

NCELA

**National Clearinghouse for
English Language Acquisition and
Language Instruction Educational Programs**

presents

**How States Can Improve Their Practices to Ensure ELLs
are Meaningfully Accommodated in State Content
Assessments**

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The George Washington University

Center for Equity and Excellence in Education (GW-CEEE)

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Welcome

- Welcome to the Webinar on “**How States can Improve Their Practices to Ensure ELLs are Meaningfully Accommodated in State Content Assessments.**” Today’s webinar is hosted by the National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition, NCELA, located at the Graduate School of Education and Human Development at The George Washington University, funded through a contract with the U.S. Department of Education's Office of English Language Acquisition.
- NCELA's mission is to provide technical assistance information to state and local educational agencies on issues pertaining to English language learners.
- My name is Kathia Flemens PhD, a Research Associate at NCELA and your Webinar facilitator.



Note: The contents of this webinar, including information or handouts, do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of Education nor does the mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.

presents

Today our presenters are:

Dr. Charlene Rivera, Executive Director

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Center for Equity and Excellence in Education (GW-CEEE)



THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

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EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

How States can Improve Their Practices to Ensure Meaningful Participation of ELLs in State Content Assessments

Webinar Overview

Study Background

- Context
- Research Questions
- Background on ED peer review and Title I monitoring requirements

Research findings

- ELL inclusion
- ELL accommodation

Implications

Recommendations

- States
- ED

BACKGROUND

Context

ESEA requirement to validly assess all students including English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities (SDs)

Question of extent to which ELLs are offered meaningful opportunities to participate in state content assessments



Lack of Information about ELL Participation in State Assessments

Example: Consolidated State Performance Reports

- SEAs must report data on ELL inclusion (95% ELL participation requirement)
 - Yet GAO study (2006) cautions that these data are incomplete and inconsistent
- SEAs are not required to report ELL accommodation
 - Yet SEAs are required to report the accommodation of students with disabilities



Examined Two Other Sources to Create Portrait of ELL Participation in State Content Assessments

State Standards and
Assessment Peer
Review

Title I Monitoring



Research Questions

1. To what *extent* do SEAs receive feedback in peer review decision letters and/or Title I monitoring reports that addresses the inclusion and accommodation of ELLs?
2. What *issues* are identified for SEAs in peer review decision letters and Title I monitoring reports related to the inclusion and accommodation of ELLs?

State Standards and Assessment Peer Review and
Title I Monitoring

BACKGROUND



STANDARDS AND ASSESSMENTS PEER REVIEW

Peer Review

States were required to have assessment systems ready by 2005-2006 school year



Process

- States compile and submit evidence about their standards and assessment system to demonstrate compliance with Title I requirements
- Team of 3 experts review evidence and provide feedback to ED (1 - psychometrician, 1 - disabilities or ELL expert, and 1- testing practitioner with practical experience in large-scale testing)
- ED compiles and refines feedback and issues decision letter(s)

7 Peer Review Components

Component	Description
1.0	Academic content standards
2.0	Academic achievement standards
3.0	Statewide assessment system
4.0	Technical quality (in guidance for reviewers, ELLs accommodations referenced here)
5.0	Alignment
6.0	Inclusion
7.0	Reporting



TITLE I MONITORING REPORTS

Title I Monitoring Cycle Examined

Year One 2006-2007	Year Two 2007-2008	Year Three 2008-2009
17 SEAs	16 SEAs	19 SEAs (including DC and PR)

Title I Monitoring Reports n= 52

Title I, Part A Monitoring Area 1: Accountability (Excerpt)

Indicator	Description
1.1 – 1.4	SEA has approved system of academic content standards, academic achievement standards and assessments (including alternate assessments) for all required subjects and grades, or has an approved timeline for developing them.
...	
1.9	The SEA ensures that LEAs meet all requirements for identifying and assessing the academic achievement of limited English proficient students.

Method for Examining Peer Review Decision Letters & Title I Monitoring Reports

Documents examined

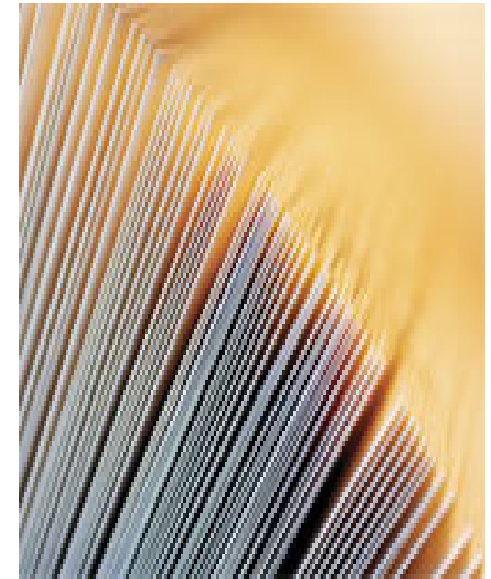
- 273 peer review decision letters issued to 52 SEAs (including DC and PR)
- 52 Title I Monitoring Reports

Timeframe examined

- Peer review data: June 2005 – January 2009
- Title I Monitoring data: 2006/07 – 2008/09

Two-Step Analysis

- Data were sorted according to the peer review components or Title I indicators prescribed for each type of review
- Both data sets were examined to identify common issues related to the inclusion and accommodation of ELLs



FINDINGS



Feedback Given to SEAs

Source of Feedback	ELL Inclusion	ELL Accommodation
Peer Review Decision Letters	26 of 52 SEAs (50%)	38 of 52 SEAs (73%)
Title I Monitoring Reports	30 of 52 SEAs (57%)	10 of 52 SEAs (19%)



INCLUSION ISSUES IDENTIFIED IN FEEDBACK TO SEAS

Issue 1: How ELLs were defined in state policy for inclusion in assessments

Where data were found: (18 SEAs overall)

- 12 SEAs' peer review decision letters
- 6 SEAs' Title I monitoring reports

Feedback on what SEAs needed to clarify or improve:

- Policy language or guidance on inclusion of recently-arrived ELLs and migrant students in state assessments
- SEA's operational definition of an ELL in state assessment policy

Issue 2: Methods used to count ELLs for AYP

Where data were found: (27 SEAs overall)

- 23 SEAs' peer review decision letters
- 8 SEAs' Title I monitoring reports
(4 SEAs received feedback in both sources)

Feedback on what SEAs needed to clarify or improve:

- Evidence showing all students are included in the state content assessments
- Methods for categorizing ELLs as full, transitioned, or exited
- Clear guidance on data elements required for LEAs to submit for the state AYP calculation

Issue 3: SEA monitoring of LEA inclusion practices

Where data were found: (11 SEAs overall)

- 11 SEAs' Title I monitoring reports

Feedback on what SEAs needed to clarify or improve:

- LEA awareness of SEA criteria for defining students as ELL
- LEA practices: Do not permit LEA to determine their own criteria for excluding ELL students from the state assessment
- LEA practices: Do not permit LEAs to determine their own criteria for exiting students from LEP status

Issue 4: Reporting of ELL participation in state assessments in either state or district report cards

Where data were found: (21 SEAs overall)

- 21 SEAs' Title I monitoring reports

Feedback on what SEAs needed to clarify or improve:

- Specific information about the number of ELLs and their participation in state assessments in state and/or district report cards



ACCOMMODATION ISSUES IDENTIFIED

Issue 1: Validity and meaningfulness of accommodated ELL scores

Where data are found: (32 SEAs overall)

- 32 SEAs' peer review decision letters
- 1 SEAs' Title I monitoring reports
(1 SEA received feedback in both sources)

Feedback on what SEAs needed to clarify or improve:

- Ensure that accommodated test scores can be shown to be valid and, therefore, pooled with unaccommodated test scores

Issue 2: Practices for monitoring the implementation of ELL accommodations

Where data are found: (24 SEAs overall)

- 21 SEAs' peer review decision letters
- 4 SEAs' Title I monitoring reports
(1 SEA received feedback in both sources)

Feedback on what SEAs needed to clarify or improve:

- Documentation that the monitoring of accommodations is occurring
 - Are accommodations being implemented?
 - Can the SEA compare accommodations assigned with accommodations actually used?

Issue 3: ELL accommodations allowed in state policy

Where data are found: (13 SEAs overall)

- 8 SEAs' peer review decision letters
- 5 SEAs' Title I monitoring reports

Feedback on what SEAs needed to clarify or improve:

- Questions raised about the consistency or accuracy of either read aloud, translations, or simplification accommodations
- State policy or procedures for either read aloud, translations, or simplification accommodations

Issue 4: Alignment of assessment accommodations and instructional practices

Where data are found: (3 SEAs overall)

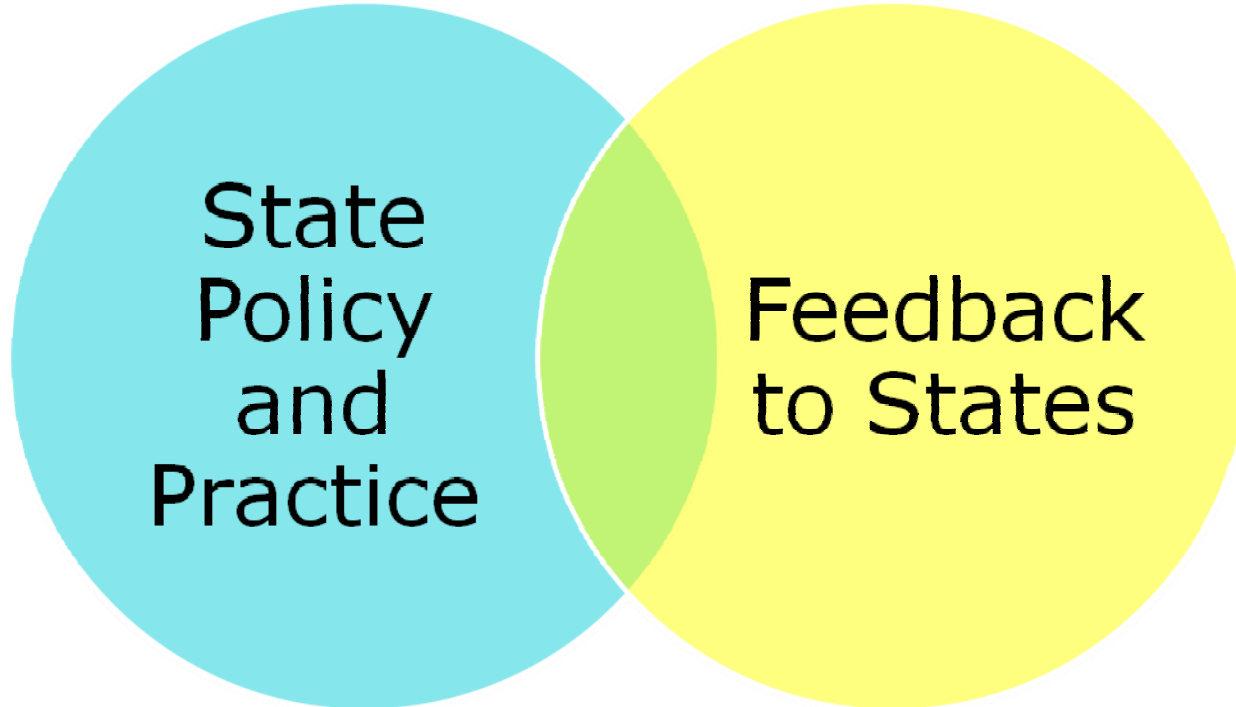
- 3 SEAs' peer review decision letters

Feedback on what SEAs needed to clarify or improve:

- Evidence “that appropriate accommodations are available to **students with disabilities and limited English proficient (LEP) students** and that these accommodations are used in a manner that is consistent with instructional approaches for each student **determined by a student's IEP or 504 plan.**”

Implications

- Inclusion and accommodations issues suggest need for policy reassessment and need for improved methods to implement policy within states.
- Wide range in feedback suggests lack of coherence and consistency in state evidence and practices, but also within and across peer review and Title I monitoring feedback



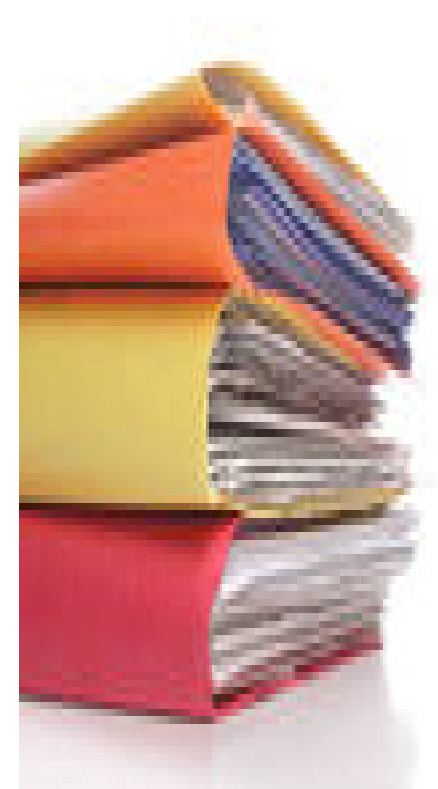
Improving the coherence, quality, and effectiveness of both SEA and ED practice

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for SEAs When Preparing for Reviews

Be prepared to provide data and/or documentation on:

- ELL inclusion
- ELL accommodation
- ELL inclusion and accommodation monitoring procedures
- Research on effectiveness of ELL accommodations used with state assessment



Recommendations for ED When Conducting Peer Review and Title I Monitoring

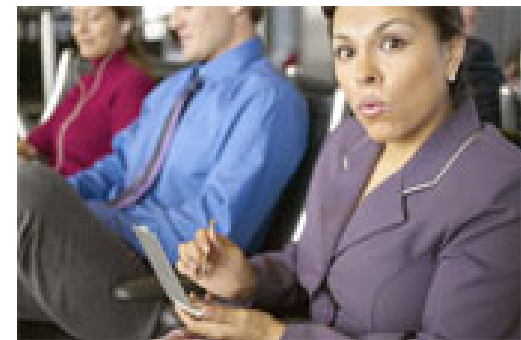
To improve consistency of feedback in...

- Peer review and Title I monitoring rubrics
 - Improve both rubrics so that ELLs are directly addressed
 - Refine the language in the rubrics so it clearly distinguishes the needs of ELLs from students with disabilities
 - Improve alignment of the two rubrics

Recommendations for ED When Conducting Peer Review and Title I Monitoring

Improve Processes used

- Provide Title I monitors with access to peer review feedback (and vice versa)
- Require reviewers to record whether an SEA has addressed each issue on a protocol



Ensure ELL expertise included

- Include experts in the assessment of ELLs on all peer review committees and Title I monitoring teams

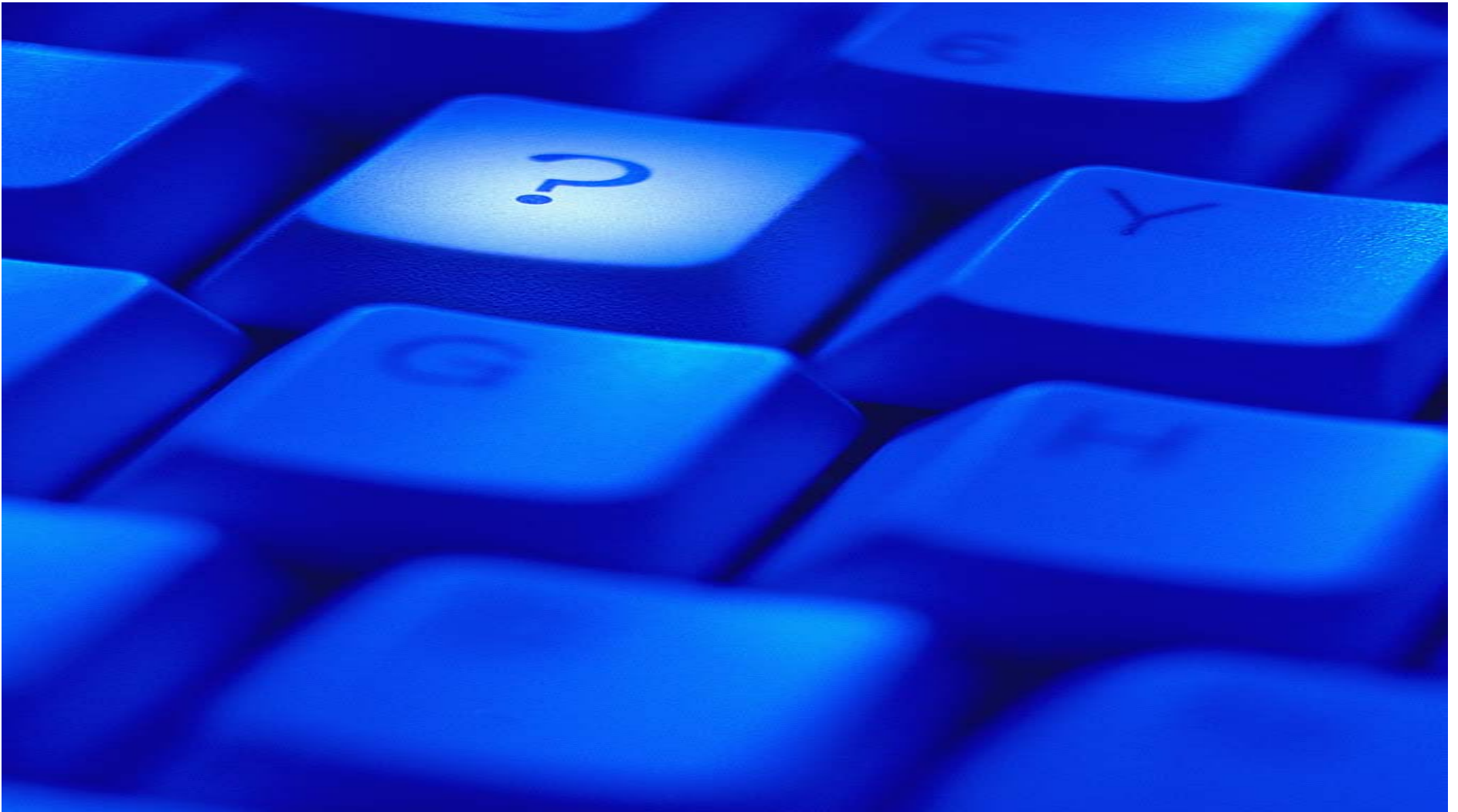
Concluding Thoughts



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Questions?





Thank you!

Report available at
<http://ells.ceee.gwu.edu>

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Thank you

Thank you for having participated in today's webinar on "**How States can Improve Their Practices to Ensure ELLs are Meaningfully Accommodated in State Content Assessments**" presented by Drs. Charlene Rivera, and Lynn Willner hosted by National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition, NCELA, located at the Graduate School of Education and Human Development at The George Washington University.

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Thank you