

# Re-entry FAQs for English Learners

## **I have several students who tested proficient on the ELPA21 this spring, some of whom I am concerned about exiting. Can I re-enter students I am concerned about into EL services?**

Once an English learner has proven proficient on the ELPA21, they must be exited and cannot be re-entered immediately. They need to be given ample opportunity to succeed in the mainstream with the same level of multi-tiered support and the same considerations given their never EL peers (native English speakers).

## **I have students who are proficient on the ELPA21 but are not doing well on academic assessments. Can those students be re-entered?**

Consistent with the Office for Civil Rights, students cannot be held in EL because of academics. Previously, students were qualifying for services because of their lack of language proficiency and then were being kept in the program for criteria unrelated to the qualifying criteria. The Office of Civil Rights deems this a violation of these students' civil rights. They are however to be moving into the two-year monitoring phase by a licensed teacher and experiencing the multi-tiered system of supports just as a native English/never English learner peers.

## **Are there any exceptions to reentering a student who shows proficient on the ELPA21?**

We are working on guidance specific to re-entry criteria. The criteria will include re-entry for issues directly related to a lack of language proficiency in one or more language domain areas. The criteria will also require substantial documentation of these language domain deficiencies.

## **What if a discrepancy exists in the exited students' academic knowledge/grade level performance?**

There is natural variability in student skills, concepts, and performance within each classroom and grade level. The question being answered by the ELPA21 assessment is whether or not language is the primary contributor to discrepancy. Ongoing discrepancy requiring robust Tier 1 universal instruction, differentiation, and scaffolding is normal. It

does not indicate a learning disability nor an ongoing need for EL classification, automatically.

EL students should be provided a strong language instruction education program (LIEP) that accelerates their academic progress while they are classified EL. Then these students should be given the same support afforded any other learner when they lack skills or knowledge in an academic area. Further, ongoing academic discrepancy for groups of students is good information to have when evaluating the effectiveness of the EL services and programming offered students.

### **When can I reenter a student who has tested proficient on the ELPA21?**

Students who have shown proficiency in the past, but are struggling with one or more domains of the English language in a manner which impedes their learning/success, can be screened using the Dynamic Screener 2.0. If the student shows a lack of proficiency in any language domain area, s/he qualifies once again for services and can be re-entered as an EL.

### **Are there exceptions to disallowing re-entry of ELPA21 proficient students?**

Currently, there is no appeal process in place but if you feel strongly that you have a student who must be re-entered despite his/her ELPA21 proficiencies, you may contact [pam.mcdonnell@iowa.gov](mailto:pam.mcdonnell@iowa.gov) to discuss an appeal. Your appeal will only be considered if :

- You can illustrate that the student has been given ample opportunity and specific general education supports to succeed in the mainstream (provided the same consideration and support offered his/her never EL peers, such as evidence based universal tier, building intervention team problem-solving/intervention groups, etc.)
- A clear deficiency in one or more language domain areas has been established using valid and reliable data for this purpose, such as the dynamic screener
- Monitoring and general education supports were provided with fidelity during the monitoring phase
- You can demonstrate the unique circumstances that require a review of EL services/programming and establish this is not a violation of the student's civil rights, per the court ruling

**Why are the rules about re-entry so stringent? Is this good for students?**

According to the Office of Civil rights and the USDE (through the ESEA/ESSA), it is good for students and more than that, it is their right to be exited based on language proficiency.

**So, how can I be sure exited ELs will be successful in the mainstream?**

Unless they have a disability, these are typically developing students and can learn. These typically developing students still may have needs unrelated to their English proficiency as do many other native English students. Exited ELs are to be afforded the same considerations for instructional support that never EL peers experience.