

LPAC Beginning-of-Year (BOY): Identification of English Language Learners (ELLs) Who Receive Special Education Services

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This vignette simulates an LPAC meeting that is conducted for the required identification of an English language learner, ELL, within the 20 school days of enrollment who also receives special education services. English language learner and student of limited English proficiency, LEP, are used interchangeably to refer to the same student. This dialogue is an example of the suggested discourse that should occur at the LPAC meeting. It is an excerpt that can be heard at a beginning of your LPAC meeting, paying particular attention to the identification of an ELL who is also a student in special education.

The individuals participating in the LPAC represent the required membership of the LPAC from a bilingual education program campus. In addition, as best practice, a special education representative that was present at the student's ARD has been invited to the LPAC meeting.

The following LPAC is composed of a campus administrator, LPAC chair/ bilingual educator, ESL teacher/ professional transitional language educator, professional special education educator, parent of a current ELL participating in the required bilingual or special language program, ESL. This parent may not be an employee of the school district.

We've been discussing several new students who may be eligible for bilingual services on our campus. Now let's discuss Nathan. Nathan is in pre-kindergarten this school year. We received the home language survey, or HLS, which indicates that Spanish is the only language spoken in his home.

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So based on these responses from the HLS and district procedures, Nathan was going to be administered an oral language proficiency test. However, I attended Nathan's ARD committee meeting as the LPAC representative, and in conjunction with these committee members, determined that the oral language proficiency test is not an appropriate assessment instrument.

That is correct. Actually, per Texas Education Code Chapter 29, "this language proficiency assessment committee may classify a student as limited English proficient if the student's disabilities are so severe that assessment procedures cannot be administered." However, in Nathan's case, his disability is not of such severity that assessment procedures cannot be administered. Ms. Riojas, a special education representative, is present for this part of the meeting to discuss in more detail some of the findings and suggestions from the ARD committee meeting.

Thank you for inviting me to your meeting today. At Nathan's ARD committee meeting, we determined that the OLPT would be an inappropriate assessment due specifically to the nature of Nathan's disability. And in conjunction with Mr. Castro and the LPAC representative at the meeting, we discussed and determined an appropriate assessment instrument and designated level of performance for indicating limited English proficiency.

Let's all take a moment to review the assessment results, and then, as a committee, discuss our recommendations on whether he will be identified as an English language learner and if he is eligible for placement in the bilingual program. Ms. Riojas, will you help us interpret the assessment results?

Yes, of course. And once the LPAC makes a recommendation, the ARD committee will hold another meeting and reconvene in conjunction with the LPAC representative from this meeting to discuss Nathan's entry into a bilingual education program.

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Based on Nathan's assessment results, what do we determine as a committee?

It looks like the student's listening and speaking skills are limited level in English.

I agree with Ms. Reyes. The results demonstrate that he is at a beginning English language proficiency level. Let's take a look at the ARD LPAC recommendations on the designated level of performance on this assessment.

In reviewing the assessment results, along with the home language survey, I think Nathan would benefit from receiving services from our district's bilingual program.

Does anyone else have additional comments about Nathan's assessment results? I'll report to the ARD committee that, based on the assessment results, the home language survey, and other pertinent information, we have reviewed Nathan should be identified as a student of limited English proficiency and is eligible to participate in our district's bilingual program.

I agree. It is necessary for him to receive instructions from a teacher who is able to meet his linguistic needs in the classroom.

Yes, Mrs. Reyes. It is essential that not only Nathan's linguistic needs are being met in the classroom, but also his special needs as they relate to his disability. In conjunction with Mr. Castro, the LPAC representative will attend Nathan's ARD committee meeting to report the LPAC's decisions. Nathan's identification is LEP and eligibility to participate in the bilingual program.

Furthermore, at this ARD committee meeting, together, we will review Nathan's educational needs as an ELL who qualifies for services in the special education program and ensure that his instructional arrangement is optimal to meeting both his linguistic and disability needs. We will document all of these decisions in his Individualized Education Plan, the IEP.

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Summary The LPAC must be conducted within 20 school days of enrollment. All LPAC members must be trained and certificates maintained on file. ARD committee members shall meet in conjunction with the LPAC to review the educational needs of each ELL who qualifies for services in the special education program. Oral language proficiency tests, OLPT, used by the district must be from the current list of approved tests for assessment of ELLs.

After the LPAC has identified the student as an ELL, a Parental Notification Identification and Placement form must be sent home to the parent or guardian for the approval of placement into a bilingual ESL program. All recommendations must be updated on the student's IEP and documentation maintained in the student's file. All LPAC members must review and sign documentation during the meeting.