English Learners and Special Education FAQ

1. **How do you differentiate between a student who is an English Learner and a student with a language processing disability?**

   You will need to document that the student’s “suspected” handicapping condition is present in the primary language...this is not only testing data results but intervention results. This means teaching and testing in the primary language. This is the only way to rule out that the difficulties are not second language issues as you have eliminated the possibilities.

2. **What assessment does the district use for assessing the language proficiency level of students who are EL and are moderate to severe and non-verbal?**

   This is a district decision. Some examples ALPI, SOLOM, and Brigance are a few that are used.

3. **What is the reclassification process for special education students?**

   Reclassification definition according to CELDT guidelines includes 1) Assessment of Language Proficiency using an Objective Assessment Instrument, 2) Teacher Evaluation 3) Parental Opinion and Consultation 4) Student’s Score on an Assessment of Basic Skills such as CAPA. However, since the ELs with severe disabilities may not be able to demonstrate proficiency in English due to their exceptionalities a dilemma occurs. The guidelines also go on to say “In accordance with federal and state law, the local IEP may address the individual needs of each English learner with a disability using multiple criteria…” If we look to federal law, EC 56320, EC 56001, Evaluation and placement procedure must be conducted in the native language, unless it is CLEARLY not feasible to do so”. Thus, the language proficiency assessment must be conducted in both languages to determine which language the child is dominant and if English still needs to be developed. Deaf students may be reclassified using only the reading and writing CELDT results.

4. **If a process is established for reclassification of special education students, will that help with the compliance and disproportionality?**

   There is a danger here if we are equating reclassification as a way to help out the district’s compliance & disproportionately issues. The question itself is a red flag for Civil Rights Violation. What we should be asking is, will reclassification help the student to better meet his/her goals?

5. **If dual-identified (EL & SPED) students are not reclassified, how does that impact our bilingual staff resources and speech and language?**

   That is a question that only the district can answer. Resources provided should be the same as with any regular EL. Speech and Language therapist may have to use a Collaboration Model if that cannot provide direct services to students.
6. Can we combine the reading goal and the ELD goal?

No. EL Special ED are also covered by Casteneda v Pickard, so the IEP must have a language goal and any other goals developed must reflect the linguistic support needed to access the mastery of that goal.

7. For students who receive speech and language services, are the language goals from the speech and language specialists sufficient or should be also write an ELD goal? Aren’t they the same?

Both are language based, but SL services are provided based on assessed specific language disorders or articulation disorders as defined by the IEP. The ELD instruction that must be provided is based on the results of the child’s level of English proficiency level, the grade level and the ELD standards.

8. At what proficiency level is it appropriate to discontinue primary language assessment?

If and when, the students is reclassified, and reaches English fluency based on the student’s cognitive functioning level

9. If the CELDT is administered with modifications, will that automatically trigger a low score?

No, use the CDE guidelines for modifications.

10. Who administers the CELDT for students that require accommodations and modifications?

This is a district decision and would be determined at the IEP.

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