

English Language Development Standards

The Background:

T.C.A. § 49-1-302(a)(8) authorizes the State Board of Education to “set policies governing all academic standards and courses of study in the public schools.” Additionally, State Board Rule 0520-01-03-.03(1) calls for the State Board to adopt standards for each subject area, grades K-12. The approved standards are to be the basis for planning instructional programs in each local school system.

The English Language Development Standards were last adopted in 2013 when the state adopted WIDA’s standards, screener, and assessment. Starting in July 2024, the state will move to ELPA21 for both its English as a second language programming standards and assessment. Therefore, this first reading item proposes to adopt the English Language Proficiency Assessment for the 21st Century (ELPA21) standards as Tennessee’s English Language Development Standards.

The English Language Development Standards are used to help English learners access content in their core classes. They are designed to complement instruction in the Tennessee Academic Standards for the other subjects while also building students’ development in the English language.

The Department has provided training opportunities for ESL teachers and district staff related to the ELPA21 standards and assessment transition and will continue its support plan throughout summer 2024.

The Fiscal Analysis Impact:

T.C.A. § 49-1-212 requires that the Department prepare a fiscal analysis of any policy, rule, or regulation proposed to the State Board of Education. This item has no financial impact on an LEA.

The Recommendation:

The Department of Education recommends acceptance of this item on first reading. The SBE staff concurs with this recommendation.