with disabilities have been shown to be effective with EL students who have disabilities:

- Ensure that questioning and feedback to the student are comprehensible
- Allow sufficient wait time for processing
- Offer scaffolding as necessary, both for language and academic content
- Create thematic units
- Use both formal and informal English throughout the day
- Employ discovery and cooperative learning to foster interactions
- Encourage active participation, providing a means for all language levels to engage
- Use the current vocabulary of the culture (terms students are more familiar with through peer and family interactions)
- Use visuals and graphic organizers to reinforce concepts or new vocabulary
- Embed new vocabulary in context to develop a deep understanding of both terms and concepts
- Plan sufficient practice, intentionally using new vocabulary in discussion of content area topics
- Maintain a portfolio of student products over time to demonstrate growth in various areas
- Understand what the student brings to the lesson in terms of background knowledge, interests, and culture; plan accordingly
- Plan plenty of opportunities for EL students to engage with teachers and peers using oral language to develop these skills
- Find ways to incorporate culture and the student's personal experiences to make learning relevant
- Develop an awareness of how personal expectations of students, based on one's own cultural norms, may impact interactions with students; adjust accordingly
- Establish routines and structure to provide stability
- Share clear learning goals along with criteria for success
- Maintain a constructivist view, believing that all students can learn

Visit the NCEO website for more techniques.

Addressing Student Needs Across Settings

As the IEP team develops goals to address the student's needs, they must consider the impacts that both the disability and the developing language have on the student's ability to fully engage throughout the day. A particular setting or task may require unique accommodations or modifications, and these should be monitored for effectiveness as changes to language proficiency or academic progress evolve over time.

Classroom and School Culture

Culturally responsive teaching requires planning for instruction that includes the culture, customs, and deference to the language of the student. By couching instruction in this manner, students are better able to utilize prior knowledge and make necessary connections to advance their learning. Further, recognizing and embracing cultural and language differences creates a welcoming, non-threatening learning environment that is conducive to learning. This approach also extends to any interactions with family members. By honoring their culture, families feel valued and understood in their school and community. Family input is particularly important when the student has a disability that may impede the child's ability to organize and express thoughts and needs clearly. For these students, teachers must rely on the family to inform their understanding of the "whole child" in order to work with them effectively.

Students Withdrawn from EL Services at Parent Request

These students are still considered ELs and must have their language needs addressed by the SEI-endorsed special education teacher or other qualified personnel as designated in the IEP. Language needs will be detailed in the IEP, and the student will continue to be assessed on AZELLA annually to ensure that progress is being made in language acquisition.

Assessing English Language Learners with Disabilities

Please refer to Arizona's Accommodations Guidelines manual for detailed information on assessment accommodation policies.

Assessing English Language Proficiency

The English learner assessment in Arizona is known as AZELLA. All students who enter school with a primary or home language other than English indicated on their enrollment forms (known as students who have a Primary Home Language Other Than English [PHLOTE]) must be tested to determine whether there are English language development needs. **This includes the range of students with disabilities, from high incidence to those with significant cognitive disabilities. All qualifying students must be initially tested, then reassessed with AZELLA annually until they reach proficiency.**

AZELLA is a standards-based assessment that measures a student's English language proficiency based on the Arizona English Language Proficiency Standards. AZELLA meets both state and federal requirements in assessing the language proficiency of students identified as second language learners. It is used to determine student placement for appropriate English language instruction as well as for periodic reassessment purposes. The Test Administration Directions (TAD) that accompany each form of the AZELLA provide guidance and scripted directions to ensure a standardized administration of the assessment.

The following AZELLA **Universal Test Administration Conditions,** separated into tables by stages, may be offered to **any student** to provide him/her with a comfortable, distraction-free environment during testing:

Universal Test Administration Conditions – Stages I and II, Paper and Pencil Administrations
Universal Test Administration Conditions Include: • Testing in a small group, one-on-one, or in a separate location (e.g., another room, or in a study carrel) • Being seated in a specific location within the testing room, or being seated at special furniture • Having the test administered by a familiar Test Administrator • Using a special pencil or grip • Using devices (e.g., glasses, contacts, magnification, special lighting, color overlays) that allow the student to see the test • Using devices (e.g., hearing aids, amplification apparatus) that allow the student to hear the test administration • Wearing noise buffers after the scripted directions have been read (for the Reading and Writing sections) • Repeating scripted directions from the *Test Administration Directions* as needed • Answering questions about the scripted directions from the *Test Administration Directions* and/or the directions that the students read on their own as needed

Universal Test Administration Conditions – Stages III Through V, Online Administrations

Universal Test Administration Conditions Include:

- Testing in a small group, one-on-one, or in a separate location (e.g., another room, or in a study carrel)
- Being seated in a specific location within the testing room, or being seated at special furniture
- Having the test administered by a familiar Test Administrator
- Using a special pencil or grip
- Using devices or online tools (e.g., glasses, contacts, magnification, special lighting, color overlays or contrast, line reader) that allow the student to see the test
- Using TestNav tools that are universally available to all students during testing, or those that can be set prior to the testing day (e.g., color contrast, line reader mask, answer masking, and the magnification tool)
- Using devices or online tools (e.g., hearing aids, amplification apparatus) that allow the student to hear the test administration
- Wearing noise buffers after the scripted directions have been read (for the Reading and Writing sections)
- Repeating scripted directions from the *Test Administration Directions* as needed
- Answering questions about the scripted directions from the *Test Administration Directions* and/or the directions that the students read on their own as needed

Students who are unable to respond due to an injury may receive additional considerations. Contact AZELLA@azed.gov for further information.

AZELLA Assessment Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Students with both EL and SPED needs are required to make an earnest attempt at all the domains tested. When a student has a disability that precludes assessment in one or more of the AZELLA domains because there are no appropriate accommodations to address access issues, the AZELLA District Test Coordinator must contact the AZELLA team at ADE to discuss options. The conditions of AZELLA participation should be documented in the student's IEP as:

[Student's Name] will not participate in the _____ AZELLA sub-test domain because the student's disability precludes assessment in this domain and there are no appropriate accommodations.

[Student's Name] will participate and make an earnest attempt at the _____ AZELLA sub-test domains.

Once a student has been identified as an EL, annual reassessment is required until the student obtains an overall proficiency score of "Proficient" on the AZELLA. The nature and purpose for the AZELLA assessment differs from Arizona's achievement tests, and accommodations specific to this assessment are afforded students with disabilities as needed and documented in their IEPs to access the assessment content and produce results that can be interpreted as valid.

Students with disabilities are those with special needs who have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) as determined by the Individual with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA) or a 504 Plan as determined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). AZELLA's accommodations are changes in the presentation (e.g., read the extended writing prompts aloud) and/or the response options (e.g., scribe assisting with bubbling answers) in the administration of the assessment that **do not alter the item and what is being measured**, but still allow students to demonstrate their proficiency in English. The "Universal Test Administration Conditions" detailed above are available to all students and may also be included in a student's IEP or 504 Plan. The following AZELLA Test Accommodations for Students with Disabilities are only available to those students who have a current IEP or 504 Plan.

To maintain the validity and reliability of the AZELLA test, the use of scribes for the extended writing responses is **not** permitted. The use of a scribe would require a student to "spell-out" everything that is to be written without the test administrator or scribe providing any input or additional directions. This same practice would have to occur in regular instruction as well. There is a natural tendency for adults to write the words correctly and use correct English grammar structure; however, for assessment purposes this may not be done without violating the construct(s) being assessed.

A dually enrolled (SPED and EL) student who has a current IEP that states the student may use assistive technologies may do so for the **extended Writing portion** of the Writing sub-test domain of the AZELLA Reassessment Test. The student may use assistive technologies with **spell check, grammar check, proofing, automatic capitalization – paragraphing - and spacing, and predict ahead functions turned OFF**. The qualified Test Administrator must copy the student's responses **EXACTLY** as written (e.g. capitalization, punctuation, spelling, symbols, paragraphing, words per line, spacing, etc.) to the test book/answer document, then into the testing platform Writing Part 2 unit (Stages III through V only).

The IEP must clearly indicate that *the student will use assistive technologies for the extended writing responses on the AZELLA Writing Test with* **spell check, grammar check, proofing, automatic capitalization – paragraphing - and spacing, and predict ahead functions turned OFF**.

AZELLA Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Paper-and-Pencil Testing (Stages I – II and Special Paper Version)

Accommodations are listed by Domain (L=Listening, R=Reading, W=Writing, S=Speaking)

Accommodation	Acceptable	Not Acceptable or Not Applicable
Allow frequent breaks	L, R, W	S
Allow a scribe to assist in bubbling answers for multiple-choice items	L, R, W	S
Allow the use of assistive technology* for the extended writing prompt response with spell check, grammar check, and word prediction functions turned off *Contact AZELLA@azed.gov before providing this accommodation.* *** Speech-to-text is prohibited**	W	L, R, S
Allow the enlargement of test material *Contact AZELLA@azed.gov before providing this accommodation.*	L, R, W, S	
Allow the test to be administered over more than 5 days *Contact AZELLA@azed.gov before providing this accommodation.*	L, R, W	S

The translation of the test by the Test Administrator into another language is not allowed. The use of dictionaries, word lists, or glossaries is not allowed in the administration of the AZELLA. Some students may be provided with accommodations during instruction that are not appropriate for use during a standardized state assessment. Accommodations not listed above, routinely provided to students during classroom instruction or for classroom assessments based on an IEP or 504 Plan, must be approved by ADE prior to their use during AZELLA administration. Send email questions to AZELLA@azed.gov regarding the administration of the AZELLA to students with disabilities.

AZELLA Accommodations for Students with Disabilities
Online Testing (Stages III – V)

Accommodations are listed by Domain (L=Listening, R=Reading, W=Writing, S=Speaking)

Accommodation	Acceptable	Not Acceptable or Not Applicable
Allow frequent breaks	L, R, W, S	
Allow a scribe to assist in clicking on the student's selected answer choice for multiple-choice items	L, R, W	S
Allow the Test Administrator to read the prompts aloud, as needed	W	L, R, S
Allow the use of assistive technology* for the extended-writing prompt response with spell check, grammar check, and word prediction functions turned off *Contact AZELLA@azed.gov before providing this accommodation.* ***Speech-to-Text is prohibited.**	W	L, R, S
Allow the use of Special Paper Version (SPV) tests or Large Print SPV tests. *Contact AZELLA@azed.gov for approval and instructions for obtaining SPV materials.*	L, R, W, S	
Allow the test to be administered over more than 5 days *Contact AZELLA@azed.gov before providing this accommodation.*	L, R, W, S	

The translation of the test by the Test Administrator into another language is not allowed. The use of dictionaries, word lists, or glossaries is not allowed in the administration of the AZELLA. Some students may be provided with accommodations during instruction that are not appropriate for use during a standardized state assessment. Accommodations not listed above, routinely provided to students during classroom instruction or for classroom assessments based on an IEP or 504 Plan, must be approved by ADE prior to their use during AZELLA administration. Send email questions to AZELLA@azed.gov regarding the administration of the AZELLA to students with disabilities.

Achievement Testing

Procedures for administering achievement tests must be followed precisely as directed to obtain results that can be interpreted as valid and reliable. Only those accommodations detailed in the charts below or features/tools embedded within the assessments are permitted. Please call or email the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) Assessment Unit with questions pertaining to achievement test administrations (602-542-5031; AzM2@azed.gov or AssessingSWDs@azed.gov)

AzM2 and AIMS Science

- AzM2 is administered annually to Arizona students in grades 3 through 8 and high school to measure proficiency in both English language arts and math. AIMS Science is administered annually in grades 4, 8, and high school.
- Accessibility to AzM2 and AIMS Science assessments is enhanced by the many features and tools available to all students on both computer-based and paper-based assessments. ELs and students with disabilities may choose to utilize these as well as any approved testing accommodations identified in their individual plans.

Most English language learners with disabilities will be included in these achievement assessments and, if needed, provided with accommodations specific to their needs to access and participate in these assessments.

Accommodations for English Learners (ELs) and Fluent English Proficient (FEP) Students

For an English learner (EL), accommodations are intended to allow the student the opportunity to demonstrate content knowledge even though the student may not be functioning at grade level in English. Students who are not proficient in English, as determined by the Arizona English Language Learner Assessment (AZELLA), may use, as appropriate, any of the Universal Test Administration Conditions and any of the EL accommodations. (This includes EL students withdrawn from English language services at parent request.)

If an EL or FEP student requires an accommodation that is not listed, contact ADE for guidance.

Reclassified Fluent English Proficient (FEP) students are monitored for two school years. These FEP Year 1 and FEP Year 2 students may use, as appropriate, any of the Universal Test Administration Conditions and any of the EL accommodations below. IEP teams may document any of the following as testing accommodations, provided that they have been used regularly in instruction throughout the year:

Test Session	Accommodation	Additional Information
All Test Sessions	**Simplified Directions** – The Test Administrator may provide verbal directions in simplified English for the scripted directions from the *Test Administration Directions* manual. This must take place in a setting that does not disturb other students.	No test content or directions may be simplified.
All Test Sessions	**Translate Directions –** Exact oral translation, in the student's native language, of the scripted directions from the *Test Administration Directions* manual are permitted.	No test content or directions may be translated.

Test Session(s)	Accommodation	Additional Information
	Not Permitted: • Translations that paraphrase, simplify, or clarify directions • Written translations • Translation of the test content	
All Test Sessions	**Translation Dictionary** – During testing, students may use the word-for-word published paper translation dictionary that is used regularly for classroom instruction.	

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If a student with an IEP/504 plan requires an accommodation not listed, contact ADE for guidance.

Test Session(s)	Accommodation	Additional Information
Mathematics	**Abacus** – Students may use an abacus without restrictions for any Math test or a talking calculator for students taking Part 1 of the 7th or 8th grade Math test or any part of the 10th grade Math test.	
Science ELA Part 1, 2 Mathematics	**Adult Transcription** – A student who requires one-on-one adult assistance during daily instruction may orally dictate or use gestures to indicate a selected response while an adult enters this in the test. The adult may not ask or answer any questions during the session or influence student responses in any way.	<u>May not</u> be used for the Writing portion of ELA.
ELA Part 1, 2	**ASL and Closed Captioning** – Available for the listening items on the Reading portion of the computer-based ELA test.	
All Test Sessions	**Braille Test Booklet** – Provide a paper Braille test booklet. Also requires Adult Transcription into the Data Entry Interface (DEI).	Braille tests must be ordered and approved through the test interface.
All Test Sessions	**Large Print Test Booklet** **CBT** – Students may either increase default zoom settings (up to 3x) or use Zoom Text when the student participates in CBT or provide a PBT Large Print test booklet. A PBT Large Print test booklet requires Adult Transcription into the Data Entry Interface (DEI). **PBT** – Provide a Large Print test booklet. This accommodation also requires Adult Transcription into the Data Entry Interface (DEI).	Large Print tests must be ordered and approved through the test interface. A screenshot of the IEP language may be required for approval.

All Test Sessions	**Paper Test Booklet CBT** – Provide a regular-sized paper test booklet for a student at a school administering the CBT. This accommodation may only be used for students who are unable, due to the disability, to access instructional and testing material on a computer during the school year and must be documented in the IEP or 504 Plan. If a paper test booklet is ordered as an accommodation for a student at a CBT school, the student must use the paper test booklet and may not participate in computer-based testing. This accommodation also requires Adult Transcription into the Data Entry Interface (DEI).	Regular-sized paper tests for CBT schools must be ordered and approved through the test interface. A screenshot of the IEP language may be required for approval.

	Rest/Breaks – Individual students may take short breaks during testing sessions to rest.
	      PBT - Test Administrator must collect paper test booklet document
	      CBT - Test must be in "Pause" status	

Science Writing Mathematics	**Sign Test Content** – Any student who requires signing of content during daily instruction may have any of the content of Writing, Mathematics, and Science signed.	Signing the content of the Reading portion of the ELA test is prohibited.
All Test Sessions	**Simplified Directions** – The Test Administrator may provide verbal directions in simplified English for the scripted directions from the *Test Administration Directions* manual.	

Writing	**Technology Use for Paper-Based Testing** – Use of a tablet, laptop, or workstation for the writing response and/or open response items is permitted for PBT students with an IEP or 504 Plan. Grammar check, spell check, encyclopedia, word predictive functions, and internet access must be turned off.
	   o The student must type the response.
	   o An adult must transfer the student's response exactly as written into the PBT test booklet.
	   o Any print copy must be shredded. Any electronic copy must be deleted.
		Speech-to-Text is not permitted.

Arizona's Alternate Assessments

Nationwide, students with significant cognitive disabilities account for approximately 1% of the student population. Some English language learners with disabilities may meet the qualifications for Arizona's alternate assessments, known as MSAA for ELA and math, and AIMS A Science. These online assessments are designed to measure student knowledge and skills based on alternate achievement standards. The Alternate Assessments are administered in a 1:1 setting.

Accommodations and supports are embedded within the items on both MSAA and AIMS A Science. The following tables address additional testing accommodations that may be documented by the IEP team if needed to access the assessments. Questions about qualification for the alternate assessments or

administration procedures may be directed to the Alternate Assessment Inbox (AssessingSWDs@azed.gov) or by calling 602-542-5031.

MSAA Testing Accommodations	
Assistive Technology	Students may use assistive technology devices for viewing, responding to, or interacting with the test. The student and the TA should use the AT device with the sample items to ensure it functions properly with the MSAA Online Assessment System. Refer to the MSAA Online Assessment System User Guide for Test Administrators for information about compatibility of the MSAA Online Assessment System with assessment features.
Paper Version	A paper version of the test may be downloaded and printed from the MSAA Online Assessment System in PDF format. After testing, all printed assessment materials must be given to the TC for secure shredding, and all downloaded files must be deleted from any computer or laptop used for testing. A TA may record student responses for all or part of the test, including the writing prompt. Anyone performing as a scribe for the student must read and follow the MSAA Scribe Accommodation Protocol in Appendix A of the TAM. Here are three ways a scribe can support the student's independence during testing: • A student is able to use a mouse to select a response to the selected response items but cannot use the keyboard to type a response to the writing prompt. In this case, the scribe can type the student's writing response, but may not need to help with any other part of the test. • A student is able to use the mouse but becomes physically fatigued easily. The scribe can select the response the student indicates as needed. The scribe can assist with recording and typing the student's writing response. • A student is able to complete the Paper Version of the test that the TA printed. The TA enters the student's responses into the MSAA Online Assessment System when the student has completed the test, after each testing session, or after several items are completed. Note: All student responses must be entered for Session 1 before an assignment in Session 2 may be determined.
Sign Language	For students who use American Sign Language (ASL), Pidgin Sign English (PSE), or Sign Exact English (SEE), the TA may translate passages, items, answer options, and directions. Review the vocabulary lists for ELA and Mathematics to determine which words the student may need practice with prior to testing. Required Documents: It is important to adhere to the Sign Language Protocol in Appendix C of the TAM as it will help signers avoid cueing the student.

AIMS A Science Testing Features, Tools, and Accommodations		
Time/Setting	**Presentation**	**Response**
Testing over multiple days	Oral reading by Test Administrator	Augmentative devices or other Assistive Technology
Extended time	Large print or magnification device	Adaptive calculators
Multiple or frequent breaks	Sign language	Number or alphabet lines
Change in schedule	Tactile graphics	Manipulatives
One-on-one or small group	Manipulatives	Visual/verbal/physical cues
Noise buffers	Audio amplification devices	
Adjusted lighting	Visual/verbal/physical cues	