



**Guidance on Using MEPA Results to Plan
Sheltered English Immersion (SEI)
Instruction and Make Reclassification
Decisions for Limited English Proficient
(LEP) Students**

September 2009



This document was prepared by the
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
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Commissioner

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Commissioner's Foreword

I am pleased to provide you with updated guidance on using the results of the Massachusetts English Proficiency Assessment (MEPA) to plan appropriate instruction for students who are limited English proficient, and to make reclassification decisions, where appropriate, for these students.

MEPA is the state's annual assessment of English language proficiency for English language learners (also called "students with limited English proficiency," or LEP students) in grades K-12 and is required under Title III of the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and Chapter 386 of the Massachusetts Acts of 2002 (known as "Question 2").

MEPA tests measure each student's performance in reading and writing (MEPA-R/W), as well as his or her progress in learning these skills when the results are compared with test scores from the previous year. Students are also assessed on their listening and speaking abilities in English using the Massachusetts English Language Assessment-Oral (MELA-O).

MEPA results are to be used, together with other data available to schools, to make appropriate and valid decisions regarding the instruction and reclassification of these students, using the guidance provided in this document.

I appreciate the continuing work of educators to teach English language skills to LEP students so they can successfully transition to English-language academic instruction and perform at high levels on MCAS tests.

Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D.
Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education

Introduction

The Massachusetts English Proficiency Assessment (MEPA) is the state's annual assessment of English language proficiency for limited English proficient (LEP) students, also referred to as English language learners, in kindergarten through grade 12. Section 2 of G.L. c. 71A, the state law governing the education of students who are not proficient in English, defines an English learner as "a child who does not speak English or whose native language is not English and who is not currently able to perform ordinary classwork in English." For purposes of this guidance, we use the term "LEP student" or "English language learner" (ELL) to refer to "English learner."

MEPA assesses English language proficiency in four areas: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Beginning with the spring 2009 results, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education will report the MEPA results using different performance levels than those used from 2005-2008. This guidance will assist educators in using MEPA results to plan sheltered English immersion (SEI), and other instructional programming as permitted by law, for LEP students. It also assists decision making regarding the reclassification of LEP students.

Additional information and resources for the instruction of LEP students in Massachusetts can be found at www.doe.mass.edu/ell. For questions, please contact the Office of English Language Acquisition and Academic Achievement at 781-338-3518, or Student Assessment Services at 781-338-3625.

Background

Annual assessment of the English language proficiency of all LEP students is mandated by G.L. c. 71A and Title III of the federal *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) Act. G.L. 71A requires school districts to provide LEP students, with limited exceptions, sheltered English immersion (SEI) instruction until the students are proficient in English. Section 4 of the law states: *Once English learners acquire a good working knowledge of English and are able to do regular school work in English, they shall no longer be classified as English learners and shall be transferred to English language mainstream classrooms.*

Districts must establish a process and set of criteria to determine whether a LEP student who has been receiving language instruction during the school year is *still* limited English proficient at the end of the school year.¹ (See 603 CMR 14.02(4)). In determining LEP status, districts must determine and consider English language proficiency in *four* areas: speaking, listening, reading and writing in both social and academic settings. A school-based team, including members familiar with the student's English language proficiency in a classroom setting, should make decisions about the nature of instructional programming for the student and his or her classification as LEP, using the district's criteria and guidance provided in this document.

If a student is determined to be LEP after applying these criteria, and guidance provided in this and other Department publications, an instructional program must be designed for the student that meets the requirements of G.L. c. 71A, and the student should be designated as LEP in the district's report to the Department's Student Information Management System (SIMS). For most students, with some exceptions, this instruction will be a sheltered English immersion (SEI) program. Guidelines for planning SEI instruction are available at www.doe.mass.edu/ell/cdguide/.

If a student is determined *not* to be LEP, the district should no longer classify the student as LEP in SIMS. Guidance on identifying and making classification decisions for LEP students is available at www.doe.mass.edu/ell/guidance_laws.html.

¹ Department guidelines may be found at www.doe.mass.edu/ell/sei/identify_lep.html.

How MEPA Results are Reported

Between 2005-2008, MEPA results had been reported using four performance levels (i.e., Beginning, Early Intermediate, Intermediate, and Transitioning) and using a numerical scale between 300-400. Beginning with the spring 2009 MEPA administration, the following information will be reported for each LEP student:

- an overall performance level of *Level 1, Level 2, Level 3, Level 4, or Level 5*
- a scaled score between 400-550
- the performance of the student on the reading, writing, speaking, and listening, sections of the MEPA compared with a typical student performing at the beginning of *Level 5*, the highest performance level. The student's performance is categorized either: "at or above," "approaching," or "below" the typical student at the beginning of *Level 5*.

Using All Available Information to Make Instructional Decisions for LEP Students

The following steps are recommended for evaluating the educational needs of LEP students and in making reclassification decisions for LEP students. It may be useful to collect relevant data and information for each student in an individual student record or folder for use by the school-based team.

Step 1: Review MEPA Results

The general guidelines found in Table 1 should be used to make reclassification decisions for each student, based on MEPA results and other data. If the student is not reclassified from LEP to non-LEP, a SEI program and ESL instruction must be designed for the student by the school-based team, using guidance provided in Step 3, unless a waiver is sought for a Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) or other program model.

Table 1.
Reclassification recommendations for ELL students based on MEPA results

MEPA Performance Level	Reclassification recommendations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Level 1</i> • <i>Level 2</i> 	<p>Student is not a candidate for reclassification from current LEP status to non-LEP.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Level 3</i> 	<p>Student is not a likely candidate for reclassification. However, students performing at Level 3 may be considered for reclassification if they meet either of the two criteria listed below <u>and</u> demonstrate that they are able to perform ordinary class work in English, as indicated by one or more of the measures listed in Step 2 on the following page:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) student’s MEPA score is either “At or Above” or “Approaching” the performance of a student at the beginning of <i>Level 5</i> in all four tested areas, according to MEPA results b) student scored <i>Proficient</i> on MCAS ELA <p>The number of students at <i>Level 3</i> who meet these criteria will likely be very small.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Level 4</i> 	<p>A number of students at Level 4 may be ready for reclassification, if they meet either of the two criteria listed below <u>and</u> demonstrate they are able to perform ordinary class work in English, as indicated by one or more of the measures listed in Step 2 on the following page:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) student’s MEPA score is either “At or Above” or “Approaching” the performance of a student at the beginning of <i>Level 5</i> in all four tested areas, according to MEPA results b) student scored <i>Proficient</i> on MCAS ELA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Level 5</i> 	<p>Reclassification of the student is recommended from LEP status to non-LEP if the student also meets one or more of the measures listed in Step 2 on the following page. Once reclassified, the student’s academic performance must be monitored for two years.</p>

Step 2: Review other available student data collected by the district and/or provided by the Department

In addition to MEPA results, educators should evaluate and consider a range of other evidence of the student’s performance collected by the district in making decisions about instructional programming and reclassification of a student as non-LEP, including a review of:

- the student's scores on locally-administered reading and other academic assessments, such as DIBELS, GRADE, DRA, Terra Nova, or Stanford 9
- the student's scores on locally-administered diagnostic language assessments
- the student’s academic grades
- the written observations and recommendations documented by the student's classroom teachers
- the new MEPA performance level descriptors found in Appendices A and B, which describe the general characteristics of students performing at each MEPA performance level in the four areas of reading, writing, speaking, and listening.
- student performance on other MCAS content area tests.

Unless a LEP student did not participate in MCAS ELA testing either because he or she is a student in kindergarten through grade 2, or is a first-year LEP student and was not required to participate, MCAS ELA results should be used to support and validate the preliminary decisions made each spring to plan the student's instructional programming and whether to continue to report the student as LEP.

It will also be important to determine the level of support, if any, needed by the student during instruction in other content areas, and whether scores of Warning/Failing on MCAS mathematics and science and technology/engineering tests are due to language-based considerations. If the student's MCAS results provide evidence to contradict the instructional or classification decisions made earlier based on the student's MEPA test results and other district data, seek additional consultation and input from teachers familiar with the student to make final determinations.

Step 3: Plan an instructional program for the LEP student.

Chapter 71A of the Massachusetts General Laws (G.L. c. 71A) requires that limited English proficient (LEP) students be educated in a sheltered English immersion (SEI) program, unless a program waiver is sought for another program model, such as Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE). This requirement applies to all districts that enroll LEP students, regardless of the number. Districts should use the following guidelines to plan instructional programs for LEP students enrolled in an SEI program, which consists of two components:

- **Sheltered content instruction**
Sheltered content instruction is intended to make instruction in academic content areas, delivered in English, more comprehensible to LEP students. Accordingly, students at higher levels of English proficiency (i.e., Levels 3, 4, and 5 on MEPA) will find this instruction more beneficial and less challenging than those at Levels 1 and 2.
- **English as a second language (ESL), also called English language development (ELD), instruction**
ESL instruction addresses the listening, speaking, reading and writing standards contained in the *Massachusetts English Language Proficiency Benchmarks and Outcomes*. ESL instruction is designed to help LEP students "catch up" to their classmates in academic content by learning English as quickly as possible. A district-level ESL curriculum, based on the *Massachusetts English Language Proficiency Benchmarks and Outcomes*, should guide ESL instruction within the district.

Pursuant to G.L. c. 71A, districts must promote and support the rapid acquisition of English language proficiency by LEP students. Thus, districts must ensure that all LEP students receive ESL instruction corresponding to their needs. For example, students with MEPA scores of Levels 1, 2, and 3 should receive proportionally more English language instruction than those at higher performance levels. The following guidelines for instructional planning reflect the importance of ESL instruction for *all* LEP students.

Recommended Instructional Programming for LEP Students at Each MEPA Performance Level

Level 1 and Level 2

Students at *Level 1 and Level 2* MEPA performance levels generally produce and understand very little, if any, spoken or written English, or may have only very basic English skills. It is important that these students receive English language development instruction for a substantial portion of their school day because sheltered content instruction, the other component of SEI, will be challenging for students at lower levels of English proficiency.

**Recommended Instruction for LEP Students at *Level 1* and *Level 2*
(Elementary, Middle, and High School)**

- English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction: 2.5 hours/day to a full day of direct ESL instruction, delivered by a licensed ESL teacher
- Content instruction: other hours as available outside of ESL instruction, delivered by a teacher qualified to teach LEP students² and licensed in the appropriate content area
- Specials/electives, e.g., physical education, art, music: same schedule as for other students in the grade level

Level 3

Students at *Level 3* MEPA performance level generally demonstrate a range of mid-level English proficiency in speaking, listening, reading and writing, but have not yet developed academic proficiency in English. Sheltered content instruction should be tailored to provide comprehensive content instruction and engaging learning tasks to students at *Level 3* who have wide ranging English proficiency. Students at *Level 3* should also receive ESL instruction as outlined below.

**Recommended Instruction for LEP Students at *Level 3*
(Elementary, Middle, and High School)**

- English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction: 1-2 hours of direct ESL instruction per day, delivered by a licensed ESL teacher
- ELA or reading instruction: 1-2 hours per day, delivered by a teacher qualified to teach LEP students and licensed in ELA or reading.
- Content instruction: other available hours outside of ESL instruction, delivered by a teacher qualified to teach LEP students and licensed in the appropriate content area
- Specials/electives, e.g., physical education, art, music: same schedule as for other students in the grade level

Level 4 and Level 5 (for students not yet reclassified as non-LEP)

Students at *Level 4* and in the low range of *Level 5* MEPA performance levels generally demonstrate good English proficiency. However, a student performing overall at *Level 5* may not have all the skills associated with a *Level 5* student in all four areas of the MEPA. A student should either be “At or Above” or “Approaching” in all four areas before being considered for reclassification (see MEPA parent/guardian reports or electronic data files to obtain this information about each student). Increasingly complex and varied language demands on LEP students in late elementary, middle, and high school may also support the decision by school-based teams to delay the reclassification of certain students at *Level 4* and *Level 5* who are aspiring to achieve academic parity with English-speaking peers.

**Recommended Instruction for LEP Students at *Level 4* and *Level 5*
(Elementary, Middle, and High School)**

- English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction: a minimum of 2.5 hours of direct ESL instruction per week, delivered by a licensed ESL teacher
- Content instruction: other available hours outside of ESL instruction, delivered by a teacher qualified to teach LEP students and licensed in the appropriate content area
- Specials/electives, e.g., physical education, art, music: same schedule as for other students in the grade level

² See Commissioner’s June 15, 2004 memo, available at www.doe.mass.edu/ell/sei/qualifications.pdf, which discusses the four categories of skills and knowledge applicable to teachers of LEP students. The language “a teacher qualified to teach LEP students,” when used in this guidance, refers to teachers meeting the criteria set forth in the Commissioner’s June 15, 2004 memo.

Level 4 and Level 5 (for students reclassified as non-LEP)

After evaluating the available student data, the school-based team should determine whether there is sufficient evidence of the student's English language proficiency and that the student is able to perform ordinary classroom work in English without additional support.

If there is such evidence, the district must:

- reclassify the students as non-LEP (i.e., proficient in English) and remove the student's coding as LEP on the SIMS data collection (SIMS: DOE 25 – record 00 under “LEP”). Typically, this decision will be made in time for the October SIMS data collection
- notify parents/guardians of the student's reclassification.
- update all school/district records.
- design and implement a process for routine monitoring of students' academic progress for two years.³

In addition, the school should consider

- assigning reclassified students, at least initially, to teachers qualified to teach LEP students and licensed in the appropriate content area(s). Although not required, this will enhance the likelihood of continued growth in their English language proficiency and content learning.
- providing additional opportunities for small group instruction and learning throughout the school day, as well as after school and during the summer.
- designing and providing additional individualized learning support and opportunities to check on academic progress.

If a formerly LEP (FLEP) student fails to make academic progress after reclassification as non-LEP, as measured by grades and assessments; and if a school-based team familiar with the student determines that this failure is due to lack of English proficiency, the student must be reclassified as LEP and the instructional programming redesigned consistent with this guidance.

In most cases, it is recommended that students designated as LEP in kindergarten continue to be designated as LEP in grade 1, so more substantial data on their achievement in reading will be available to support the decision to reclassify a young LEP student as English proficient.

³ If the school-based team determines that the student does not require ESL and sheltered content instruction and recommends monitoring only, the student is not an LEP student and must be reclassified as non-LEP (i.e., formerly LEP or FLEP).

APPENDIX A: MEPA Performance Levels as Described in the *MEPA PARENT/GUARDIAN REPORT*

Grades K-2:

Your child's overall results on the MEPA tests are reported based on five levels of performance. The performance levels for grade span K–2 are described below.

A student at **Level 1** cannot yet communicate in English, and errors almost always interfere with communication. Comprehension is demonstrated either without words, through a few basic English words, or in a language other than English. A student performing at this level typically

- recognizes only a few letters of the alphabet and reads only a few simple words, with help;
- writes only a few letters of the alphabet and may attempt to write words that are mostly incorrect;
- speaks using only a few English words with frequent errors, and cannot be understood easily;
- understands only a little spoken English.

A student at **Level 2** communicates using simple written and spoken English at school, with errors that often interfere with communication and understanding. A student performing at this level typically

- recognizes many letters of the alphabet and reads a few simple words, with help;
- writes some letters of the alphabet and a few basic words, with frequent errors;
- speaks English using basic words and short phrases, and is generally difficult to understand;
- recognizes some basic spoken words and phrases in English, with frequent repetition and explanation.

A student at **Level 3** communicates using basic English at school, though errors sometimes interfere with communication and understanding. A student performing at this level typically

- reads and understands many common words and most letters of the alphabet, including some grade-level academic language;
- writes commonly used words and simple sentences, with some errors;
- speaks English using common words, including some grade-level academic vocabulary, and basic grammar and sentence structure, with some errors;
- understands most basic spoken English, including some grade-level academic vocabulary, with some repetition and explanation.

A student at **Level 4** is generally fluent in English at school. Oral and written communication is mostly correct and usually understandable, with few or minor errors. A student performing at this level typically

- reads and understands most common words, including many grade-level academic words;
- writes short sentences and short texts, with few errors;
- speaks English with basic fluency, using grade-appropriate words and sentences, with occasional errors;
- understands most spoken English during classroom discussions, including grade-level academic vocabulary, with only occasional repetition and explanation.

A student at **Level 5** is fluent and communicates effectively in English across all academic subjects, with very few errors. Oral and written communication is correct and understandable. A student performing at this level typically

- reads and understands most grade-level texts;
- writes and edits grade-level texts with fluency, using standard grade-level English writing conventions;
- speaks English with fluency, using grade-level academic vocabulary correctly;
- understands spoken English, with little or no need for repetition or explanation.

Grades 3-12:

Your child's overall results on the MEPA tests are reported based on five levels of performance. The performance levels for grade spans 3-4, 5-6, 7-8, and 9-12 are described below.

A student at **Level 1** cannot yet communicate in English and errors almost always interfere with communication. Comprehension is demonstrated either without words, through a few basic words, or in a language other than English. A student performing at this level typically

- reads only a few simple written words or phrases, with help;
- writes only a few simple words and a few short sentences with errors;
- speaks using only a few English words with common errors, and is not easily understood;
- understands only a little spoken English.

A student at **Level 2** communicates using simple written and spoken English at school, with errors that often interfere with communication and understanding. A student performing at this level typically

- reads and understands simple words, phrases, and a few simple sentences with help, but shows little awareness of features of written English;
- writes one or more simple sentences with some understanding of purpose and audience, but shows little control of grade-level standard English writing conventions;
- speaks using basic English words and phrases, and is generally difficult to understand;
- understands some basic spoken vocabulary, phrases, and simple questions, with frequent repetition and explanation.

A student at **Level 3** communicates using basic English at school, although errors sometimes interfere with communication and understanding. A student performing at this level typically

- reads and understands many common words and some grade-level academic vocabulary; can understand the main idea of some grade-level texts, and understands some grade-level features of written English;
- writes and edits simple sentences and paragraphs to suit an audience, and uses basic grade-level vocabulary; shows some control of grade-level standard English writing conventions;
- speaks using many basic English words and some grade-level academic vocabulary, creating original sentences, with some errors and pauses in conversation;
- understands most spoken English sentences and questions, some basic grade-level academic vocabulary, and grade-level texts read aloud, with some repetition and explanation.

A student at **Level 4** is generally fluent in English at school, and oral and written communication is mostly correct and usually understandable, with few or minor errors. A student performing at this level typically

- reads and understands most grade-level texts, including academic vocabulary and most grade-level features of written English;
- writes and edits short texts with few errors using basic grade-level academic vocabulary, and shows basic control of grade-level standard English writing conventions;
- speaks English with basic fluency, using grade-level words and sentences, with occasional errors;
- understands most spoken English during classroom discussions, with only occasional repetition and explanation.

A student at **Level 5** communicates effectively in English across all academic subjects, with few errors. The student shows control of standard English. Oral and written communication is correct and understandable. A student performing at this level typically

- reads and understands most grade-level texts, including a range of academic vocabulary;
- writes and edits texts of different lengths, giving details and descriptions to suit the purpose and audience, and shows a general control of standard grade-level English writing conventions;
- speaks English with grade-level fluency, using academic language and descriptive vocabulary in conversations and classroom discussions;
- understands spoken English during nearly all conversations and classroom discussions.

APPENDIX B: MEPA Performance Levels Used to SET STANDARDS on the Spring 2009 MEPA Tests

Grades K-2:

Level 1 A student at this performance level has not yet developed simple written and spoken communication in English. Errors (lexical, phonological, syntactic, semantic)⁴ consistently interfere with communication, and comprehension is mostly demonstrated either non-verbally, through a few basic words, or in a language other than English.

A student performing at this level:

- recognizes only a few letters of the alphabet and reads a few simple, high-frequency words, with visual and graphic support (R)
- writes only a few letters of the alphabet and may attempt a few basic words, but these are seldom recognizable (W)
- speaks using a few basic words with frequent errors; little or no command of isolated vocabulary; responds inappropriately to most questions; is seldom intelligible (S)
- recognizes and comprehends only a few basic spoken words with consistent need for repetition and clarification; may demonstrate minimal comprehension of simple speech either non-verbally, through a few basic words, or in a language other than English (L)

Level 2 A student at this performance level has developed simple written and spoken communication in English. Errors often interfere with basic comprehension and communication, although the meaning is sometimes retained. Limited lexical, syntactic, phonological, and discourse features of English are present.

A student performing at this level:

- recognizes many letters of the alphabet; reads and comprehends some simple written words and phrases, often with visual or graphic support; recognizes some basic features of written English appropriate for the specified grade (R)
- writes some letters of the alphabet, a few basic words, and may attempt phrases or simple sentences, but with little or no control of standard English writing conventions (W)
- speaks using single words and a few basic phrases; gives short responses to simple questions, often using graphic, visual, or gestural support; performs very basic language functions; word choice is often inappropriate or incorrect; is sometimes intelligible but generally difficult to understand (S)
- recognizes some sounds of the English language; comprehends some basic spoken vocabulary, phrases, and simple questions, with frequent need for repetition and clarification (L)

Level 3 A student at this performance level communicates in English and uses the language in the school context. Errors may still impede communication and comprehension; however, the overall meaning is usually retained. A limited range of lexical, syntactic, phonological, and

⁴ **Lexical:** pertaining to the words or vocabulary of a language

Phonological: pertaining to the pattern and distribution of speech sounds in a language and the rules governing pronunciation

Syntactic: pertaining to the rules for the formation of phrases and sentences from words in a language

Semantic: pertaining to the meaning of words and symbols in a language

discourse features are used, and oral and written communication, although somewhat inconsistent, is usually accurate and understandable.

A student performing at this level:

- recognizes most letters of the alphabet, and reads and comprehends many common written words including some high-frequency academic language appropriate for the grade level; comprehends the main idea of some grade-level texts, mostly on familiar topics; is aware of some grade-level appropriate features of written English (R)
- writes words, spelling some familiar words correctly, and may attempt short sentences with a limited range of linguistic complexity relative to what is required for the specified grade level; demonstrates limited control of grade-level appropriate standard English writing conventions (W)
- speaks using common words and phrases, and basic grammar and sentence structure, including some high-frequency academic language of the content area appropriate for a student in that grade; attempts sentences with some complex grade-appropriate language structures, with occasional errors and frequent pauses in conversation; is often intelligible (S)
- recognizes most sounds of the English language and comprehends most sentences and questions during interpersonal communication, with occasional need for clarification and repetition; comprehends some grade-level appropriate academic vocabulary, discourse, and texts read aloud (L)

Level 4 A student at this performance level is moderately fluent in English and uses the language in the school context with few or minor errors. The student usually demonstrates control of many lexical, syntactic, phonological, and discourse features, with continued support and assistance as needed; and oral and written communication is mostly accurate and usually understandable.

A student performing at this level:

- recognizes a range of common written words and high-frequency academic language appropriate for the grade level; comprehends most grade-level appropriate texts with language of varying linguistic complexity, on familiar and closely related new topics across most content areas; is aware of many grade-level appropriate features of written English (R)
- writes short sentences and paragraphs, using words and phrases correctly to provide detail; demonstrates modest (adequate) control of standard English writing conventions appropriate for a student in the grade level (W)
- speaks with occasional errors using mostly grade-level appropriate words, phrases, sentences, and expressions, and is mostly intelligible; demonstrates general control of standard spoken English conventions, such as vocabulary and grammar (S)
- recognizes nearly all sounds of the English language and comprehends most oral communications, including most grade-level appropriate academic discourse, with infrequent need for clarification and repetition; recognizes and comprehends most grade-level appropriate vocabulary, including high-frequency academic language of the content area (L)

Level 5 A student at this performance level communicates effectively in English in the school context with few errors. The student demonstrates control of most lexical, syntactic, phonological, and discourse features, and oral and written communication is accurate and understandable.

A student performing at this level:

- comprehends most grade-level appropriate texts with language of varying linguistic complexity on familiar and new topics across all content areas; draws conclusions and makes interpretations from text; demonstrates a beginning awareness of implied ideas; is aware of most grade-level appropriate features of written English (R)
- writes and edits texts as required of a student in the specified grade; demonstrates control of most grade-level appropriate standard English writing conventions; uses descriptive words and phrases to provide detail and fit the audience and purpose (W)
- speaks with grade-level appropriate fluency, including academic language of the content area; generates innovative language in social and academic settings, varying speech to fit audience and intent; can sustain interpersonal interaction; demonstrates control of most standard spoken English conventions; is almost always intelligible (S)
- comprehends most extended and prolonged oral communication, including grade-level appropriate academic discourse, with little need for clarification or repetition; recognizes and comprehends most grade-level appropriate vocabulary, including high-frequency academic language of the content area (L)

Grades 3-12:

Level 1 A student at this performance level has not yet developed simple written and spoken communication in English. Errors (lexical, phonological, syntactic, semantic)⁵ consistently interfere with communication, and comprehension is mostly demonstrated either non-verbally, through a few basic words, or in a language other than English.

A student performing at this level:

- recognizes only a few basic features of written English and reads a few simple written words with graphic or visual support (R)
- writes only a few simple words, and may attempt a few phrases or short sentences, but these are seldom recognizable (W)
- speaks using a few basic words with little or no command of isolated vocabulary; responds inappropriately to most questions; is seldom intelligible (S)
- recognizes and comprehends only a few basic spoken words and sounds of the English language, with consistent need for repetition and clarification; may demonstrate minimal comprehension of simple speech either non-verbally, through a few basic words, or in a language other than English (L)

Level 2 A student at this performance level has developed simple written and spoken communication in English. Errors often interfere with basic comprehension and communication, although the meaning is sometimes retained. Limited lexical, syntactic, phonological, and discourse features of English are emerging.

A student performing at this level:

- reads and understands simple written words, phrases, and some simple sentences; demonstrates an awareness of some features of written English; comprehends some

⁵ **Lexical:** pertaining to the words or vocabulary of a language

Phonological: pertaining to the pattern and distribution of speech sounds in a language and the rules governing pronunciation

Syntactic: pertaining to the rules for the formation of phrases and sentences from words in a language

Semantic: pertaining to the meaning of words and symbols in a language

simple below grade-level texts (R)

- writes one or more simple sentences with some awareness of purpose and audience; demonstrates little control of grade-appropriate standard English writing conventions (W)
- speaks using single words and a few basic phrases; gives short responses to simple questions, often using graphic, gestural, or visual support; uses basic vocabulary in the context of social interaction, with little use of grade-level appropriate academic language; word choice is often inappropriate or incorrect for the situation or context; is sometimes intelligible, but comprehensibility remains difficult (S)
- recognizes some sounds of the English language and comprehends basic spoken vocabulary, phrases, and some simple questions with frequent need for repetition and clarification (L)

Level 3 A student at this performance level communicates in English and uses the language in the school context. Errors may still impede communication and comprehension; however, the overall meaning is usually retained. A limited range of lexical, syntactic, phonological, and discourse features of English are used, and oral and written communications, although somewhat inconsistent, are usually accurate and understandable.

A student performing at this level:

- reads and comprehends words and texts of limited linguistic complexity and on familiar topics; recognizes common written words and some high-frequency academic language of the content area; is aware of many features of written English (R)
- writes sentences and short, simple paragraphs with limited detail and linguistic complexity relative to what is required for a student in the specified grade; edits and revises to fit an audience; demonstrates limited control of grade-level appropriate standard English writing conventions (W)
- speaks using common words, phrases, and basic grammar and sentence structure, including some high-frequency academic language of the content area; attempts sentences with some complex language structures, with errors and frequent pauses in conversation; is often intelligible (S)
- recognizes most sounds of the English language and comprehends most sentences and questions during interpersonal communication, with occasional need for clarification and repetition; comprehends some grade-level appropriate academic vocabulary, discourse, and texts read aloud (L)

Level 4 A student at this performance level is nearly fluent in English and uses the language in the school context with few or minor errors. The student usually demonstrates control of many lexical, syntactic, phonological, and discourse features, with continued support and assistance as needed; and oral and written communication is mostly accurate and usually understandable.

A student performing at this level:

- reads and comprehends most grade-level appropriate texts, including main ideas and details, primarily on familiar topics across most content areas, with some assistance; recognizes and comprehends most common grade-level appropriate vocabulary and academic words; is aware of many features of written English (R)
- writes and edits a variety of sentences and paragraphs using original words and phrases to provide detail to suit the audience and purpose; uses a limited range of high-frequency academic language of the content area; demonstrates moderate control of grade-level appropriate standard writing conventions, with some assistance required (W)
- speaks using mostly grade-level appropriate words, phrases, sentences, and expressions, and demonstrates general control of standard spoken English conventions, such as vocabulary and grammar, with occasional errors; is mostly intelligible (S)
- recognizes nearly all sounds of the English language and comprehends most oral communications, including most grade-level appropriate academic discourse with infrequent need for clarification and repetition; recognizes and comprehends most grade-level appropriate vocabulary, including high-frequency academic language of the content area (L)

Level 5 A student at this performance level communicates effectively in English in the school context with few errors. The student demonstrates control of lexical, syntactic, phonological, and discourse features, and oral and written communication is primarily accurate and understandable.

A student performing at this level:

- comprehends most grade-level appropriate texts on familiar and new topics, with language of varied linguistic complexity across all content areas; draws conclusions and makes interpretations from text; demonstrates an understanding of abstract or implied ideas; is aware of most features of written English (R)
- writes and edits expanded texts (multi-paragraph compositions) of varying lengths, level of detail, and linguistic complexity relative to other students in the specified grade; accurately uses a range of academic language of the content area; demonstrates control of most standard English writing conventions, with only occasional assistance (W)
- speaks with grade-level appropriate fluency, including academic language of the content area; generates innovative language in social and academic settings, varying speech to fit audience and intent; can sustain interpersonal interactions; demonstrates control of most standard spoken English conventions; is almost always intelligible (S)
- comprehends spoken language within the context of nearly all extended and prolonged oral communication, including grade-level appropriate academic discourse, with little need for clarification or repetition; recognizes and comprehends most grade-level appropriate vocabulary, including high-frequency academic language of the content area (L)