

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers (FAQ)

1. Who may be a Spring ELPA proctor?

We would like to select staff members who will be participating in training. An Assessment Proctor may be a teacher's aide, paraprofessional, or other paid district or school staff member. If volunteers must be used, they should be trained with appropriate testing procedures, just like any other proctor. Family members of students in the assessment group must not be used as proctors. Refer to Appendix B in the ELPA Directions for Administration for proctor's duties.

Proctors may administer any section(s) of the Spring ELPA, but proctors must be working under the direct supervision of an Assessment Administrator, who must be a staff member with Michigan educational certification in any field. It is ultimately the responsibility of the Assessment Administrator to ensure that all procedures and directions are followed properly.

2. Do sections of the Spring ELPA need to be completed in one day, or could they be continued onto the next day?

Each section or domain of the Spring ELPA needs to be completed in one continuous session.

3. Do Spring ELPA sections need to be given in any particular order?

No, they can be given in any order.

4. Will an ELPA score replace a MEAP score? If our ELLs successfully take the MEAP, do they also have to take the Spring ELPA?

The ELPA score can only be used in place of the English Language Arts (ELA) portion of the MEAP, and only if the student qualifies as "recently arrived." Recently-arrived students are those students who have attended U.S. public schools for 12 months or less at the time of the beginning MEAP assessment window. These students will still need to take the MEAP mathematics, science, or social studies assessments, using accommodations as necessary for their status. ELLs are to participate in both assessment systems. The MEAP and Spring ELPA are considered to be separate—with different assessment requirements—as defined by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation. The MEAP is the assessment system that the State of Michigan uses to measure student progress with Michigan content standards in mathematics, ELA, science, and social studies. The Spring ELPA is the assessment system that the State of Michigan uses to measure student progress in English language acquisition; it is based on Michigan's English language proficiency (ELP) standards.

5. How about the MME? Are students exempt under the same rules? If so, which portions do they not take? Recently-arrived ELL students must also take the MME. The parts of the MME that contribute to an MME English Language Arts score are not separable from the rest of the test. For that reason, recently-arrived ELL students will take all portions of the MME. Their resultant ELA results will not show a final score, but for purposes of calculating participation for AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress), they will be recorded as having taken the assessment.

6. We have only a few ELLs in our district. May the Spring ELPA be given in a one-on-one setting?

Yes. All sections of the Spring ELPA may be given in a one-on-one setting.

7. Will students who have exited ELL programs and have been designated as Formerly Limited English Proficient (FLEP) be tested with the Spring ELPA?

The assessment of FLEP students using the Spring ELPA is not recommended. If a district determines that a FLEP student should take the ELPA, the student should be re-entered as LEP eligible in MSDS. If you have exited students from ELL services before the beginning of the Spring ELPA window during this same school year, these students should still take the Spring ELPA.

8. We don't have any ELL programs. Do we need to give the Spring ELPA?

All ELLs who are eligible to receive ELL services need to be assessed, regardless of whether they are actually receiving services. If you have students who have been identified as LEP eligible in MSDS, they must be assessed for their English language proficiency.

9. Some Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) address MEAP, MME, MI-Access, and MEAP Access, but not the Spring ELPA. If a student takes any of these assessments and this student is an ELL, is this student assessed with the Spring ELPA?

All students who are eligible for services need to be assessed, including Students with Disabilities (SWDs). ELL students who are also students with disabilities must take the Spring ELPA level that is associated with their grade of enrollment. If the Spring ELPA is not appropriate according to a student's IEP, please contact BAA at (877) 560-8378.

10. When we give the ELPA, do we need to consider exactly what service(s) the student receives, or only that they are eligible to receive service?

The school or district needs to consider only that the student is eligible for services, not whether the student is actually receiving LEP (ELL) services.

11. How can we receive more information from the State about the Spring ELPA?

Join our e-mail list. It's called the MDE-ELLA ListServ. Go to www.michigan.gov/elpa to join.

12. Will BAA automatically send Test Coordinator Manuals (TCM), or do we have to request them?

You can download the manual from the public ELPA Web site at www.michigan.gov/elpa.

13. In regard to the Speaking portion of the ELPA, do the test administrators need to be certified staff? Also, do two people need to listen and score each individual student?

The staff that administers the speaking portion may be a staff member that qualifies as an assessment proctor as described in the Assessment Integrity Guide. This is available for download at www.michigan.gov/baa. Proctors work closely with certified staff members who are actually in charge of the assessment administration process. It is important that all staff members involved in the assessment process receive appropriate training prior to the administration of the ELPA. See question #1 for more clarification.

14. May parents “opt out” of testing?

As an assessment of all eligible K-12 ELL students, the ELPA is mandated by the federal government through the NCLB law. It must be given to students who are determined to be eligible for LEP (ELL) services through the use of the Home Language Survey and according to the policies of the school district in which the student is enrolled.

15. Are foreign exchange students eligible for the Spring ELPA, even if they are grade 12 students?

Yes, if they meet the criteria using the Home Language Survey.

16. Do we assign students to the Spring ELPA based on their grade level in school or their grade level equivalent of their English language skills?

For example, what do we do with a 9th grade student who has the English skills of a second grader? Students are to take the Spring ELPA that matches their grade level of enrollment. If students are enrolled in grade 9, they would take the Spring ELPA at Assessment Level V (9-12 Grade).

17. Can additional Spring ELPA materials be ordered on the BAA Secure Site?

Yes. If a district determines that the quantity of materials they received is not sufficient, additional materials can be ordered.

18. Are the Speaking rubrics still available for training?

All speaking rubrics for the Spring ELPA can be found online at www.michigan.gov/elpa. In addition, you can also order a Speaking Item Scoring Training DVD for use with assessment administrators and proctors. If you would like a DVD please contact Cristina Rodriguez at rodriguezcr@michigan.gov.

19. Should we test ELLs and bilingual education students who are also in special education services?

Yes. All students who are eligible for Title III services—whether or not they are currently receiving those services—need to be assessed. This includes students with disabilities and Section 504 students.

20. On the Sentence Repeat section of the Speaking test, may a proctor repeat a prompt for a student if he or she asks to hear it again?

The Test Administrator Manual specifies what is read aloud to the student. The prompt is read only once. Note that a sample is provided for each type of prompt in the ELPA. While the sample is given, the staff member giving the assessment may check for understanding and may remind the students that the prompt will be only read one time.

21. The Spring ELPA reports also have “Comprehension.” The ELPA features four sections: Listening, Reading, Writing, and Speaking. When are the students assessed for their comprehension?

Items in the Listening and Reading sections that match those ELP standards that have been identified as contributing to Comprehension will be used to report this score.

22. Once a student tests as “Proficient,” must they take the ELPA again the next year?

At this time, testing of the student is based on a student’s eligibility for Limited English Proficiency services. Eligibility is based on locally-determined factors which may include a number of criteria in addition to a “Proficient” score on an English language proficiency assessment. Each district must set their own policy for using the Spring ELPA score as part of several factors that determine a student’s exit or entrance into ELL services or programs.

23. Are extra blank documents automatically sent as part of our orders?

An automatic overage is automatically sent along to all schools. If you discover, upon receipt of all materials, including extra blank documents, that you still need additional materials, please contact your district ELPA coordinator who can log into the BAA Secure Site to place these additional orders. A district can order materials to go just to the district offices by selecting its own name from the drop-down list of schools at the time of ordering.

24. Can ISDs get extra materials for distribution to buildings if needed?

No. Additional material orders are sent only to districts for use in schools. This will facilitate the accounting for the return of all secure Spring ELPA materials at the close of testing. Each secure item is scanned upon return. Many ISDs and consortia have ELL coordinators who are willing to help in the process of ensuring that all of Michigan’s English language learners are recognized and assessed in compliance with the law. For now, we are relying on ISD and consortia ELL coordinators to help coordinate information for districts, answer questions where possible, and coordinate training where necessary.

25. If we see that a pre-printed label is incorrect, can we make a new label?

A student’s barcode label only has to be reprinted if the student’s name or building assignment changes. Any other student demographic information isn’t loaded to the Secure Site from MSDS until after the testing cycle.

Ensuring that a student’s name and building are correctly identified aids the scoring contractor in making a student match in case a document is unable to be scanned or needs to be manually reviewed.

If a new label is printed, be sure to affix it carefully on top of the existing label on the student's test booklet or answer document so the incorrect label is not visible.

26. What if we have an ELL student who is also in special education? Do we indicate "Special Ed" on the ELPA?

We already have that information from MSDS data. If the student is given testing accommodations, however, please indicate these on the demographic form.

27. Should we administer the ELPA Initial Screening to students who enroll after the Spring ELPA window?

Yes. As soon as your district has closed its testing cycle (based on the ELPA Cycle it registered for), please continue to use the current ELPA Initial Screening. You can order new ELPA Initial Screening materials at any time through the BAA Secure Site.

28. Will a district receive multiple forms within the same assessment level?

We have worked with our administration contractor to provide one form to smaller districts; multiple forms are needed for districts with large numbers of students.

29. On the Speaking Item Training DVD, we noticed that the administrator closed the book before the student retold the story. Is this done at all grade levels?

The instruction that appears in the Test Administrator Manual (TAM) is that the proctor turns over the book so that the student cannot simply read back the story on the page. (On the video, the book was closed and placed face-up because the sample booklets that were generated for the taping of the students had an item on the back, possibly distracting students.) However, proctors of the Spring ELPA will turn over books for students of all levels.

30. If a student was registered in the fall through the ELPA Initial Screening, will they need a barcode label?

No. If this student scored at the Proficient level or lower this student would have been added to the pre-identified list and thus will receive a test booklet or answer document with a pre-printed, pre-applied label.

31. How did my school receive a pre-identified (pre-printed) ELPA test for some students and not for others?

A student would have received a pre-identified test if he or she was on the Spring ELPA pre-id list. Students entering a district after the pre-id window would not receive test booklets with pre-printed labels.

32. I heard about the state's ListServ for ELL information. How can I subscribe?

Many of our ELL paraprofessionals, teachers, department leaders, and program administrators have joined our email list called the MDE-ELLA ListServ. They receive announcements via email related to the

ELPA and other issues related to assessing ELLs. Membership is free. To subscribe go to www.michigan.gov/elpa.

33. Are there opportunities for ESL or Bilingual Ed. teachers to get involved in the development of the Spring ELPA?

Yes. We welcome the active participation of Michigan's field of ELL educators. Interested professionals and para-professionals who want to be considered for participation on ELPA committees should go to the the BAA Committee Application survey available at www.michigan.gov/elpa We will notify anyone who is selected about upcoming events.

34. We need Level I ELPA Initial Screening materials in time for Kindergarten Round-Up. Is this possible?

Yes. We have designed a new ELPA Initial Screening testing cycle, called the Pre-K Cycle, specifically for the ordering of Level I materials and for the entry of Level I scores into the BAA Secure Site. (These Level I materials are the same as for Cycle I and II of the ELPA Initial Screening, so check how many you have on hand before you order.) Students who take the Pre-K ELPA Initial Screening do not take the Reading and Writing sections. Kindergarten students who take the Cycle I ELPA Initial Screening also do not take the Reading and Writing sections.