English Language Proficiency (ELP) Improvement Measure, 2019-2020

Background

Section 1111(c)(4)(A)(ii) of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires states to measure how well schools and districts are doing in getting students whose native language is not English to become proficient in English. These students used to be called Limited English Proficient and now they are called English Learners (ELs). The Ohio Department of Education (Department) began measuring school and district progress in this area as part of the Gap Closing component on the 2017-18 Ohio School Report Card. The English language proficiency improvement measure (ELP Improvement) will give credit for English learners who achieve proficiency and for those who meet improvement goals for expected progress toward proficiency on the Ohio English Language Proficiency Assessment (OELPA). Points will be awarded based on the percent of English Learners' who show improvement from one year to the next and will contribute to the letter grade assigned to the Gap Closing component on the Ohio School Report Cards.

Overview of the Measure and General Business Rules

All of the calculations in the Gap Closing component allow a school or district to earn points based on whether the Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) are met or not and if it's not met, whether a subgroup showed improvement from the prior year to the current year (i.e. did the subgroup cut its gap). For this measure, there is just one subgroup being evaluated; English Learners. A school or district will earn between zero and 100 points for that one subgroup based on meeting the AMO or showing improvement from 2019 to 2020.

In the state's ESSA plan, the Department established interim goals and a long-term goal for this calculation. The table below shows the percent of EL students who are expected to show improvement towards English proficiency each year. The goal for 2020 is to have at least 57% of a school's or district's EL student either show improvement in gaining English proficiency or to reach the proficient mark and exit EL status.

	English Learners Annual Progress Toward Attaining English Language Proficiency										
	2015-2016 Baseline	2016 - 2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026
English Learners	45%	48%	51%	54%	57%	60%	63%	66%	69%	72%	75%

The calculation uses standard Where Kids Count business rules and a student who otherwise is accountable to a school or district in the 2019-20 school year is included if they meet the other conditions specific to this calculation. Because this calculation is longitudinal, a student must have two OELPA tests, one taken in the spring of 2019 and one from the spring of 2020, to show improvement. Districts always get 'credit' for a student who scores proficient and exits EL status, so first-time test takers in the current school year are included if they score proficient on that 2020 test. A student also is included if he is classified as an English learner (EL) during the testing window, but was not tested and did not have a Score Not Reported reason that exempts him from the test (more details on this below).

Subgroup Size

Districts and schools must administer the OELPA during the testing window to all students identified as English learners. This measure will only contribute to the Gap Closing component for schools and districts that serve the minimum required number (n-size) of accountable ELs, as outlined in Ohio's approved ESSA plan. The number of accountable ELs required for inclusion in the measure is 25 English learners in 2017-2018; 20 in 2018-2019; and, 15 for the 2019-2020 school year and beyond. Please note that students are included in the measure based on their identification as English Learners, not whether services are received. As such, English Learners whose parents or guardians refuse English Learner services are still included in the measure until such time as they reach English proficiency.

The Department will calculate improvement percentages for all schools and districts, but only those with enough accountable students (15 in 2019-20 and beyond) will have the calculation contribute to the Gap Closing letter grade. This ensures that gaps can be calculated for schools and districts that may become eligible for the measure, as well as provide valuable information to schools and districts.

OELPA History

The Ohio English Language Proficiency Assessment (OELPA), first administered in the 2015-16 school year, consists of four domain tests: Reading, Writing, Listening, and Speaking. Students receive a score of 1 to 5 on each domain, and achieve proficiency and exit EL status by earning a combination of 4's and 5's across all domains they are required to complete. An EL is required to complete all four domains unless that student has a disability for which no vendor accommodation exists. In such cases, the district must report in EMIS that the student was exempt from that domain because no accommodation exists. This reporting is done by using the Score Not Reported code of "L" in the Assessment Record (Record FA235).

Proficiency on one domain does not exempt a student from completing that domain in a future year if the student continues to be identified as an English learner. If a student is required to complete all four domains and scores proficient on three out of the four domains on one attempt, the student must continue to take all four domains on subsequent attempts and remains an English learner until proficiency is attained on all four domains in the same year.

The ELP Improvement measure uses only performance and improvement on the OELPA -- no other tests are used. Each EL is assigned an improvement target for growth using the student's grade level when initially identified as an EL and the summed score on the initial OELPA.

Districts and schools earn credit for accountable students who either meet or exceed their annual improvement targets or score proficient on the OELPA. The section below outlines how each student's improvement target is set.

Student Level Improvement Targets - Students Taking Four OELPA Tests

As was mentioned above, the OELPA is comprised of four different tests that measure the various aspects of English proficiency. If a student is making progress and getting closer to English proficiency, they should accrue more points on their current year test than they did on the prior year's. A school or district gets credit for a student if they increase the number of points from one year to the next to 'meet' their improvement target.

Thus, the first step in the calculation is to set each student's improvement target. The student-level targets use a student's grade level at the time they first take the OELPA and their initial English language proficiency level, which is determined by summing the scores from the four domains. The overarching goal for students is to reach Proficient on the OELPA, which is achieved by scoring any combination of 4's and 5's across all four domains. Because of the scoring rubric, a proficient student will always have a summed domain score between 16 and 20 points. This score is not compensatory, meaning students must earn at minimum of 4 points on each of the four domains (not including approved domain exemptions).

The student-level targets for annual improvement are assigned to each individual English learner using the table shown in Figure 1. Schools administered the OELPA for the first time in the spring of 2016. Prior to that year, a different English proficiency assessment was used in Ohio. For EL students enrolled in an Ohio public school in the 2015-16 school year, the Department used that 2016 test and the student's 2016 grade level to set the improvement target. This test was used even if it was not the student's first year in an Ohio school.

Students who enrolled for the first time in the 2016-17 school year had their improvement target set using the 2017 OELPA and 2017 grade level. For students who were new to Ohio in 2017-18, ODE used their 2018 OELPA and that year's grade level to set their improvement target and so on.   In each year, students who are new to Ohio will have their first year's OELPA test and their grade level at the time of that test used to set their improvement target.

The table below shows the number of points a student must improve from one year to the next based on the grade of the student and the number of points earned across the tests taken in that first year. Note that the improvement targets shown in the table are applicable ONLY to students taking all FOUR OELPA domains (reading, writing, listening and speaking). Students who are exempt from one or more tests because of a disability always have an improvement target of ONE (1) point. This is explained more fully below.

Figure 1: Annual Student Level English Language Proficiency Improvement Targets for English Learners

Student's Grade Level when Identified as English Learner	Sum of Student's Initial OELPA Domain Score (point range)	Student Level Target for Annual Improvement (points/year)
Kindergarten – 8th Grade	4 points – 11 points	Increase of **2 points** per year
Kindergarten – 8th Grade	12 points – 20 points	Increase of **1 point** per year
9th Grade – 12th Grade	4 points – 7 points	Increase of **2 points** per year
9th Grade – 12th Grade	8 points – 20 points	Increase of **1 point** per year

The annual improvement target does not change once it is set for a student unless a student is exempted from one or more domains (this will be discussed more fully below). The prior and current year's assessments always are used to determine if the target is met and students cannot 'bank' points if they exceed their improvement goal, nor do they need to 'make up' points if they fall short. For example, a student with an improvement target of two points who improves by four points from the previous year still has a goal of improving by two points the next year. Similarly, a student with an improvement target of two points who only improves by one point does not need to 'make up' the deficit by improving by three points in the following year, the two points continues to apply.

The following is an example of how a student's target is set. Student A entered school in Ohio in 3rd grade and is identified as an English learner. On his first OELPA test, Student A scored a total of six points (one for Reading, one for Writing, two for Listening and two for Speaking). Based on Student A being in 3rd grade and scoring six points on his initial test – the student level target is to improve by two points per year. Thus, to be in the numerator of this calculation, Student A must score at least eight points across the four domains of the OELPA (6 points + 2 points = 8 total points) when they take it for the second time in 4th grade. The calculation does not require the points to be earned in any specific domain. As long as the total number of points equals eight, the student is counted as meeting his/her goal and is in the numerator regardless of where he shows improvement.

Student Level Improvement Targets - Students Taking Fewer Than Four OELPA Tests

As was mentioned earlier, the chart above is applicable only for students who complete all four domains. Beginning in 2017-18, domain exemptions became available on the OELPA for some students with disabilities. This policy allows districts to exempt students from up to three of the four domains on the OELPA if a disability prohibits the student from participating in the domain. All domain exemptions must be documented in the student's IEP or 504 plan. Any student exempt from one or more domains for a disability on the first test attempt is assigned an annual improvement target of **one point**.

If a student completed all four domains on the first attempt, but then was exempted from one or more domains in a subsequent year due to a disability, the Department will consider that student to be a first-time test taker, and will re-assign the student's annual improvement target to one point (assuming it previously had been set at two points). This action will remove the student from the current year's calculation. Any time the number of domain exemptions changes year-to-year, whether it is an increase or decrease in the number of domains taken, that student will be treated as a first-time test taker and a new summed score will be calculated.

In order for a student to be treated as a first-time test taker and have a new summed score calculated, the student must have test records reported for all exempted tests reported with a Score Not Reported code of "L" in the FA235 element, which indicates that the student has a disability for which no vendor accommodation exists. Any other Score Not Reported code will not result in a change in expectations for the student. If a district reports any Score Not Reported code other than "L", the student will be counted in the current year's calculation using that summed score in comparison to the summed score from the prior year's attempt. *Please see Example B: Student Calculations for more detailed information about how this would impact student-level calculations.*

EL Progress AMO Numerator/Denominator

Once each student's improvement target is determined, the next step is to determine whether the student "met" that target and thus made progress towards English proficiency. This is done by summing the points from the four 2019 OELPA domains and comparing that number to the summed 2020 domains to see if the student's improvement target was met. If a student 'meets' the target, he is deemed to have made "progress" and is in the numerator. Students who don't meet their targets, are not in the numerator. Students who are new to Ohio in the 2019-20 school year will have their improvement targets set, but won't be included in the numerator or denominator of the calculation until they have a second test in the 2020-21 school year.

There are two exceptions to the rules set forth in the paragraph above. In the first exception, a student can be in the numerator for not meeting his improvement target. The ultimate goal of this calculation is for each English Learner to reach proficiency. At that time, the student exits EL status and stops taking the OELPA. As students get close to reaching proficiency, they may need only one more point to exit. Assuming they do exit, the school or district will receive credit and they will be placed in the numerator, regardless of whether their improvement target is met.

For example, if a student with a target of 2 points scored 15 points on his prior year OELPA, he would need to increase to 17 points to "meet" the improvement goal. If that student scored straight 4's on the current year's tests, the total score would increase by only one point moving from 15 to 16, but this would be enough for the student to exit EL status. Such a student would be included in the district's numerator, based on the fact that he exited EL status. It is important to understand, however, if the student does not obtain a high enough score on each domain to exit, then at least two points of improvement are needed to place him in the numerator (e.g. – if he scored 3 on one domain, then a total of 17 points are needed across the four tests to place the student in the numerator).

The second exception is that the calculation places a student in the numerator in his first year in an Ohio public school IF he earns enough points on the four domains to exit EL status the first time he takes the OELPA. As was mentioned earlier, a student is deemed to have reached proficiency in English when all four domains have scores of 4's or 5's. Once those scores are earned, the student exits EL status and no additional OELPA tests tare taken. A school or district gets credit for all students who reach proficiency even in cases where the proficient score is earned on that first OELPA test.

Figure 2 depicts how the improvement percentage is derived.

Figure 2: ELP Improvement Example

Student	Improvement Target	2019 Score	Points Earned	2020 Score	Met or Not Met
Student A	2	4	3	7*	MET
Student B	2	5	1	6	NOT MET
Student C	1	8	1	9	MET
Student D	2	14	2	16	MET
Student E	1	13	0	13	NOT MET
Student F	2	16	1	17 (did not exit)*	NOT MET
Student G	1	11	1	12	MET
Student H	1	10	0	10	NOT MET
Student I	2	16	1	17 (exited)*	MET
Student J	2	8	2	10	MET
6 out of 10 students met the Improvement Measure = 60%					

*Note that Student A exceeded his improvement target. He needed to earn two points, but he earned three, moving from 4 to 7 total points. The extra point is not banked. In 2021 his expected improvement remains at two points and he will need to score at least 9 total points to be in the numerator of that calculation.

**Note that Students "F' and "I" both have improvement targets of two points per year. They both improved by only one point, moving from 16 to 17. Student "F" did not exit EL status, thus his target was not met. Student "I" did score high enough on each domain to be deemed Proficient and exit, thus the school earns credit for him in the numerator.

Students Who Re-Enter EL Status

As was mentioned above, a student exits his status as an English Learner when he earns a score of 4 or 5 across all applicable domains. In a small number of cases, a student may meet the criteria to exit, but district personnel will have questions about whether the student really is "proficient" in all aspects of English. District personal have the right to re-assess a student who exits, and if the assessment shows that deficits still exist, the district can decide to "re-enter" the student into the status as an English Learner so that he can continue to receive English language services.

When this happens, the student's previous improvement target and previous year score are retained and the calculation continues as if the student never exited EL status. For example, in 2015-2016, a student was assigned an improvement target of 1-point based on his initial score and grade level. The student scored 16 points (all 4's) across the four domains in 2018-2019 and exited English Learner status at the end of that year. The district determined the student needed additional services to ensure that language was not a barrier to learning, so they re-identified him as an EL at the beginning of the 2019-20 school year. In 2019-2020, the student either is expected to again exit English Learner status by earning all 4's or 5's on the domains, or to increase his total score to 17 points to meet his improvement target of one point.

Earning Points for the AMO

Just like the ELA, math and graduation AMOs, there are three ways a school or district can earn points for this piece of the Gap Closing component.

1. If the subgroup's current year improvement percentage is greater than or equal to the current year's AMO (57% for 2020), then 100 points are assigned.

2. If the subgroup fails to meet the AMO, but shows at least a 10 percent improvement between the prior year and current year, then the full 100 points as assigned.

3. If a subgroup fails to meet the AMO, but did increase the percentage of students showing progress in learning English and the amount of improvement is smaller than 10 percent, then partial points between 0 and 100 are assigned.

4. No points are assigned if the gap grows and the AMO is not met.

When a school or district doesn't meet the AMO target (57% for 2020), the following calculation is used to determine if points are awarded and if so, how many.

Example A: School/District Calculation

	2019-20	2018-19	Improvement
N-Size for Inclusion	15	20	---
Number of Accountable ELs	39	40	---
Number of Students Who Met Improvement Target (or Achieved Proficiency)	21	21	---
EL Progress Percent	**53.8%**	**52.5%**	**1.3 points**
Interim Target	57%	---	--
Current Year Target Was Met/Not Met	Not Met	---	--
2026 AMO Goal	75%	---	--
Gap	**21.2 points**	---	--
Percent of Improvement			**6.1321%**
Points Awarded for AMO Calculation	**61.321 Points**	---	

The green cells show the data used in the calculation. In the example above, the entity increased the percent of students who made progress learning English by 1.3 percentage points between 2019 and 2020 (52.5% to 53.8%). The gap between the 2026 goal and the 2020 actual progress percent is 21.2 percentage points (75%-53.8%).

The Percent of Improvement is calculated by taking the amount of improvement divided by the gap 1.3/21.2 = 6.1321%. The points are awarded by turning the percentage into a number and sliding the decimal one place to the right (6.1321 ➡ 61.321 points).

In the example above, the school or district did not meet the interim target for improvement (57%) nor did it close its gap by 10% or more, so it did not earn the full 100 points for the report card. However, it did close its gap by 6.1321% so it earns 61.321 points towards the Gap Closing component through the partial points calculation.

Example B: School/District Calculation

	2019-20	2018-19	Improvement
N-Size for Inclusion	15	20	---
Number of Accountable ELs	39	40	---
Number of Students Who Met Improvement Target (or Achieved Proficiency)	22	21	---
EL Progress Percent	**56.4%**	**52.5%**	**3.9 points**
Interim Target	57%	---	--
Current Year Target Was Met/Not Met	Not Met	---	--
2026 AMO Goal	75%	---	--
Gap	**18.6 points**	---	--
Percent of Improvement			**20.9677%**
Points Awarded for AMO Calculation	**100 Points**	---	

In this example, the school/district improved by 3.9 points (52.5% to 56.4%). It still did not meet the interim target of 57% and it had a gap of 18.6 points (75-56.4). When we divide the Progress Percent (3.9) by the Gap (18.6), we find this school/district improved by 20.9677% from the prior year to the current year. Any improvement equal to 10% or greater earns the school the full 100 points – as if it met the interim target.

Note: Values in the examples above were rounded to three decimal places for simplicity. In actual calculations, the Department will use unrounded values for intermediate calculations to generate a final point value that will be rounded to the nearest tenth of a point.

First Year School/District

A school is unable to 'show improvement' when it's in its first year of operation because it had no prior year data from which to calculate whether it improved. Similarly, a school or district only is evaluated for EL Progress if it has enough accountable English learners in the current year to meet the minimum "N" size (20 for the 2018-19 school year and 15 for 2019-20 and beyond). If a school did not have enough English learners to be evaluated in the prior year, any data from that year cannot be used to help the school earn points through improvement in the current year.

In other words, if a school had a subgroup of 10 students in 2019, it would not have been evaluated for EL Progress in that year. If the subgroup increases in size to 15 in 2020, the data from the 10 in 2019 CANNOT be used to award points based on improvement because those data were not 'used' in 2019 for the purpose of awarding points in the 2019 calculation. A "first year" school, whether it's newly opened or just in the first year of having enough EL students to be evaluated, can only earn 0 or 100 points based on whether it meets the AMO interim target or not. This same rule applies for the other three pieces of the AMO calculation (ELA, math and graduation).

Final Rules

Once the points are awarded, they are averaged by AMO to get a sub-component score. Once each sub-component score is calculated, the four numbers are averaged to determine the Preliminary Letter Grade. The "Understanding AMO" document located here explains how the pieces of this calculation are combined to issue the final grade.