

## Eligibility for ELL Accommodations and Exemptions

Students eligible for English Language Learner (ELL) accommodations and exemptions on state tests (ISAT, PSAE, and IAA) are students who:

1. Have been properly identified as having limited English proficiency (LEP) using
  - Home Language Survey results, *and*
  - Placement Test results (W-APT), *or*
  - ACCESS for ELLs™ results (an overall composite proficiency level below 4.8 and/or a literacy composite proficiency level below 4.2),<sup>1</sup>

**And**

2. Have been *eligible* for ELL support services for less than five years (excluding pre-K and Kindergarten),<sup>2</sup>

**And**

3. Do not possess sufficient literacy skills in English to participate meaningfully in ISAT or PSAE without ELL accommodations.

Students for whom a district elects to provide ELL support even though they are not considered by the State of Illinois to have LEP are not eligible for ELL accommodations or exemptions for any state test.

## Accommodations for ELLs

Accommodations for ELLs on the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) and the Prairie State Achievement Examination (PSAE) are available for all tested subject areas. However, provisions and restrictions surrounding these accommodations vary from test to test and subject to subject. District and school officials should become thoroughly familiar with state policies regarding ELL accommodations before selecting and implementing them.

Regarding the Illinois Alternate Assessment (IAA), all applicable accommodations should be specified in the student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP). While the exemptions for ELLs (described below) apply, there are no additional state testing accommodations for IAA-eligible students who are also ELLs.

## Exemption for ELLs

Eligible ELLs may be excused from state accountability testing (i.e., ISAT, PSAE, or IAA) either generally or in the specific subject areas of reading and writing.<sup>3</sup> Exemptions may be found at 105 ILCS 5/2-3.64(c), 23 Ill. Adm. Code 1.30 (a)(4)(A), and 23 Ill. Adm. Code 1.50(b). Visit [http://isbe.net/sis/pdf/not\\_testing.pdf](http://isbe.net/sis/pdf/not_testing.pdf) for "Reasons for Not Testing" definitions of these exemptions.

### Reading Exemption

An ELL student who has attended school in the U.S. for less than one year, as of the beginning of the regular, state testing window, for the assessment that the student would normally take, may be excused from the state reading assessment for one cycle.<sup>4</sup>

For students who have been continuously enrolled since they began attending U.S. schools, their eligibility depends upon their date of enrollment.

- For ISAT, an ELL student who first enrolled in a U.S. school *after* March 4, 2011 may be excused from the ISAT Reading Assessment.
- For PSAE, an ELL student who first enrolled in a U.S. school *after* April 23, 2011 may be excused from the PSAE reading components - the ACT Reading (on PSAE Day 1) and the Work Keys *Reading for Information* (on PSAE Day 2).<sup>5</sup>
- For IAA, an ELL student who first enrolled in a U.S. school *after* February 19, 2011 may be excused from the IAA Reading Assessment.

For students who have *not* been continuously enrolled since they began attending U.S. schools, due to temporarily leaving the country, eligibility depends upon the cumulative length of attendance in U.S. schools they have experienced. If the cumulative attendance in U.S. schools is less than the equivalent of one academic year (as defined by the district) the student qualifies for the Reading Assessment exemption. However, in no case may a student be given the state Reading Assessment exemption more than one time. Districts should make a reasonable effort to determine the extent of attendance a student has had in U.S. schools (both inside and outside of Illinois), and whether the student has ever been given this exemption.

### Writing Exemption<sup>3</sup>

Students who meet the LEP eligibility requirements above are not required to participate in the writing portions of ISAT, PSAE,<sup>6</sup> or IAA. They satisfy the state writing requirement through the ACCESS Writing Test. Failing to participate in the ACCESS Writing Test does not require participation in another state writing assessment.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Scores from any standard ACCESS administration, including those from other states and non-public schools, supersede placement test results.

<sup>2</sup> A student initially identified as having LEP in pre-K or Kindergarten is eligible for ELL accommodations through grade 5. Students not receiving language support program services due to parent/guardian refusal are considered eligible for state testing accommodations, and are also subject to the five-year limit. This five-year clock stops whenever a student leaves the United States long enough to be dropped from school enrollment. It resumes upon return to the United States, including outside of Illinois. A year is treated as twelve calendar months. The first twelve calendar months following ELL identification are considered to be year one. The second twelve are year two, and so forth.

<sup>3</sup> The ISAT, IAA, and PSAE Writing assessments have been suspended for the spring 2012 administration. Regardless, the writing component of ACCESS must still be administered at every grade level.

<sup>4</sup> The student must be coded as "First Year in U.S." in ISBE's Student Information System.

<sup>5</sup> Such students must test on both PSAE Day 1 and PSAE Day 2 using State-Allowed accommodations with a self-paced session. This allows them to skip over the ACT Reading and WorkKeys *Reading for Information* tests. Students given this accommodation will not receive college-reportable ACT scores. State-Allowed accommodations must be requested from ACT prior to testing (see ISBE accommodations guidance).

<sup>6</sup> Such students must test on PSAE Day 1 using State-Allowed accommodations with a self-paced session. This allows them to skip over the PSAE writing assessment, which includes the ACT English and ACT Writing tests, both administered on PSAE Day 1. Students given this accommodation will not receive college-reportable ACT scores. State-Allowed accommodations must be requested from ACT prior to testing (see ISBE accommodations guidance).

<sup>7</sup> This policy was revised in 2010-11.