

Proposed Performance Standards for the Academic Indicator Based on Student Test Scores in English Language Arts/Literacy and Mathematics for Grades Three through Eight, Definition of the English Learner Subgroup

This Addendum updates Attachment 1 from Item 2 of the State Board of Education (SBE) January 2017 meeting agenda

(<http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/ag/ag/yr17/documents/jan17item02.doc>). It provides:

- Background on the development of the accountability system to date as it relates to the Academic Indicator,
- An overview of the options for using scale scores, and
- Considerations for defining the English learner (EL) student group for the Academic Indicator.

Staff recommend that the SBE adopt the proposed performance standards for the Academic Indicator using the methodology known as Distance from Level 3 and defining the EL student group as ELs plus students who have been reclassified fluent-English-proficient (RFEP) for four years or less.

BACKGROUND

With the enactment of the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) in 2013, California changed how it provides resources to public schools and holds local educational agencies (LEAs)—school districts, county offices of education, and charter schools—accountable for improving student performance.

Unlike the former state and federal accountability systems, the Academic Performance Index (API) and No Child Left Behind (NCLB), LCFF uses multiple measures of student success to define a quality education more broadly than a single test score. California recognizes that establishing accountability targets that label the majority of schools as failures based on a single measure had not improved school performance.

LCFF requires that the new accountability system reflect a clear expectation that all LEAs and schools can and should improve and emphasizes equity by focusing on student group performance. LCFF replaces the former system of sanctions and punishment with a support system that focuses on helping all LEAs and schools improve. It will also provide additional support to LEAs with performance issues that affect one or more student groups and will help focus that support on the areas with the most need and areas most likely to improve student outcomes.

The SBE continues to implement key elements of the new accountability system. In adopting the evaluation rubrics, a new accountability tool required by LCFF, the SBE emphasizes the importance of supporting LEAs and schools to build their own capacity to improve performance, highlighting where there are disparities among student groups, and promoting continuous improvement by establishing the expectations that all LEAs and schools will improve, not just those identified for intervention.

Additionally, in the last decade NCLB has shown the limitations of setting accountability targets without context of where LEAs and schools are performing today. Although NCLB had substantial support initially, strong criticisms emerged within only a few years as the approach set almost all LEAs and schools up for failure. The SBE's new approach for establishing performance standards for the state indicators uses a methodology that considers the current distribution of performance (for both Status and Change), and reflects achievable improvement expectations for all LEAs and schools.

Throughout the development of the new accountability and continuous improvement system, the SBE has emphasized its commitment to review and revise the indicators and performance standards, as appropriate, as new data become available and as LEAs and stakeholders provide feedback on using the new accountability tool over time. (See the August 2016 Information Memorandum to the SBE titled, Update on Developing California's New Accountability and Continuous Improvement System Draft Timeline, <http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/pn/im/documents/memo-sbe-aug16item01.doc>).

The SBE has already demonstrated at prior SBE meetings a commitment to this principle of continuous improvement leading up to the adoption of the Academic Indicator. Specifically, at the SBE September 2016 meeting, the SBE decided that using one year of Smarter Balanced assessment data was not in the best interest of LEAs and schools and directed staff to incorporate the second year of Smarter Balanced assessment data to determine the "Change" results. At the SBE November 2016 meeting, the SBE requested the use of scale scores to calculate the Academic Indicator results to provide a more precise measure of LEA and school status and progress. Additionally, at the SBE November 2016 meeting the SBE directed California Department of Education (CDE) staff to propose a definition for the EL student group for the Academic Indicator. Finally, Attachment 2 of this item identifies a proposed timeline for further refinement of the Academic Indicator with the development of a methodology for a student-level growth model for accountability purposes, which will be incorporated into the Academic Indicator in fall 2018.

SETTING PERFORMANCE STANDARDS FOR THE ACADEMIC INDICATOR

The SBE must still decide on a methodology for setting performance standards for the Academic Indicator for the initial phase of the new accountability system.

With the adoption of the more rigorous Common Core State Standards for English language arts and mathematics, students are expected to demonstrate critical thinking, analytical writing, and problem-solving skills needed to be ready for college and the 21st century job market. The new assessment system design also better measures these skills through computer-adaptive tests and performance tasks.

While LEAs have successfully administered the Smarter Balanced summative assessments over the past two years, California's public schools are still transitioning to the new standards and assessment system, which are much more rigorous and have higher expectations than the prior system. Significant work remains to continue to

provide support to all schools/educators delivering high-quality standards-aligned instruction using formative assessments and the summative assessment results to improve local practices.

Use and Adoption of Scale Scores in the Assessment System

California's new assessment system uses vertically aligned scale scores. Students who take the assessment receive a scale score, which falls between the lowest and highest scores available on the scale for that grade. Vertical alignment is the practice of placing all of the possible test scores on a common scale across grade levels. This provides a basis for describing individual student progress over time, setting goals, and ultimately determining whether students are on track for college and career readiness.

When considering using scale scores for the Academic Indicator, as requested by the SBE, it is important to note the role of these scores in an accountability system versus in the assessment system.

With the adoption of the new assessment system in 2013, California *Education Code (EC)* Section 60648 delegated the role of setting performance standards for the summative assessment to the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (Consortium). For all other assessments, the SBE has the authority to adopt performance standards.

The Consortium utilized a multi-step process to establish achievement levels that involved educators from across the United States. The first step in the process consisted of an online panel of thousands of teachers as well as other interested parties. The online panel reviewed test questions and recommended the level of performance required for students to be considered on-track to college and career readiness, which is conditional evidence that a student is ready for entry-level, transferable, credit-bearing college courses and is not meant to convey which students could successfully graduate with a college degree.

The next step in the process involved an in-person panel of approximately 500 participants nominated from Smarter Balanced governing states, including California representatives. The panel consisted of educators, higher education faculty, and other content experts. The panel, utilizing their expertise as well as data from the online panel, made recommendations on the threshold scores for the achievement levels. Additionally, a subset of the in-person panel made cross-grade comparisons and recommendations for smoothing the threshold scores across grades.

The final step in the process involved presenting the recommendations to the chief school officers from the governing states who voted on the recommended threshold scores. Finally, the Consortium plans to review the Smarter Balanced threshold scores to determine if adjustments are necessary.

The process utilized for setting the Smarter Balanced threshold scores differed in some aspects from how threshold scores for other assessments have historically been

established in California. While the same standard setting approach was utilized, namely the Bookmark method, SBE approval was not required, as previously indicated.

Use and Adoption of Scale Scores in the Accountability System

Under LCFF, the SBE is required to adopt standards for performance and improvement within all LCFF priorities areas, including Pupil Achievement (Priority 4), which includes results on state academic assessments. As a result, the SBE has the authority to establish performance standards on the Academic Indicator for accountability purposes that do not rely on the threshold scores established by Smarter Balanced for reporting individual student results in the assessment system. This option, however, would require additional communication with the field to understand the selection of these different criteria from the annual Smarter Balanced summative assessment results.

Unlike the development of the new assessment system, LCFF requires the SBE to review and select the indicators. Specifically for the Academic Indicator, the SBE may use its discretion to set performance standards for schools and LEAs. As part of this discretion, the SBE can consider the broader policy context for how the initial performance standards fit into the overall statewide implementation of the new, more rigorous state academic standards and accompanying computer-adaptive assessment system.

Proposed Methodology Using Scale Scores

In response to the SBE's request to use scale scores, the CDE worked with the Technical Design Group (TDG) on multiple approaches, focusing on a methodology known as Distance from Level 3 (i.e., Distance from "Standard Met"). This approach measures how far (or the distance) each student is from the Level 3 Smarter Balanced performance level.

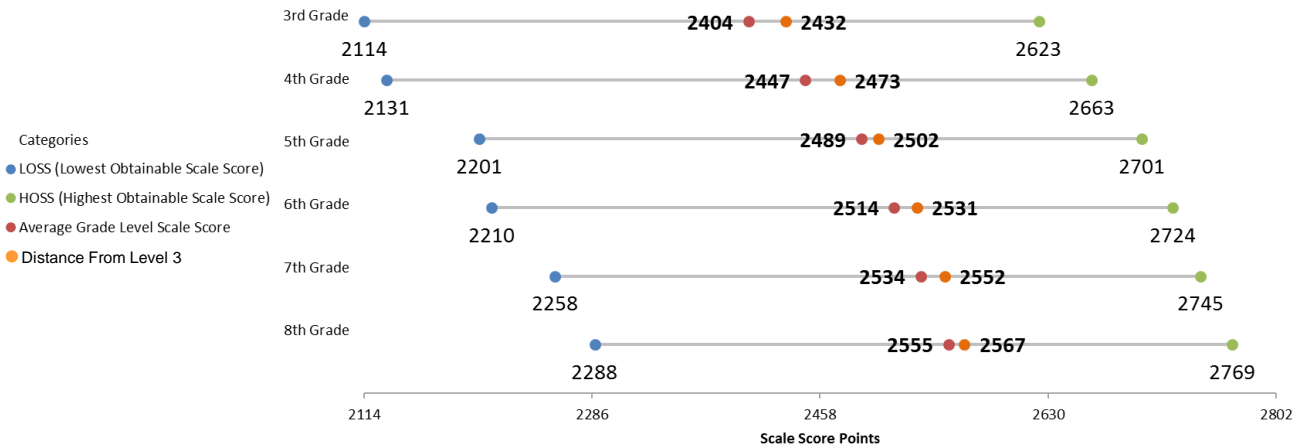
For example, for the grade five California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) mathematics test, the lowest scale score for Level 3 is 2528. In this methodology, each grade five mathematics assessment score is compared to 2528, which will provide the "distance" from the lowest possible Level 3 score. If a student received a score of 2505, that student would be 23 points below Level 3. If a student received a score of 2535 that student would be 7 points above Level 3. Once all students' scores are compared to the fixed point on the scale (i.e., Level 3), the distance results would be averaged to produce a school-level average scale score and an average scale score for each student group. The results will show, on average, the needed improvement to bring the average student to Level 3 or the extent to which the average student exceeds Level 3. Using scale scores, rather than a performance level, provides a more precise measure on how far students are from the fixed point on the scale.

In addition to using Level 3 as the fixed point for comparing scores, the SBE requested the CDE to review other criteria that examines the “distance” from a fixed point on the vertical scale. As a result, CDE staff researched the following four criteria:

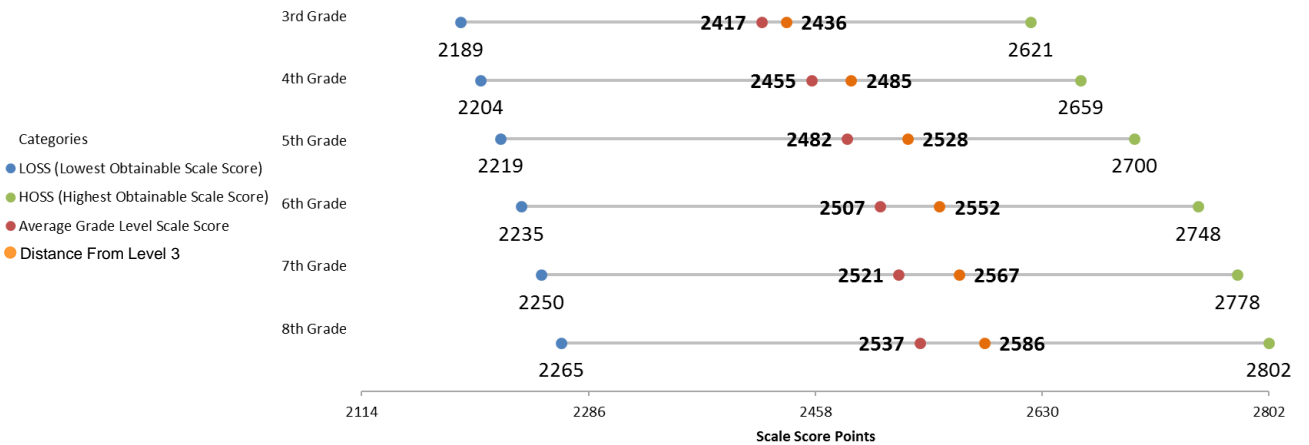
- 1) Distance From Level 3
- 2) Distance From the statewide average (by grade)
- 3) Distance From Level 2 (i.e., distance from “Nearly Met”),
- 4) Distance to the lowest obtainable scale score (LOSS)

The charts below show the relationship of the fixed points on the Smarter Balanced scale by grade.

Fixed Points for ELA Scale Scores



Fixed Points for Math Scale Scores



Prior to analyzing the four criteria, the CDE requested assistance from CDE's CAASPP testing vendor, Educational Testing Services (ETS), regarding the proposed methodology for using scale scores. ETS provided the following feedback on the options presented by the CDE.

Feedback from Educational Testing Services on Distance From Level 3, Level 2, and Statewide Average

- The Smarter Balanced grade level assessments are designed to place all scores on a common scale for a school or LEA, but the comparability of scale score points across grades is complex and presents challenges when used with an accountability system with multiple grade configurations. If scale scores are not comparable, schools or LEAs with differing grade configurations may not have comparable results.
- Even if the scale scores are accepted as comparable across grades, the scale score ranges vary across grades, particularly for mathematics. For example:
 - The scale score points for grade three mathematics is from 2189 to 2621, which is a range of 432 points.
 - In comparison, the scale score points for grade eight mathematics is from 2265 to 2802, which is a range of 537 points.
- Grades with a smaller range of scale scores will have a narrower distribution compared to grades with a larger range.
- The average Distance From Level 3 and Distance From Level 2 for schools and LEAs will be sensitive to their grade configuration. For instance, for mathematics, schools with only secondary students will have more extreme values for their average than schools with only elementary students because the ranges in mathematics are larger for secondary grades.
- The concerns stated above also apply to the statewide average. In addition, unlike the Level 3 or Level 2 cut scores, the statewide average was not set by an expert standard-setting panel and does not carry the same substantive interpretation about student performance.

Feedback from Educational Testing Services on Distance from the Lowest Obtainable Scale Score

- The LOSS was not set at the same percentile ranks across grades and was not set to carry the same substantive meaning about student performance across grades (unlike the Level 3 or Level 2 cut scores).

- The LOSS was not established through an expert judgment standard-setting panel and are not intended to be comparable across grades.

Feedback from Educational Testing Services on Standardizing Scale Scores Across Grades

- Because scale score ranges vary across grade levels, another option is to standardize the scores (e.g., z-scores) to allow for comparisons. However, the results may be interpreted inaccurately and challenging to explain.
- Standardizing scale scores will have a larger impact in some grade levels than others and may mask substantive differences in variability across grade levels.

Stakeholder Input on the Scale Score Methodology

Since the November 2016 SBE meeting, CDE staff solicited feedback on the use of scale scores in the Academic Indicator. In addition to the summaries listed below, CDE staff presented this information to the Regional Assessment Network, Capitol Assessment Network, California County Superintendents Educational Services Association-Curriculum and Instruction Steering Committee, and CAASPP Stakeholder Group.

Technical Design Group

The CDE discussed the four criteria and concerns raised by ETS with the TDG at its December 2016 meeting. In response, the TDG agreed that scale scores should not be standardized. Although there are differences in scale scores across the grades, members acknowledged that it was a state of the art effort to create the vertical scale and experts deliberately set the benchmarks for Levels 2 and 3. Standardizing the scale score will distort the vertical scale and essentially make it meaningless.

The TDG members agreed there are issues of comparability for schools with varying grades; however, this issue also exists when using percent of students that meet or exceed standards. Most kindergarten through grade six schools have more students at or above standards in mathematics than middle schools. However, this is not due to the effects of the scale scores, but is the result of real variance and the capacity to do mathematics between grades; for example, grade three and grade eight.

The TDG had an in-depth discussion regarding the criteria for using the statewide average as a fixed point on the scale. They agreed with ETS that the statewide average was not set by an expert standard-setting panel and does not carry the same substantial meaning about student performance across grades. Members also expressed that:

- The scale scores were deliberately chosen and using an average would essentially standardize the scores.
- Using the state average sends a message that all grades are doing equally well.
- There is an anticipation that scores (or performance) will increase more rapidly over time in the lower grades than in the higher grade. Therefore, the average selected for the baseline will be out of alignment very quickly.
- The statewide average is more aligned to a norm reference process than to a criterion reference process that was used to develop the Smarter Balanced scale.
- Using the statewide average is unstable because the average will move differentially across grade levels each time it is computed.
- A lot of work has gone into defining Level 3. Selecting a different reference point (such as statewide average) that has not yet been defined is not appropriate.

After reviewing each of the four criteria, the TDG members recommended the Distance From Level 3 be used as the fixed point for the following reasons:

- Using Distance From Level 3 provides a sound basis for comparisons across grades.
- Parents have an understanding of the knowledge and skills that Level 3 (i.e., Standard Met) represents.
- Selecting a fixed point other than Level 3 presents a communication challenge with the field to understand why the selection of these criteria are not in alignment with the Smarter Balanced performance levels.
- The state average has no relationship to where student performance is on the Smarter Balanced performance levels, making it more difficult for schools to identify successes and to determine next steps, thus making it more difficult to communicate than Distance From Level 3.

Although the Distance From Level 3 criteria will result in some schools having an average below Level 3, TDG members indicated that as long as the criteria were well explained, stakeholders should not have difficulty in comprehending performance that is “below”, as well as “above”, Distance From Level 3. In addition, the majority of stakeholders may only view the top-level data display of the new Web-based system, which shows only the performance level (Blue, Green, Yellow, Orange, Red). So they may not review the more detailed reports that will display the results used to determine the performance level. To make the report more user friendly, language like “below” could replace the minus sign, which may reduce undue attention to negative numbers and promote conversations about school performance.

California Practitioners Advisory Group

The CDE also presented the “distance from a fixed point” methodology and the four criteria to the California Practitioners Advisory Group (CPAG) at their December 2016 meeting. The consensus from the group was in support of using Distance From Level 3. Members agreed that the LOSS criteria should be eliminated, but there was no consensus on Distance From Level 2 or the statewide average.

2016 California Educational Research Association Conference

The CDE presented the methodology and four criteria at the 2016 California Educational Research Association (CERA) annual conference in early December during the general session. When asked which criteria they most preferred, 114 of the audience members responded, via instant polling, the following:

1. Distance from Level 3	76 (67%)
2. Distance from Level 2	7 (6%)
3. Distance from lowest possible score	15 (13%)
4. Distance from statewide average score	16 (14%)

Summary and Recommendation for Adoption of Performance Standards

The CDE is recommending using Distance From Level 3 as the fixed point on the Smarter Balanced scale for the Status in the Academic Indicator based on the technical advice of ETS and the TDG, which includes:

- The Distance From Level 3 was established using an expert standard-setting panel and carries substantial meaning about student performance across grades.
- Using Distance From Level 3 provides a basis for comparisons across grades.
- Distance From Level 3 is easier to communicate than other fixed points.

In addition, the feedback provided by CPAG members, CERA participants, and other stakeholder groups overwhelmingly supported using Distance From Level 3 as the fixed point for the scale score methodology.

The proposed cut scores for the Distance From Level 3 methodology are included in the 5X5 grids included in Appendix 1, starting on page 19. The ELA cut scores are on pages 19 and 20, and the mathematics cut scores are on pages 23 and 24. In addition to the cut scores, the 5X5 grids display the number and percent of LEAs and schools in

the five performance categories and their location on the 5X5 grid. Student group results for ELA are provided on pages 21 and 22, and student group results for mathematics are provided on pages 25 and 26. NOTE: The proposed cut scores include a change to the 5X5 grid compared to other state indicators. The Low Status/Maintained Change box is Yellow, instead of Orange. This adjustment was necessary to establish an appropriate distribution across the five performance levels, particularly in light of the criteria for determining LEA eligibility for technical assistance, which are Red on one assessment and Red or Orange on the other.

ENGLISH LEARNER STUDENT GROUP DEFINITION FOR THE ACADEMIC INDICATOR

Historical and Current State and Federal Definitions for English Learners

Under the prior state and federal accountability systems, California had a unique definition for ELs compared to other states. Specifically, the State Accountability Workbook, approved by the U.S. Department of Education, defined ELs as: (1) students who are currently EL based on the results of the California English Language Development Test (CELDT), or (2) students who are reclassified (i.e., RFEP) who had not scored proficient or above on the English-language arts test three times after being reclassified. California also used this definition for the EL student group under the API. All other states under the former federal accountability system were restricted to including RFEP students in the EL student group for no more than three years.

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) includes a provision that allows states to include RFEP students in the EL student group no longer than four years in the academic accountability measure. States are required to define the EL student group for the academic measures in the state plan, which provides California with the opportunity to re-evaluate the definition of the EL student group in the Academic Indicator.

This issue is particularly important for California due to the absence in current state law of a standard statewide definition for reclassifying students who are ELs. *Education Code* Section 313(f) states that multiple measures must be used to reclassify ELs and must include, at a minimum, all four of the following criteria:

- 1) Assessment of English language proficiency
- 2) Teacher evaluation
- 3) Parental opinion and consultation
- 4) Comparison of student performance in basic skills against an empirically established range of performance in basic skills based on the performance of English proficient students of the same age.

Further, Title 5, *California Code of Regulations*, Section 11303 requires LEAs to establish local reclassification policies that allow for “the effective and efficient conduct of the language reclassification process.” Therefore, the decision to reclassify students is ultimately a local decision and there is considerable variation across the state.

English Learner Student Group in the New Accountability System

LCFF and the ESSA require ELs to make progress towards English proficiency. As detailed in the July 2016 SBE Memorandum (<http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/ag/ag/yr16/documents/jul16item02.doc>), EL progress is determined using two data sources: (1) the CELDT, and (2) reclassification data.

For the EL Progress Indicator, formally known as the English Learner Indicator, “Status” is the percent of ELs that moved up at least one performance level on the CELDT from prior year to current year plus the percent of EL students reclassified in the prior year. “Change” is based on the difference in “Status” from current year to prior year.

In the new accountability system, the EL student group is included in all state indicators and is the only student group with its own indicator, the English Learner Progress Indicator. The EL student group, unlike other student groups, is expected to change over time to accommodate newly arrived ELs and those students exiting due to reclassification. At the May 2016 SBE meeting, the SBE expressed its intent to adjust this indicator in the future with the implementation of the English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC), and to accommodate new data sources including Long-term English learner (LTEL) and ELs “At-Risk” of becoming Long-term ELs. In addition, CDE created an English Learner Progress Indicator Workgroup comprised of EL program experts, researchers, and school and district representatives. The Work Group has met twice since October 2016 to discuss these issues and provide recommendations to CDE on options for updating this indicator.

When developing the methodology for the state indicators, the CDE used the criteria in Table 1 to define the EL student group for purposes of data simulations. The SBE subsequently requested at the November 2016 meeting that staff review the criteria and consider alternatives for the EL student group for the Academic Indicator.

Table 1: Criteria for English Learners in the New Accountability System

State Indicator	Criteria
English Learner Progress	Current EL annual CELDT test takers (grades 1–12) plus students reclassified in the prior year
Academic	ELs (grades 3–8) plus students who have been RFEP for four years or less* Note: (This is similar to the criteria used in the prior state and federal accountability systems.)
Graduation	Students with an EL status at any time in grades 9–12 (Same criteria since the initial release of the cohort graduation rate)
College/Career**	Students with an EL status at any time in grades 9-12
Suspension (Note: Chronic Absenteeism will be added when data is available)	Current EL students (grades K–12)

*Note: This definition is based on what is permitted by ESSA.

**Note: The College/Career Indicator is included as a local indicator during the initial phase of the new accountability system. The SBE will revisit the College/Career Indicator in the fall when two years of grade 11 Smarter Balanced assessment results are available.

English Learners in the Academic Indicator

The Academic Indicator provides information on how well students at an LEA or school are mastering the ELA and mathematics standards based on the CAASPP assessments. The SBE adopted a methodology to set performance standards for state indicators that establishes cut points for Status and Change based on the distribution of performance. The established cut points will remain in place for a specific number of years as determined by the SBE. This methodology ensures an appropriate distribution across the five performance levels and provides all schools and LEAs the ability to demonstrate improvement.

Unlike other student groups, the definition of EL student group is much more fluid because reclassified students exit the group and newly arrived ELs enter the group, especially in elementary schools. In addition, the EL student group results should align with the principles established by the methodology: (1) an appropriate distribution across the performance levels, and (2) the ability to improve and move up in performance levels.

The SBE requested the CDE to consider the effect of alternate definitions of the EL student groups and run data simulations for the following three definitions of ELs in the Academic Indicator:

1. Students identified as EL plus students who were RFEP for **four** years or less
2. Students identified as EL plus students who were RFEP for **two** years or less
3. Students identified as EL based on the CELDT only

Tables 2 and 3 display the number of LEAs and schools identified in each of the performance categories based on the three definitions listed above. Note that:

- The number of LEAs and schools that have 30 or more students in the EL student group varies by each EL student group definition
- LCFF defines student groups as numerically significant, if a student group consists of 30 or more students. The foster youth and homeless student groups are the exception to the N size of 30. These two groups are numerically significant if they consist of 15 or more students.
- The data displayed is based on the Distance from Level 3 methodology that CDE recommends the SBE approve for use in the Academic Indicator.

Table 2: LEA Distribution of the English Learner Student Group: ELA Academic Indicator Performance Categories by Student Group Definition

EL Student Group Definition	Red	Orange	Yellow	Green	Blue	Total	Difference
EL Plus Four Years RFEP or Less	102 (9.8%)	121 (11.6%)	679 (65.3%)	94 (9%)	44 (4.2%)	1,040	N/A
EL plus Two Years RFEP or Less	163 (17%)	177 (18.5%)	545 (57%)	49 (5.1%)	23 (2.4%)	957	-83
EL Only	272 (32%)	243 (28.7%)	313 (37%)	14 (1.7)	5 (0.6%)	847	-193

Table 3: School Distribution of the English Learner Student Group: ELA Academic Indicator Performance Categories by Student Group Definition

EL Student Group Definition	Red	Orange	Yellow	Green	Blue	Total	Difference
EL Plus Four Years RFEP or Less	760 (13.3%)	847 (14.8%)	3,271 (57.2%)	507 (8.9%)	337 (5.9%)	5,722	N/A
EL plus Two Years RFEP or Less	1,142 (21.3%)	985 (18.4%)	2,779 (52%)	242 (4.5%)	201 (3.8%)	5,349	-373
EL Only	1,818 (40.3%)	1,153 (25.6%)	1,469 (32.6%)	40 (0.9%)	29 (0.6%)	4,509	-1213

Tables 2 and 3 indicate that the number of LEAs and schools with a valid N size for accountability purposes decreased with the removal of RFEP students. In addition, the number of LEAs and schools identified in the Red performance category with a valid N size increased substantially when RFEP students are excluded from the student group definition, with a smaller but significant increase also occurred when including two-year RFEPs.

Stakeholder Input on the English Learner Definition

Since the November 2016 SBE meeting, CDE staff solicited extensive feedback on the definition of ELs for the Academic Indicator. Similar to the scale score discussion, CDE staff presented this information to the groups whose feedback is summarized below, along with the following: Regional Assessment Network, Capitol Assessment Network, California County Superintendents Educational Services Association-Curriculum and Instruction Steering Committee, and CAASPP Stakeholder Group, and Accountability Leadership Institute (ALI) for English Learner and Immigrant Student Programs.

English Learner Progress Indicator Work Group

At their December 2016 meeting, the English Learner Progress Indicator Work Group had three guest presenters courtesy of the Council of Chief State School Officers: Pete Goldschmidt from the California State University, Northridge; Kenji Hakuta from Stanford University; and Delia Pompa with Migration Policy Institute. The guest speakers presented on the multiple issues that states must consider when incorporating EL progress into the accountability systems.

This provided Work Group members a foundation before considering the three definitions of the EL student group for the Academic Indicator. However, after

considerable discussion, which included short-term and long-term solutions, the Work Group did not come to a consensus. Work Group members evenly split in support of the inclusion of ELs only in the group while the other half supported including ELs plus four years of RFEP. However, the Work Group did agree that there is a need to have standard statewide criteria for reclassifying students.

Technical Design Group

The TDG also discussed this information at their December 2016 meeting, and recommended defining the EL student group in the Academic Indicator as ELs plus students who were RFEP for four years or less for the following reasons:

- Because reclassification criteria vary by LEA, the EL and RFEP student populations may have different demographics across LEAs and schools, making comparability an issue in an accountability system. For example, the EL only students in one district may have more students performing at CELDT levels 1 and 2, compared to other districts that may have more students who are proficient on the CELDT in their EL group. This same issue would also apply to the RFEP student group because LEAs have different criteria for reclassifying students. Therefore, including students who are RFEP for four years stabilizes the group, allowing for better comparison across LEAs and schools.
- The Academic Indicator should evaluate the effectiveness of the entire EL program from initial designation through successful reclassification. A strong EL program should move students toward language proficiency as quickly as possible to allow students better access to the curriculum while supporting EL students in their mastery of the standards in all content areas. Including RFEP students in the Academic Indicator will identify LEAs and schools whose full continuum of EL students (CELDT Levels 1-5 and RFEP) have not received the support necessary to master the standards measured by the statewide assessments.
- Including RFEPs in the EL student group increases the indicator's ability to differentiation among LEAs and schools, which is a key function of a well-designed accountability system.
- Excluding RFEP from the group significantly reduces the number of schools with a valid N size for accountability purposes for their EL students.

California Practitioners Advisory Group

The CDE also shared this data with the CPAG members at their December 2016 meeting. CPAG members broke out into work groups and, after considerable discussion, the consensus was to exclude RFEPs from the EL student group for transparency purposes. However, members also raised concerns that excluding RFEP

students may cause too many schools and/or LEAs to receive a Red performance category and suggested reporting EL and RFEP students separately (as it is for the CAASPP).

2016 California Educational Research Association Conference

One of the polling questions at CERA asked the audience which EL student group definition they would recommend for the Academic Indicator. The 115 audience member responses were as follows:

- a. ELs plus 4-years of RFEP 43 (37%)
- b. ELs plus 2-years of RFEP 25 (22%)
- c. ELs only 47 (41%)

Unintended Consequences for Each Definition

Since there was no consensus in the feedback that CDE received on this topic from various stakeholders, CDE staff further reviewed the data and found the following:

- Excluding RFEP students may result in an inability for schools to achieve the Green and Blue performance categories if they reclassify their students. This may incentivize schools not to reclassify EL students. Analyses found schools that were in the Blue and Green performance category, based on EL only, had EL student groups that were comprised of large numbers of students who scored Met or Exceeded Standard on the statewide assessments. In many other LEAs, these students would have been reclassified.
- Many schools would be identified as needing to improve their EL programs, when their schools are successfully helping EL students gain language proficiency while gaining academic skills that allow them to perform well on the academic assessment after they are reclassified. Schools in the Blue or Green performance category when 4-years of RFEP were included in the Academic Indicator received a Red performance category when RFEP were excluded. However, these schools had large numbers of reclassified students who were performing as well as, or better than, the English only students on the statewide assessments. Excluding RFEPs resulted in these schools receiving a Red performance category based largely on the demographics of their EL student group.
- Identifying a large number of EL student groups in the Red performance category may not help districts distinguish strengths and weaknesses as they determine their priorities and allocate resources.

Recommended Definition

The CDE recommends defining the EL student group in the Academic Indicator as EL students plus students who have been RFEP for four year or less. The recommendation is based on a theory of action that utilizes both indicators (Academic and English Learner Progress) to measure two different aspects of EL success: (1) making sufficient progress toward language acquisition to increase EL access to the curriculum in all content areas, and (2) evaluating the strength of the entire EL program from initial designation through successful reclassification.

This approach will better differentiate the performance of EL students and therefore identify those LEAs and schools that are struggling in one or both areas. However, it will be important to review the data closely and potentially revisit this decision in response to changes that are likely to occur in the coming years, most notably the implementation of the new language development assessment in 2018. Potential legislation to modify the reclassification criteria currently in the Education Code may also prompt the SBE to revisit the Academic and English Learner Indicators, which is consistent with the SBE's commitment to review and revise the indicators and performance standards, as appropriate.

Appendix 1: Proposed Cut Scores for the Distance from Level 3 Methodology for English Language Arts and Mathematics

**District ELA Academic Indicator - Distance From Level 3
 Change in Average Distance From Level 3**

Average Distance From Level 3	Level	Declined Significantly by more than 15 points	Declined by 1 to 15 points	Maintained Declined by less than 1 point or Improved by less than 7 points	Increased by 7 to less than 20 points	Increased Significantly by 20 points or more
	Very High 45 or more points above	1 (0.1%) Yellow	9 (0.6%) Green	35 (2.2%) Blue	93 (5.9%) Blue	22 (1.4%) Blue
	High 10 above to less than 45 points above	3 (0.2%) Orange	26 (1.7%) Yellow	81 (5.2%) Green	147 (9.4%) Green	58 (3.7%) Blue
	Medium 5 below to less than 10 points above	3 (0.2%) Orange	25 (1.6%) Orange	58 (3.7%) Yellow	89 (5.7%) Green	25 (1.6%) Green
	Low More than 5 below to 70 points below	21 (1.3%) Red	130 (8.3%) Orange	221 (14.1%) Yellow	336 (21.5%) Yellow	103 (6.6%) Yellow
	Very Low More than 70 points below	12 (0.8%) Red	26 (1.7%) Red	21 (1.3%) Red	15 (1%) Orange	6 (0.4%) Yellow

Statewide District Performance

# of Districts	Red	Orange	Yellow	Green	Blue
1,566	80 (5.1%)	176 (11.2%)	751 (48%)	351 (22.4%)	208 (13.3%)

NOTE: The proposed cut scores include a change to the 5X5 grid compared to other state indicators. The Low Status/Maintained Change box is Yellow, instead of Orange. This adjustment was necessary to establish an appropriate distribution across the five performance levels, particularly in light of the criteria for determining LEA eligibility for technical assistance, which are Red on one assessment and Red or Orange on the other.

School ELA Academic Indicator - Distance From Level 3

Change in Average Distance From Level 3

Average Distance From Level 3	Level	Declined Significantly by more than 15 points	Declined by 1 to 15 points	Maintained Declined by less than 1 point or Improved by less than 7 points	Increased by 7 to less than 20 points	Increased Significantly by 20 points or more
	Very High 45 or more points above	2 (0%) Yellow	64 (0.9%) Green	202 (2.8%) Blue	446 (6.2%) Blue	140 (2%) Blue
	High 10 above to less than 45 points above	7 (0.1%) Orange	109 (1.5%) Yellow	320 (4.5%) Green	578 (8.1%) Green	260 (3.6%) Blue
	Medium 5 below to less than 10 points above	7 (0.1%) Orange	81 (1.1%) Orange	173 (2.4%) Yellow	310 (4.3%) Green	148 (2.1%) Green
	Low More than 5 below to 70 points below	73 (1%) Red	690 (9.6%) Orange	959 (13.4%) Yellow	1,495 (20.9%) Yellow	561 (7.8%) Yellow
	Very Low More than 70 points below	44 (0.6%) Red	193 (2.7%) Red	144 (2%) Red	130 (1.8%) Orange	21 (0.3%) Yellow

Statewide School Performance

# of Schools	Red	Orange	Yellow	Green	Blue
7,157	454 (6.3%)	915 (12.8%)	3,320 (46.4%)	1,420 (19.8%)	1,048 (14.6%)

School Performance by School Type

School Type	Red	Orange	Yellow	Green	Blue
Non-Charter n=6,389	409 (6.4%)	809 (12.7%)	2,994 (46.9%)	1,248 (19.5%)	929 (14.5%)
Charter n=768	45 (5.9%)	106 (13.8%)	326 (42.4%)	172 (22.4%)	119 (15.5%)
Non-Small Schools n=7,066	440 (6.2%)	901 (12.8%)	3,284 (46.5%)	1,407 (19.9%)	1,034 (14.6%)
Small Schools n=91	14 (15.4%)	14 (15.4%)	36 (39.6%)	13 (14.3%)	14 (15.4%)

**District Level Academic Indicator: ELA
 Student Group Results**

Student Groups	Total*	Red	Orange	Yellow	Green	Blue
All Districts (Total = 1,566)	1,566	80 (5.1%)	176 (11.2%)	751 (48.0%)	351 (22.4%)	208 (13.3%)
African American	422	68 (16.1%)	64 (15.2%)	232 (55.0%)	48 (11.4%)	10 (2.4%)
Asian	427	1 (0.2%)	16 (3.8%)	67 (15.7%)	111 (26.0%)	232 (54.3%)
Filipino	258	1 (0.4%)	7 (2.7%)	20 (7.8%)	123 (47.7%)	107 (41.5%)
Hispanic/Latino	1,244	77 (6.2%)	171 (13.8%)	781 (62.8%)	156 (12.5%)	59 (4.7%)
Native American	92	20 (21.7%)	16 (17.4%)	50 (54.4%)	5 (5.4%)	1 (1.1%)
Pacific Islander	98	1 (1.0%)	12 (12.2%)	68 (69.4%)	14 (14.3%)	3 (3.1%)
Two or More Races	365	1 (0.3%)	27 (7.4%)	96 (26.3%)	126 (34.5%)	115 (31.5%)
White	1,108	16 (1.4%)	103 (9.3%)	329 (29.7%)	381 (34.4%)	279 (25.2%)
Socioeconomically Disadvantaged	1,373	108 (7.9%)	212 (15.4%)	887 (64.6%)	122 (8.9%)	44 (3.2%)
English learners (0 years of RFEP)	847	272 (32.1%)	243 (28.7%)	313 (37.0%)	14 (1.7%)	5 (0.6%)
English learners (2 years of RFEP)	957	163 (17.0%)	177 (18.5%)	545 (57.0%)	49 (5.1%)	23 (2.4%)
English learners (4 years of RFEP)	1,040	102 (9.8%)	121 (11.6%)	679 (65.3%)	94 (9.0%)	44 (4.2%)
Students with Disabilities	827	413 (49.9%)	162 (19.6%)	227 (27.5%)	18 (2.2%)	7 (0.9%)

*Total = Number of districts with 30 or more students at the district level and student group level taking the CAASPP.

**School Level Academic Indicator: ELA
 Student Group Results**

Student Groups	Total*	Red	Orange	Yellow	Green	Blue
All Schools (Total = 7,157)	7,157	454 (6.3%)	915 (12.8%)	3,320 (46.4%)	1,420 (19.8%)	1,048 (14.6%)
African American	1,316	373 (28.3%)	237 (18.0%)	597 (45.4%)	74 (5.6%)	35 (2.7%)
Asian	1,702	23 (1.4%)	85 (5.0%)	229 (13.5%)	408 (24.0%)	957 (56.2%)
Filipino	442	2 (0.5%)	24 (5.4%)	69 (15.6%)	138 (31.2%)	209 (47.3%)
Hispanic/Latino	6,277	504 (8.0%)	965 (15.4%)	3,713 (59.2%)	801 (12.8%)	294 (4.7%)
Native American	25	9 (36.0%)	3 (12.0%)	11 (44.0%)	2 (8.0%)	-
Pacific Islander	9	-	3 (33.3%)	4 (44.4%)	1 (11.1%)	1 (11.1%)
Two or More Races	558	9 (1.6%)	51 (9.1%)	70 (12.5%)	150 (26.9%)	278 (49.8%)
White	4,047	104 (2.6%)	399 (9.9%)	979 (24.2%)	1,257 (31.1%)	1,308 (32.3%)
Socioeconomically Disadvantaged	6,569	626 (9.5%)	1,118 (17.0%)	3,972 (60.5%)	642 (9.8%)	211 (3.2%)
English learners (0 years of RFEP)	4,509	1,818 (40.3%)	1,153 (25.6%)	1,469 (32.6%)	40 (0.9%)	29 (0.6%)
English learners (2 years of RFEP)	5,349	1,142 (21.4%)	985 (18.4%)	2,779 (52.0%)	242 (4.5%)	201 (3.8%)
English learners (4 years of RFEP)	5,722	760 (13.3%)	847 (14.8%)	3,271 (57.2%)	507 (8.9%)	337 (5.9%)
Students with Disabilities	4,153	1,991 (47.9%)	965 (23.2%)	1,060 (25.5%)	87 (2.1%)	50 (1.2%)

*Total = Number of schools with 30 or more students at the school level and student group level taking the CAASPP.

- = No data available due to less than 30 for that subgroup taking the CAASPP.

District Math Academic Indicator - Distance From Level 3

Change in Average Distance From Level 3

Average Distance From 3	Level	Declined Significantly by more than 10 points	Declined by 1 to 10 points	Maintained Declined by less than 1 point or Improved by less than 5 points	Increased by 5 to less than 15 points	Increased Significantly by 15 points or more
	Very High 35 or more points above	0 (0%) Yellow	5 (0.3%) Green	16 (1%) Blue	63 (4%) Blue	35 (2.2%) Blue
	High 5 below to less than 35 points above	9 (0.6%) Orange	33 (2.1%) Yellow	44 (2.8%) Green	130 (8.3%) Green	77 (4.9%) Blue
	Medium More than 5 points below to 25 points below	9 (0.6%) Orange	28 (1.8%) Orange	50 (3.2%) Yellow	86 (5.5%) Green	53 (3.4%) Green
	Low More than 25 points below to 95 points below	66 (4.2%) Red	152 (9.7%) Orange	215 (13.7%) Yellow	292 (18.7%) Yellow	128 (8.2%) Yellow
	Very Low More than 95 points below	18 (1.2%) Red	22 (1.4%) Red	12 (0.8%) Red	18 (1.2%) Orange	4 (0.3%) Yellow

Statewide District Performance

# of Districts	Red	Orange	Yellow	Green	Blue
1,565	118 (7.5%)	216 (13.8%)	722 (46.1%)	318 (20.3%)	191 (12.2%)

School Math Academic Indicator - Distance From Level 3

Change in Average Distance From Level 3

Average Distance From Level 3	Level	Declined Significantly by more than 10 points	Declined by 1 to 10 points	Maintained Declined by less than 1 point or Improved by less than 5 points	Increased by 5 to less than 15 points	Increased Significantly by 15 points or more
	Very High 35 or more points above	7 (0.1%) Yellow	65 (0.9%) Green	112 (1.6%) Blue	330 (4.6%) Blue	155 (2.2%) Blue
	High 5 below to less than 35 points above	24 (0.3%) Orange	130 (1.8%) Yellow	255 (3.6%) Green	491 (6.9%) Green	369 (5.2%) Blue
	Medium More than 5 points below to 25 points below	29 (0.4%) Orange	131 (1.8%) Orange	171 (2.4%) Yellow	353 (4.9%) Green	260 (3.6%) Green
	Low More than 25 points below to 95 points below	276 (3.9%) Red	737 (10.3%) Orange	908 (12.7%) Yellow	1,257 (17.6%) Yellow	664 (9.3%) Yellow
	Very Low More than 95 points below	94 (1.3%) Red	127 (1.8%) Red	84 (1.2%) Red	97 (1.4%) Orange	29 (0.4%) Yellow

Statewide School Performance

# of Schools	Red	Orange	Yellow	Green	Blue
7,155	581 (8.1%)	1,018 (14.2%)	3,166 (44.2%)	1,424 (19.9%)	966 (13.5%)

School Performance by School Type

School Type	Red	Orange	Yellow	Green	Blue
Non-Charter n=6,388	502 (7.9%)	889 (13.9%)	2,862 (44.8%)	1,278 (20%)	857 (13.4%)
Charter n=767	79 (10.3%)	129 (16.8%)	304 (39.6%)	146 (19%)	109 (14.2%)
Non-Small Schools n=7,065	568 (8%)	1,004 (14.2%)	3,129 (44.3%)	1,410 (20%)	954 (13.5%)
Small Schools n=90	13 (14.4%)	14 (15.6%)	37 (41.1%)	14 (15.6%)	12 (13.3%)

**District Level Academic Indicator: MATH
 Student Group Results**

Student Groups	Total*	Red	Orange	Yellow	Green	Blue
All Districts (Total = 1,565)	1,565	118 (7.5%)	216 (13.8%)	722 (46.1%)	318 (20.3%)	191 (12.2%)
African American	421	87 (20.7%)	75 (17.8%)	225 (53.4%)	27 (6.4%)	7 (1.7%)
Asian	425	6 (1.4%)	17 (4.0%)	66 (15.5%)	107 (25.2%)	229 (53.9%)
Filipino	257	-	17 (6.6%)	27 (10.5%)	121 (47.1%)	92 (35.8%)
Hispanic/Latino	1,245	130 (10.4%)	196 (15.7%)	721 (57.9%)	145 (11.7%)	53 (4.3%)
Native American	92	14 (15.2%)	20 (21.7%)	53 (57.6%)	4 (4.4%)	1 (1.1%)
Pacific Islander	98	6 (6.1%)	19 (19.4%)	60 (61.2%)	11 (11.2%)	2 (2.0%)
Two or More Races	364	12 (3.3%)	36 (9.9%)	100 (27.5%)	120 (33.0%)	96 (26.4%)
White	1,105	45 (4.1%)	130 (11.8%)	346 (31.3%)	357 (32.3%)	227 (20.5%)
Socioeconomically Disadvantaged	1,372	173 (12.6%)	235 (17.1%)	790 (57.6%)	128 (9.3%)	46 (3.4%)
English learners (0 years of RFEP)	846	233 (27.5%)	182 (21.5%)	391 (46.2%)	27 (3.2%)	13 (1.5%)
English learners (2 years of RFEP)	975	207 (21.2%)	155 (15.9%)	515 (52.8%)	64 (6.6%)	34 (3.5%)
English learners (4 years of RFEP)	1,046	167 (16.0%)	157 (15.0%)	565 (54.0%)	101 (9.7%)	56 (5.4%)
Students with Disabilities	827	393 (47.5%)	170 (20.6%)	234 (28.3%)	23 (2.8%)	7 (0.9%)

*Total = Number of districts with 30 or more students at the district level and student group level taking the CAASPP.

- = No data available due to less than 30 for that subgroup taking the CAASPP.

**School Level Academic Indicator: MATH
 Student Group Results**

Student Groups	Total*	Red	Orange	Yellow	Green	Blue
All Schools (Total = 7,155)	7,155	581 (8.1%)	1,018 (14.2%)	3,166 (44.3%)	1,424 (19.9%)	966 (13.5%)
African American	1,312	445 (33.9%)	230 (17.5%)	571 (43.5%)	54 (4.1%)	12 (0.9%)
Asian	1,699	28 (1.7%)	103 (6.1%)	237 (14.0%)	332 (19.5%)	999 (58.8%)
Filipino	440	9 (2.1%)	51 (11.6%)	76 (17.3%)	134 (30.5%)	170 (38.6%)
Hispanic/Latino	6,277	682 (10.9%)	1,103 (17.6%)	3,486 (55.5%)	746 (11.9%)	260 (4.1%)
Native American	25	9 (36.0%)	6 (24.0%)	9 (36.0%)	1 (4.0%)	-
Pacific Islander	9	1 (11.1%)	2 (22.2%)	4 (44.4%)	2 (22.2%)	-
Two or More Races	556	29 (5.2%)	61 (11.0%)	85 (15.3%)	145 (26.1%)	236 (42.5%)
White	4,040	207 (5.1%)	493 (12.2%)	988 (24.5%)	1,224 (30.3%)	1,128 (27.9%)
Socioeconomically Disadvantaged	6,564	818 (12.5%)	1,197 (18.2%)	3,619 (55.1%)	713 (10.9%)	217 (3.3%)
English learners (0 years of RFEP)	4,500	1,422 (31.6%)	869 (19.3%)	2,041 (45.4%)	106 (2.4%)	62 (1.4%)
English learners (2 years of RFEP)	5,422	1,227 (22.6%)	954 (17.6%)	2,592 (47.8%)	390 (7.2%)	259 (4.8%)
English learners (4 years of RFEP)	5,740	979 (17.1%)	957 (16.7%)	2,824 (49.2%)	569 (9.9%)	411 (7.2%)
Students with Disabilities	4,127	1,921 (46.6%)	779 (18.9%)	1,251 (30.3%)	115 (2.8%)	61 (1.5%)

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