

State Board of Education – Study Session

A-F School Letter Grade Accountability System English Language Learners

Office of English Language Acquisition Services (OELAS)

Arizona Department of Education



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English Learners (ELs)

"English learner" or "limited English proficient student" means a child who does not speak English or whose native language is not English, and who is not currently able to perform ordinary classroom work in English.

[A.R.S. § 15-751.4](#)

Identification Of English Learners

The primary or home language for all new pupils (students) who enroll in a school district or charter school shall be identified in a manner prescribed by the superintendent of public instruction. [15.756 \(A\)](#)

The responses to the Home Language Survey (HLS) are used by the school to provide the most appropriate instructional programs and services for the student.

The HLS must be completed by a parent/guardian during **initial enrollment** of a student in the LEA/school.

The answers on the HLS will determine if a student will be administered an English language proficiency assessment.

Identification Of English Learners

(continued)

These HLS questions are in compliance with state and federal requirements:

1. What language do people speak in the home *most* of the time?
2. What language does the student speak *most* of the time?
3. What language did the student *first* speak or understand?

Students with a response other than English on the HLS, and who have no prior AZELLA history, shall be administered the AZELLA Placement Test.

[A.R.S. § 15-756](#)

English Language Assessments

AZELLA

The **Arizona English Language Learner Assessment (AZELLA)** is administered to eligible Kindergarten through Grade 12 students. The AZELLA measures the student's knowledge and skills across the **four domains of Listening, Reading, Writing, and Speaking**.

About 99% of the students who are eligible for assessment are administered the AZELLA.

Alt ELPA

The **Alternate English Language Proficiency Assessment (Alt ELPA)** is an alternate English language proficiency assessment designed for English learners with the most significant cognitive disabilities. Students must be determined eligible for this alternate assessment by the IEP team; eligibility is a yearly, IEP team decision. The Alt ELPA measures the student's knowledge and skills across the **four domains of Listening, Reading, Writing, and Speaking**.

About 1% of the students who are eligible for assessment are administered the Alt ELPA.

Arizona English Language Assessment

These assessments (AZELLA and Alt ELPA):

- Are **standards-based assessments** that meet both state and federal requirements
- Measure the student's English language proficiency (the student's knowledge and skills across the **four domains of Listening, Reading, Writing, and Speaking**)
- Are used for both **placement** and **reassessment** purposes
[A.R.S. § 15-756](#)
- Are administered to eligible Kindergarten through Grade 12 students

Arizona English Language Assessment

(continued)

Students who have been **identified for assessment according to the Home Language Survey (HLS)** are administered the *applicable* Arizona English Language Assessment (AZELLA or Alt ELPA) and the students' proficiency scores determine appropriate placement for instruction.

Students who have been identified as English learners (ELs) are eligible for English language learner services. They are administered the **Spring Reassessment (AZELLA or Alt ELPA) once per year until they achieve proficiency.** [A.R.S. § 15-752](#) or [A.R.S. § 15-753](#)

Students who have scored “**Proficient**” are then monitored for two years to help ensure success in the mainstream classroom.

Overall Proficiency Determination

AZELLA

Proficient:

A determination of “Proficient” on the AZELLA Reassessment requires:

- the Total Proficiency Scale Score to be greater than or equal to 1000

AND

- an Intermediate or Proficient proficiency level in all four language domains: Listening, Reading, Writing, and Speaking.

Overall Proficiency Determination

Alt ELPA

Proficient:

By attaining Level 3 or higher in all modalities (four language domains- Listening, Reading, Writing, and Speaking).

Once Proficient on the Alt ELPA, students may be considered for reclassification (scores are referred to the student's IEP team).

What are the levels of EL proficiency?

AZELLA

- Pre-Emergent/Emergent
- Basic
- Intermediate
- Proficient

Alt ELPA

- Emerging
- Progressing
- Proficient

What does it mean to exit EL status?

An EL student must achieve a score of “Proficient” on the English language assessment (AZELLA or Alt ELPA) to be exited from EL status.

To “*exit EL status*” means that the students have demonstrated a “*good working knowledge of English and are able to do regular schoolwork in English. They shall **no longer be classified as English learners and shall be transferred to English language mainstream classrooms.***”

[A.R.S. § 15-752](#)

How many ELs are in Arizona schools?

Arizona Department of Education
Office of English Language Acquisition Services

Fiscal Year	School Year	Reported October 1 Count of all English Learners (ELs) in the State of Arizona
2021	2020-2021	81,594
2022	2021-2022	93,379
2023	2022-2023	98,779
2024	2023-2024	109,465
2025	2024-2025	116,589

On average, how many students exit EL status each year?

The statewide reclassification rate for English learners (ELs) is calculated as the percentage of students who were classified as ELs and have attained proficiency on the state's annual English language proficiency assessment (AZELLA).

Fiscal Year	School Year	Statewide Reclassification Rate
2021	2020-2021	8%
2022	2021-2022	9%
2023	2022-2023	12%
2024	2023-2024	12%
2025	2024-2025	12%

Thank you.