

Finding the Sweet Spot for English Learner Reclassification

A Study of California's Criteria

by Molly Faulkner-Bond

Acknowledgments

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Overview and Key Takeaways

In 2024, WestEd¹ and the California Department of Education analyzed the state's criteria for exiting students from English Learner status. The primary goal was to confirm that the state's reclassification thresholds on the English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC) have maintained their originally intended meaning and relationships to other assessments.

The results of these analyses suggest the following:

1. The reclassification thresholds on the ELPAC remain consistent in their meaning and relation to other test scores.
2. The use of a basic skills assessment score as an additional criterion for reclassification may be redundant, unnecessary, or possibly unfair for English Learner students.

Based on these results, WestEd recommends that the state maintain its current ELPAC thresholds for Criterion 1 and consider changing or dropping Criterion 4 as an additional requirement for reclassification. We also recommend that state leaders share this report with educators and advocates and engage in two-way discussion about possible actions and implications.

Context and Motivation

California's K–12 student population includes just over 1 million students (1.113 million in the 2022–23 school year [California Department of Education, n.d.-b]) who have been classified as English Learners (EL students). EL students' success is vital to the state's economic future, and the California Department of Education (CDE) has a robust vision for their education and achievement (e.g., see the CDE's [Multilingual Learners](#) webpage and its [English Learner Roadmap](#) policy). One aspect of the state's vision is ensuring that all EL students develop high levels of English proficiency.

¹ For simplicity, this report refers to "WestEd" as a single entity throughout. In fact, the analyses described in this report were performed under multiple different contracts and relationships with the California Department of Education, including more than one federally funded technical assistance center. Subsequent footnotes clarify the specific actors for particular activities.



What Is English Learner Reclassification?

English Learner status should be temporary—lasting only as long as students need to develop the language skills necessary for learning and demonstrating their knowledge independently in English. By law, EL students must have an opportunity at least once per year to be considered for exiting from the EL classification based on their language development. In many states, including California, this transition out of EL status is called **reclassification**.

For EL reclassification decisions, federal regulations require states to use an “objective” measure of English language proficiency (ELP), and states may include additional criteria within certain parameters.² Additionally, the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (Section 3113(b)(2)) specifically requires state education agencies (SEAs) to standardize their entrance and exit procedures across all local education agencies (LEAs).

Why do states classify students as English Learners in the first place?

The English Learner classification exists because all students have a legal right to an equal and appropriate education, and any English language limitations left unidentified and/or unaddressed could preclude a student from accessing that right. In California, this legal basis is codified in the *California Code of Regulations*, Title 5 (5 CCR), Section 11518 and *California Education Code (EC)* sections 313 and 60810. It is also supported by various federal laws, including the Equal Educational Opportunities Act and Titles I and III of the Every Student Succeeds Act.

California's Reclassification Criteria

California's current policy for reclassification has been in place for 50 years.³ As specified in *EC* Section 313 and 5 *CCR* Section 11303, the state specifies that students must meet four criteria to exit from EL status:

1. Assessment of language proficiency using an objective assessment instrument, including, but not limited to, the ELP test that is developed or acquired pursuant to Section 60810
2. Teacher evaluation, including, but not limited to, a review of the pupil's curriculum mastery

² For more detail on federal requirements, see Non-Regulatory Guidance from 2016—<https://www.ed.gov/sites/ed/files/policy/elsec/leg/essa/elandiitleiiiaddendum1219.pdf>—and a 2015 Dear Colleague letter—<https://www.ed.gov/sites/ed/files/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-el-201501.pdf>.

³ The current law was originally rooted in the Chacon-Moscone Bilingual-Bicultural Education Act of 1976 (California *EC* Section 52164.6).

3. Parental opinion and consultation
4. Comparison of the performance of the pupil in basic skills against an empirically established range of performance in basic skills, based upon the performance of English-proficient pupils of the same age, that demonstrates whether the pupil is sufficiently proficient in English to participate effectively in a curriculum designed for pupils of the same age whose native language is English

Various measures are currently required, recommended, or allowed for each criterion (see Table 1, which also indicates each measure’s threshold for exiting EL status and how long each measure has been in use). LEAs are required to use a particular measure and performance threshold (the ELPAC overall Performance Level [PL] 4) for Criterion 1 and are recommended to use the Observation Protocol for Teachers of English Learners (OPTEL) for Criterion 2 and Criterion 3 and recommended to use OPTEL Level 3 in both expressive and receptive language as the performance threshold for Criterion 2. Both the measures and the exit thresholds for Criterion 4 are locally determined. In practice, most LEAs use the statewide summative English language arts (ELA) assessment for this criterion (for general education students, this is the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium [SBAC] assessment) in grades that are tested (grades 3–8 and 11). Most LEAs also allow the use of other assessments, particularly for grades that do not participate in the SBAC assessment (Hill et al., 2021).

Table 1. Reclassification Criteria Used

#	Criterion	Tool	Threshold for exit	Level of standardization	First use
1	ELP assessment	English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC)	Overall performance Level 4	Required statewide	2018–19 (general) 2021–22 (alternate)
2	Teacher evaluation	Observation Protocol for Teachers of English Learners (OPTEL)	Performance Level 3 or above on both of OPTEL’s rubrics	Recommended statewide	2024–25
3	Parent consultation	OPTEL	No refusal	Recommended statewide	2024–25

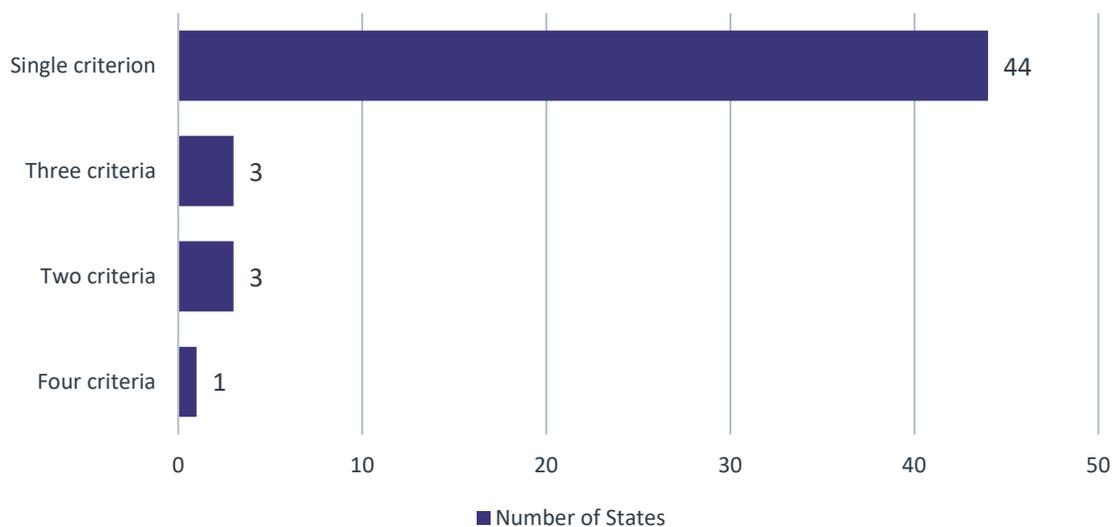
#	Criterion	Tool	Threshold for exit	Level of standardization	First use
4	Basic skills	Locally determined	Varies ^a	Locally determined	2015–16

^a Among LEAs that use the SBAC, about half require students to attain “Standard Met” on the assessment, and most others require “Nearly Met” (Hill et al., 2021).

Reclassification in Other States

As of the 2023–24 school year, California was the only state that used four criteria for exiting EL classification (see Figure 1a) and one of only a small number of states (seven in total) that use any data sources other than their statewide ELP assessments to inform exit decisions (see Figure 1b). While it is not incumbent upon the CDE to follow the trends of other states, this finding does suggest that California’s policy is out of step with other states’ practices.

Figure 1a. Number of Exit Criteria by State, School Year 2023–24



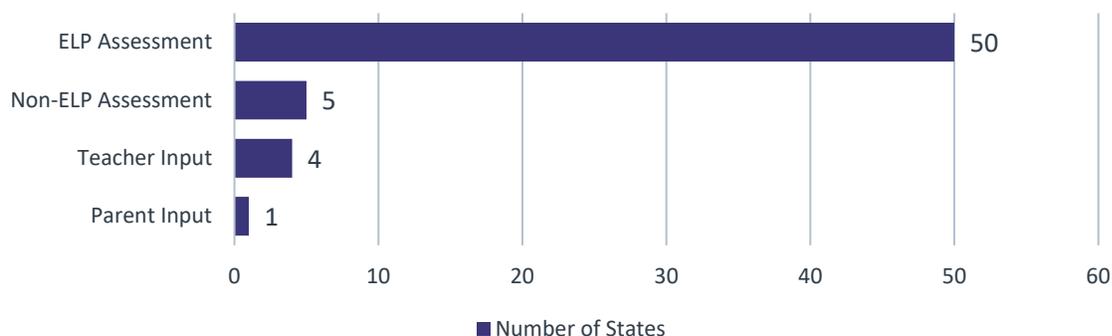
Note. Any or all ELP scores are counted as a single criterion because they all come from the same single assessment. Figure totals exclude South Dakota (research team was unable to find information for this state) but include Florida twice due to different numbers of criteria for students in grades K–2 versus those in grades 3–12.



Why do so many states use only a single exit criterion? Isn’t it better to use multiple measures?

It depends. In general, the use of multiple measures makes it harder for students to exit from EL services. This is because the more criteria a student must meet, the less likely it is that the student will meet all of them. As such, this approach is most helpful if the state’s primary concern is preventing premature exit of students who will still benefit from EL services. As noted elsewhere in this document, research in California suggests that the opposite problem—that is, students being retained in EL services while not clearly benefiting from those services—is a potentially greater risk. The use of multiple measures is likely to exacerbate this issue.

Figure 1b. Type of Exit Criteria by State, School Year 2023–24



Perceptions in the Field

In the winter of the 2023–24 school year, the CDE invited county, LEA, and site leaders and educators to two virtual listening sessions focused on EL reclassification in the state. CDE and WestEd⁴ facilitators asked participants several questions, including “What are the most common barriers to reclassification for EL students?” In the responses, there were over 75 references to Criterion 4. Many educators shared that they see Criterion 4 as a barrier to exit and expressed skepticism about English-only (EO) students’ ability to meet the LEA’s local standard for EL students to exit EL status. (See Table 2 for examples of responses.) Independent research has also found examples of this—for example, in a district that Reyes and Domina studied, they found that “[the Criterion 4] essay was the hardest requirement to pass and ... most ELL and non-ELL students failed this exam” (2019, p. 13).

⁴ The Region 15 Comprehensive Center at WestEd provided support for these listening sessions.



Table 2. Many Listening Session Participants Indicated That Criterion 4 Is a Barrier to Reclassification and Would Be a Challenge Even for Many English-Only Students to Meet

<p>“What are the most common barriers to reclassification for EL students?”</p>
<p>Criterion 4—so many English-only students can’t meet the cut-offs we apply to ELs on SBAC [the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress], and we use a very high percentile on STAR Reading that may not be reasonable. Barrier to grades is an issue because they are subjective. Also, if they get a 4 on the ELPAC, then why should they need to meet other criteria?</p>
<p>Meeting academic/local assessments.</p>
<p>Biggest obstacle is the second test for proving ELA proficiency, showing they are meeting or exceeding on another assessment. A lot of students are ELPAC 4 and feel like they are ready. For the second assessment we use [Acadience], SBAC ELA, PSAT, Renaissance STAR. Usually feel like it’s this second reading score that holds up reclassification.</p>
<p>STAR and Renaissance as local measures.</p>
<p>Meeting the criteria from the local benchmarks.</p>
<p>Basic Skills Comparison</p>
<p>Basic skills (3+ on CAASP) is very difficult for all students to pass (EL and non-EL). We also allow them to count if they meet grade-level Lexile score from whatever program, but still hard.</p>
<p>SBAC—students only take in 8 and 11 grade. District does not have a standardized district-wide assessment. Some students cannot reclassify until much later, like in 10th grade. Do not want to give another assessment because it is too much for students.</p>
<p>Criterion 4—no approach where districts are annually evaluating this criterion based on how their peers are performing—cut-off scores should be in flux based on cohorts. Inconsistency in cut-off scores and assessments. Districts need to be able to offer access to pass Criterion 4 multiple times a year.</p>
<p>SBAC is much more difficult. If I look at EOs, they are struggling to pass.</p>
<p>Students have to score on a local assessment in addition to ELPAC 4 score. Many EO students would not be able to pass this criterion.</p>

What Is in This Report

This report describes a series of analyses jointly explored by WestEd⁵ and the CDE from November 2023 through September 2024. The CDE was interested in pursuing these analyses for a number of reasons, including to validate the state's existing thresholds for Criterion 1 and to explore concerns from the field that Criterion 4 might be a particular barrier to reclassification.

The analyses focus on relationships between language proficiency, as measured by the ELPAC, and academic achievement, as measured by the SBAC ELA assessment. They focus, in particular, on the extent to which the state's Criterion 1 standards on the ELPAC reflect student readiness to meet achievement standards on the SBAC ELA. More broadly, they seek to explore whether Criterion 1 and Criterion 4 support student achievement and opportunities and whether they align with the state's broader vision for the education and success of EL students (CDE, n.d.-a).

Overall, the results, as described further in the next sections of this report, suggest that the current threshold for Criterion 1 is indexed to a rigorous standard of academic achievement, and the value-add of Criterion 4 as an additional standard for exit is at best unclear and at worst unnecessary. These results suggest that the state should seriously consider whether to continue using Criterion 4, especially given other research findings that point to opportunity costs of remaining in EL status and that call into question the validity and value of Criterion 4 measures over and above Criterion 1.

Validating ELPAC Reclassification Thresholds and Relationships With Academic Achievement

As noted in the "California's Reclassification Criteria" section above, the state currently uses a threshold of overall PL 4 on the general ELPAC assessment as the Criterion 1 standard for

⁵ The Region 15 Comprehensive Center at WestEd conducted this work. Due to the nature of Comprehensive Center work, analysts at both the CDE and WestEd conducted these analyses collaboratively. All analyses conducted by the CDE were replicated by WestEd to confirm the results, and all analyses conducted by WestEd were vetted with the CDE to confirm and refine the designs and assumptions.



reclassification.⁶ This threshold was established in the 2018–19 school year based on a series of empirical analyses that WestEd conducted (Linguanti et al., 2018).⁷ At the time, the ELPAC had been in operation for only a single school year (2017–18). In 2023–24, the CDE and WestEd collaborated to replicate these results using more recent data (from the 2021–22 and 2022–23 school years⁸). The goal was to explore whether the 2018–19 results had held up over time and continued to support the meaning and interpretations of the ELPAC scores that had been the basis of the state establishing Criterion 1's threshold.

Methods

For both the original analyses in 2018–19 and the replication analyses in 2023–24, WestEd and the CDE used a set of analytic methods developed by the U.S. Department of Education as part of a National Evaluation of Title III (Policy and Program Studies Service, 2012). The methods generally seek to identify the ELPAC PL at which students have a roughly equal chance of being proficient or not proficient on the SBAC ELA assessments. (More information about the methods is included in Appendix A.) The logic is that if students with a given level of ELP have a 50 percent chance of being proficient on an academic content assessment, this suggests that their ELP is not the primary driver of observed differences in their academic achievement. Secondly, one of the analyses compares the distribution of students' ELA scores for EL students at each achievement level to those of EO students. Another part of the analyses seeks to minimize the number of students who are proficient in ELP but not ELA or vice versa.

⁶ The State Board of Education subsequently approved overall PL 3 on the alternate ELPAC (the highest PL on that test) as the Criterion 1 standard for EL students with the most significant cognitive disabilities in [May 2023](#) (see [Item 03](#), which links to an Information Memorandum from April 2023 as well).

⁷ The California Comprehensive Center at WestEd performed this work. To see the reports produced by this team, see [Item 09](#) of the [November 2018 meeting](#), a [December 2018 Information Memorandum](#), and [Item 09](#) of the [January 2019 Meeting](#).

⁸ Most results in this memo are based only on the 2022–23 school year, which was comparable to other, earlier years in terms of its size, representativeness, and overall participation. The analyses of academic trajectories of students who score at ELPAC overall PL 4 also included students from the 2021–22 school year to provide for more years of subsequent observation.

Why do the methods aim for only a 50 percent chance of proficiency on the SBAC? Shouldn't students exit when proficiency is more likely or is guaranteed?

If English proficiency could guarantee academic proficiency, then most or all EO students would be meeting standards on statewide ELA and math assessments. Obviously, this is not the case in California—or in any state. Instead, students who are proficient in English demonstrate a range of performance in both ELA and math: Some are highly proficient, some struggle intensely, and many are in the middle. The threshold evaluation methods that WestEd and the CDE applied are based on this fact—that monolingual English-speaking students demonstrate a range of performance—and on the fact that EL status is intended to address language barriers that *may* affect students' academic learning and performance. The methods are designed to identify a score range within which there can be confidence that language barriers are not overly affecting academic scores. Once language barriers have been removed, this does not, and cannot, guarantee academic proficiency—rather, it provides confidence that scores are valid reflections of student knowledge and skills in the subject being tested rather than reflections of the fact that students are still learning English.

For both the 2018–19 and the 2023–24 analyses, WestEd and the CDE also conducted follow-up analyses that focused on particular groups of students. These additional analyses sought to understand whether EL students at ELPAC overall PL 4 have comparable academic achievement to EO students with similar backgrounds and whether EL students at this level of ELP appear to benefit from remaining in versus exiting from EL status.⁹ The motivation for these additional analyses at both time points was acknowledgment of school- and district-level segregation (Owens et al., 2016; U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2022) and known associations between family background and student achievement (Liu et al., 2022; Sirin, 2005). While the state's goal is for all students to meet high academic achievement standards and exit school ready for college and careers, there are potential fairness issues if EL students are being held to achievement standards that EO students in their same schools and districts also cannot meet—particularly as the latter group does not face constricted access to grade-level instruction (Estrada, 2014; Estrada et al., 2020; Umansky, 2016; Umansky et al., 2024) as a result of their status or low achievement.

⁹ One of these two additional analyses—the one comparing EL students only to EO students with matched background characteristics—is a direct replication of additional analyses that were done in the original (2018) analyses for Criterion 1. The other—analyzing subsequent achievement of students who score at ELPAC overall PL 4—is similar to an analysis from 2018 but uses different methods.

What are the student samples on which these analyses are based?

Both the 2018–19 and the 2023–24 analyses were based on student-level records for all students who participated the SBAC ELA assessments (grades 3–8 and 11) and had valid scores for the years being analyzed. For the 2022–23 test administration, whose results are shared here, this included approximately 3 million students, of whom roughly 500,000 were EL students.

Summary of Results

Overall, the replication analyses in 2023–24 yielded results similar to those from the original analyses in 2018–19. In other words, California's existing ELPAC thresholds for Criterion 1 were validated. The results from each method from both sets of analyses are provided below for selected grades. Subsequently, results from the additional fairness checks from the 2023–24 replication analyses only are presented. Across all results, the following themes are clear and important:

- **The numerical results across the different methods converge on the same ELPAC PL** (overall PL 4) as being the appropriate level for a reclassification threshold. This suggests that the overall PL 4 threshold is robust, not an artifact of a particular choice of analytic method or a particular year of data.
- **The numerical results from the two different data sets are similar.** In other words, the 2017–18 data and the 2022–23 data both identify ELPAC overall PL 4 as the level at which EL students appear to have similar chances of being proficient or not proficient on the SBAC ELA. This suggests that the appropriateness of the ELPAC overall PL 4 as a reclassification threshold has remained consistent over time.
- While all grades generally converge on the same conclusions, **there is some variation across grades in exact results.** In general, the population of EL students in earlier grades tends to have higher performance, on average, compared to EL students in later grades. While this difference has not resulted in different conclusions for different grades, it does suggest that the same threshold may have different implications for different grades.
- EL students at ELPAC overall PL 4 are generally **at least as likely as EO peers with similar backgrounds** to meet the proficiency standard on the SBAC ELA assessment, **if not more so.** The only exception to this finding is for EL students who are not socioeconomically disadvantaged (roughly 15% of all EL students). Nonetheless, the analyses still identified the ELPAC overall PL 4 as the most appropriate threshold for these students.
- Students who score at ELPAC overall PL 4 appear to achieve at the same level **regardless of whether they remain in EL status or exit**—particularly after controlling for socioeconomic status (SES). This suggests there is no clear benefit to retaining these students in EL status.

How could EL status constrain opportunity? Isn't it beneficial for students?

Research from California suggests that prolonged time in EL status may not be as beneficial for EL students' academic opportunities and achievement as is often assumed. Researchers have found that EL students in middle and high school grades in California are less likely to take a full academic course load (Umansky, 2016) or are relegated to course pathways that are below grade level, that focus on remediation rather than core content, and that ultimately constrain students' opportunities and achievement (Estrada, 2014; Estrada et al., 2020). Such findings suggest that prolonged time in EL status may be a *source* of academic "deficits"¹⁰ rather than a solution thereto. In short, retaining students in EL status may perpetuate low achievement rather than improve it.

Detailed Results

In both the 2018–19 and the 2023–24 analyses, WestEd and the CDE applied three methods to all tested grades on the SBAC (3–8 and 11). For purposes of space and efficiency, this report presents only the results for grades 4, 7, and/or 11 to give a sense of the range of results across the grade levels. Complete results for all SBAC-tested grades are included in [Appendix B](#) for this report.

Descriptive Box Plots for All EL and EO Students

The descriptive box plot method examines the distribution of overall scale scores on the SBAC ELA for EL students at each ELPAC overall PL for each applicable grade level. It also includes the distribution of overall scale scores on the SBAC ELA for EO students for comparison, as well as for reclassified fluent English proficient (RFEP) students and initially fluent English proficient (IFEP) students.¹¹ The goal is to identify an ELPAC PL at which either (a) EL students have an equal likelihood of scoring above or below the SBAC ELA proficiency cut score or (b) EL students' score distribution on the SBAC ELA is very similar to that of EO students. These two criteria may be met by different ELPAC PLs.

¹⁰ This word is intentionally used to mirror language in the majority opinion for the 1981 *Castañeda v. Pickard* federal court case, which addressed LEAs' responsibility for ensuring the adequacy of programs for EL students. In that opinion, the justices stated, "We understand §1703(f) to impose on educational agencies not only an obligation to overcome the direct obstacle to learning which the language barrier itself poses, but also a duty to provide limited English speaking ability students with assistance in other areas of the curriculum where their equal participation may be impaired because of deficits incurred during participation in an agency's language remediation program" (*Castañeda v. Pickard*, 1981).

¹¹ The latter two groups represent students who have exited from EL services (RFEP) and those who are multilingual but did not demonstrate a need for EL services (IFEP), respectively.

The goal for this method is to identify which of the four ELPAC PL boxes, as shown in Figures 2a and 2b, has the following:

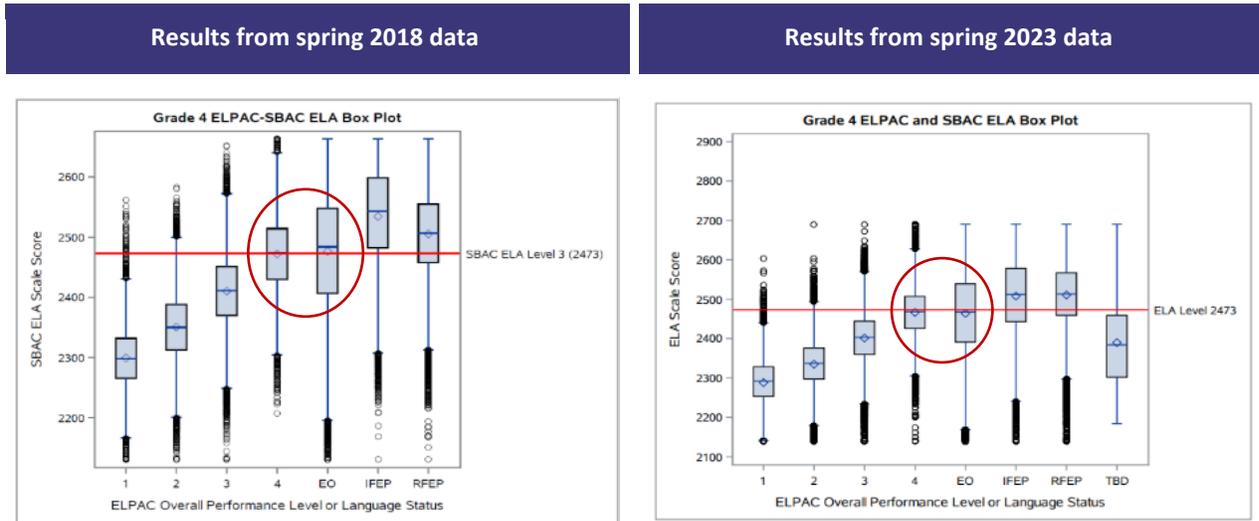
- The median score (as indicated by the middle line in the enclosed box) is closest to the horizontal reference line indicating the SBAC ELA proficiency cut score. This is the ELPAC level at which students have roughly equal chances of being proficient or not proficient, which suggests their language is not a major driver in their performance.
- The median score or overall distribution is most similar to the box representing EO students in the data visualization. This is the ELPAC level at which EL students' range of performance is most similar to that of peers who have never spent time in EL status.

Descriptive box plot results from the original (2018–19) and replication (2023–24) analyses are presented in Figures 2a and 2b for grades 4 and 11, respectively. The results show the following:

- In both years, EL students at ELPAC overall PL 4 are most similar to EO students in their SBAC ELA score distributions.
- In both years, students in lower grades are more similar to EO students in their SBAC achievement, while EL students in higher grades tend to underperform EO students on the SBAC ELA.
- Across the 2 years, results for the same grade are similar, and patterns across grades are similar.

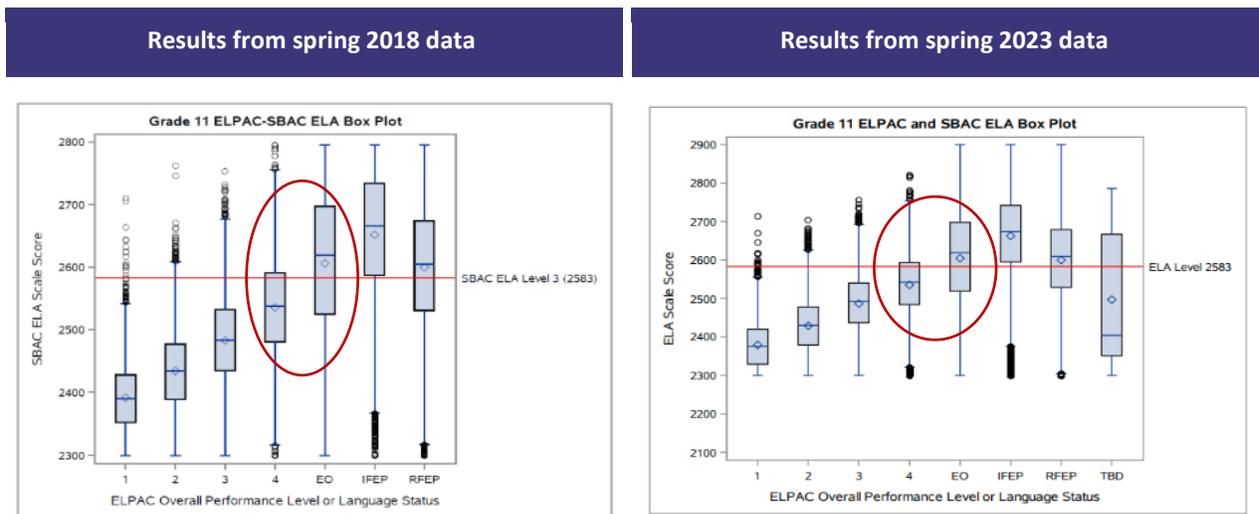


Figure 2a. In Both Years, Grade 4 EL Students at ELPAC Overall PL 4 Had Equal Chances of Being Proficient or Non-Proficient on the SBAC ELA and Had a Similar Achievement Distribution to EO Students in the Same Grade



Note. Visual differences between the 2018 and 2023 results may stem from different vertical axis ranges. While the 2023 results all show the full SBAC ELA scale range from 2100 to 2900, the 2018 results show only part of the range, with different lower and upper values for each grade.

Figure 2b. In Both Years, Grade 11 EL Students at ELPAC Overall PL 4 Were Closest to Reaching a 50 Percent Chance of Proficiency on the SBAC ELA and Closest to EO Students' Scores, Though They Fell Short of Both



Note. Visual differences between the 2018 and 2023 results may stem from different vertical axis ranges. While the 2023 results all show the full SBAC ELA scale range from 2100 to 2900, the 2018 results show only part of the range, with different lower and upper values for each grade.

Logistic Regression Results

The logistic regression method estimates the probability of reaching Level 3 (Standard Met) on the SBAC ELA for each ELPAC overall scale score. This approach helps identify the ELPAC overall scale score range in which EL students have a probability equal to or greater than 50 percent of meeting the SBAC ELA proficiency standard.

For this method's data visualizations, as shown in Figures 3a and 3b, the goal is to identify the place where the curved blue line, indicating the probability of proficiency, crosses the horizontal red line, which indicates a probability of 50 percent. The horizontal axis value at this point corresponds to the ELPAC scale score with a probability of 50 percent. The dashed vertical reference lines indicate the cut scores for different ELPAC PLs. If the blue and red lines cross to the right of all the vertical lines, this corresponds to ELPAC overall PL 4.

Logistic regression results from the original (2018–19) and replication (2023–24) analyses are presented below for grades 4 and 11. The results show the following:

- In both years and all grades, students reach a 50 percent chance of proficiency on the SBAC ELA in ELPAC overall PL 4.
- In both years, the scale score at which students reach 50 percent is closer to the beginning of overall PL 4 for earlier grades and higher or further into the overall PL 4 for higher grades. This means that, for higher grades, students who score just above the overall PL 4 cut still might have less than a 50 percent chance of being proficient on the SBAC ELA.
- Across the 2 years, results for the same grade are similar, and patterns across grades are similar.

Figure 3a. In Both Years, EL Students in Grade 4 Reached a 50 Percent Probability of Scoring Proficient on the SBAC ELA Assessment at ELPAC Overall PL 4

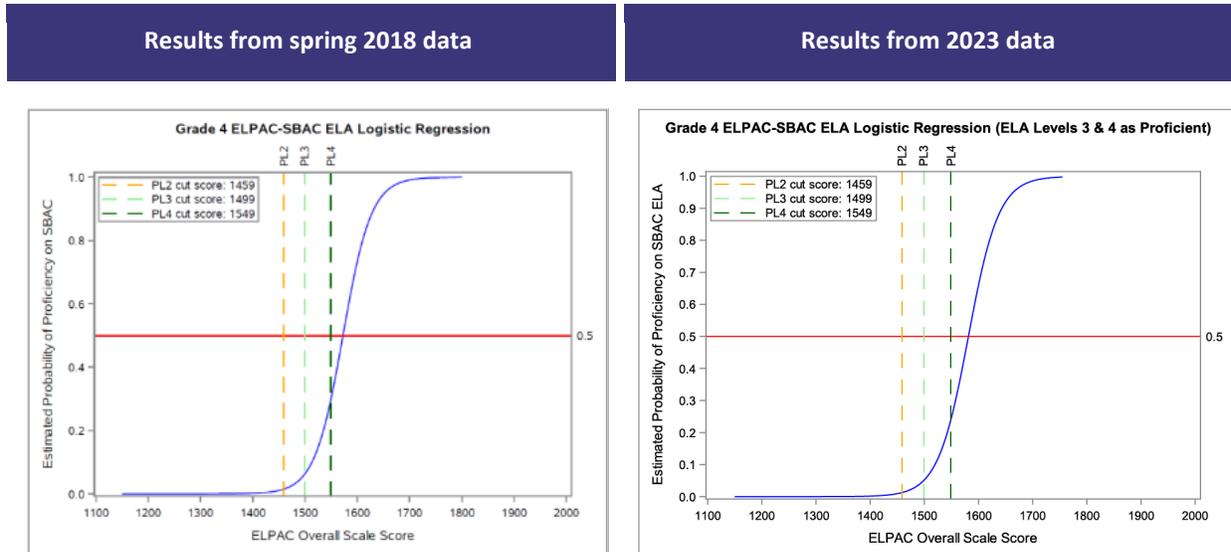
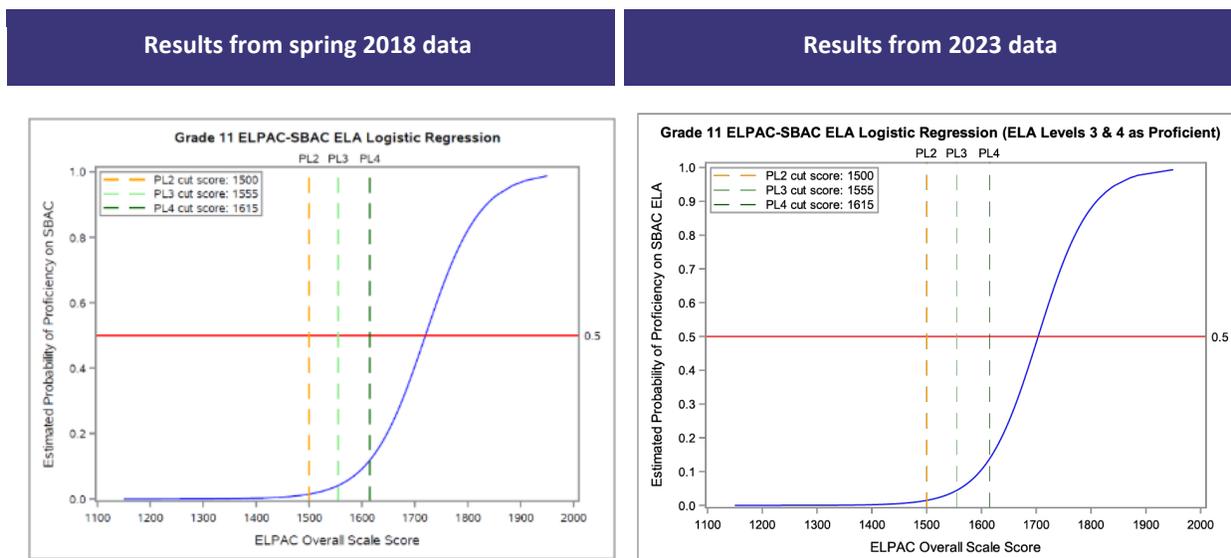


Figure 3b. In Both Years, EL Students in Grade 11 Reached a 50 Percent Probability of Scoring Proficient on the SBAC ELA Assessment at ELPAC Overall PL 4



Note. In all results for these two grades and in those for other grades not shown here, the blue line indicating the probability of achieving proficiency on the SBAC ELA assessment first reaches 50 percent (indicated by crossing the horizontal red line) to the right of the dark green dashed line indicating the cut score for ELPAC overall PL 4. This indicates that only students at overall PL 4 have a 50 percent or greater chance of meeting the ELA standard on the SBAC.

Decision Consistency Results

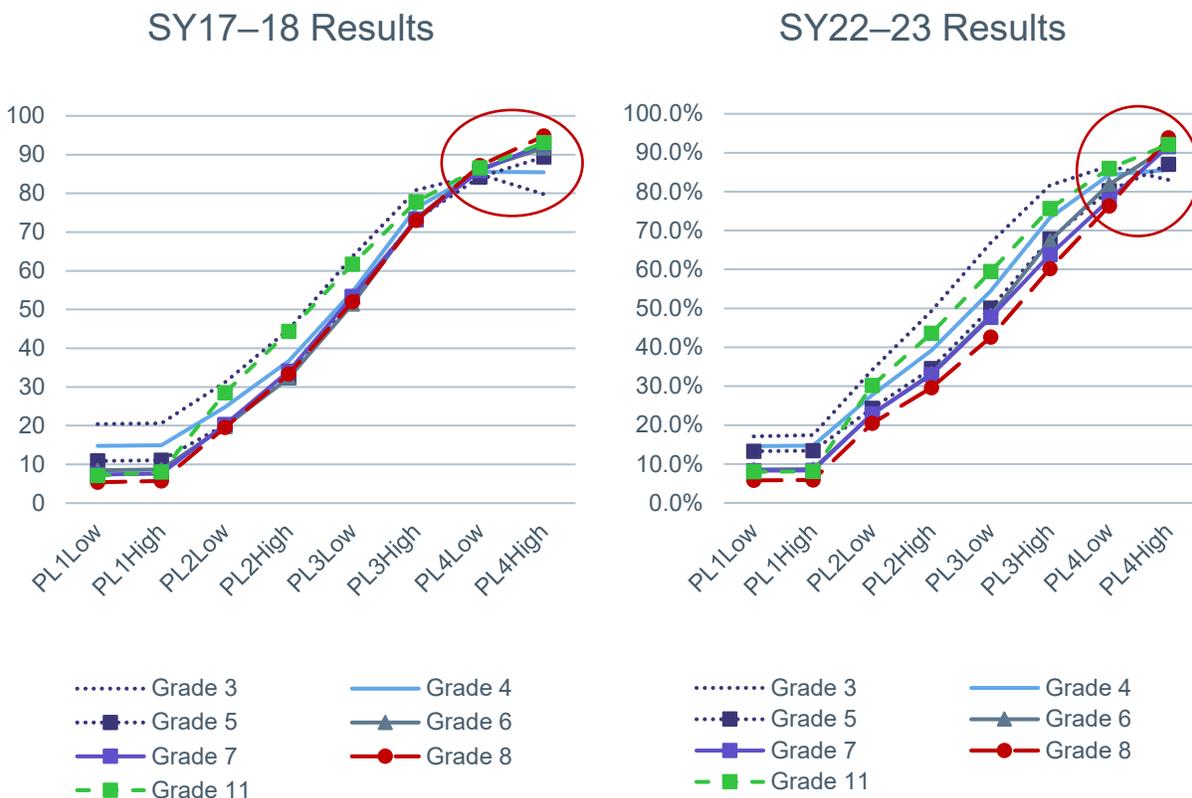
The decision consistency method seeks to identify the ELPAC PL or score range that optimizes the number of students who are consistently categorized across the SBAC ELA and ELPAC assessments. This analysis defines “consistency” as being proficient either on both assessments or on neither. A cut score that results in large numbers of “inconsistent” classification scenarios (i.e., students who are considered proficient in ELP but who overwhelmingly fail to reach proficiency in ELA or who are proficient in ELA but still classified as EL students) would suggest that the ELP threshold is not set in the right place.

In the data visualizations for this method, as shown in Figure 4, each line shows a different grade level (3–8 or 11), and the markers along the line show the percentage of students in that grade who would be consistently classified if the ELPAC reclassification threshold were set at each of the PLs (which are divided into “high” and “low” halves) along the horizontal axis. **The goal is to identify the highest point on each line;** this point represents the ELPAC PL where the highest percentage of students has consistent results across the two assessments. Ideally, there will be a point of inflection at which the line reaches a high point and then starts to go back down again. In some cases, the line increases monotonically, meaning it continues to increase for every ELPAC PL.

Decision consistency results from the original (2018–19) and replication (2023–24) analyses are presented below for grades 3 through 8 and 11. The results show the following:

- In both years and all grades, the highest level of consistent decisions occurs in overall PL 4.
- In both years, only the lower grades (typically 3 and 4) have a clear point of inflection. In other grades, the line continues to increase even into the top half of the overall PL scale score range.
- Across the 2 years, results for the same grade are similar, and patterns across grades are similar.

Figure 4. In All Grades and Both Years, Decision Consistency Results Were Highest (Best) for Students at ELPAC Overall PL 4



Note. For all grades in both years, the proportion of students who are consistently classified between the ELPAC and SBAC is highest in either the low end or the high end of ELPAC overall PL 4. This indicates that the greatest number of students would be proficient on both assessments, or neither, if the ELPAC exit threshold were placed at this performance level.

Descriptive Box Plots for EL and EO Students With Similar Backgrounds

These analyses use the same approach as the descriptive box plot analyses described above but include only students (EL and non-EL) with the same demographic characteristics, such as level of parental education or student disability status. The data visualizations for this method can be read in the same way as the descriptive box plots presented in the “Descriptive Box Plots for All EL and EO Students” section.

Selected visualizations of this method’s findings are in Figures 5a–5f below, which show the SBAC ELA score distributions for EL and EO students with different matched background characteristics. Across the grades and demographics, the findings indicate the following:

- With the exception of students who are not socioeconomically disadvantaged or whose parents have postsecondary degrees, **EL students at ELPAC overall PL 4 consistently perform on the SBAC ELA assessment as well as (in higher grades) or better than (in**



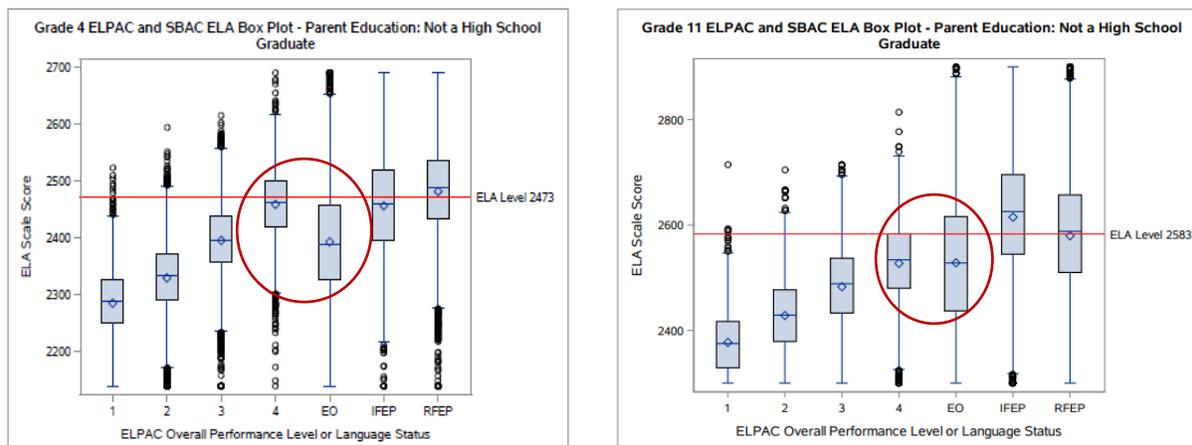
lower grades) EO students with the same background characteristics. These results essentially reverse the achievement discrepancies shown with the full population (see Figures 2a and 2b above); they suggest that the achievement gaps between EL and EO students in higher grades are more likely attributable to differences in student background characteristics than to language status.

- **Differences are most pronounced for students with disabilities, students whose parents' education is no higher than high school, and students who meet the state's definition for socioeconomic disadvantage.** For these groups, ELPAC overall PL 4 students outperform comparable EO students in lower grades and earn similar scores in higher grades.
- Students who are not socioeconomically disadvantaged or whose parents have postsecondary degrees¹² had results similar to the full population findings described in the preceding section. **The findings for these groups still also point toward ELPAC overall PL 4 as the best ELP threshold for reclassification.**

Taken together, these findings add further support to the state's choice of threshold for Criterion 1. They also call into question the need for or value of Criterion 4. Given the comparable or higher achievement of ELPAC overall PL 4 students compared to similar EO students, it is not clear that additional local evidence of students' basic skills is necessary for demonstrating that EL students are prepared to perform similarly to English-proficient pupils of the same age.

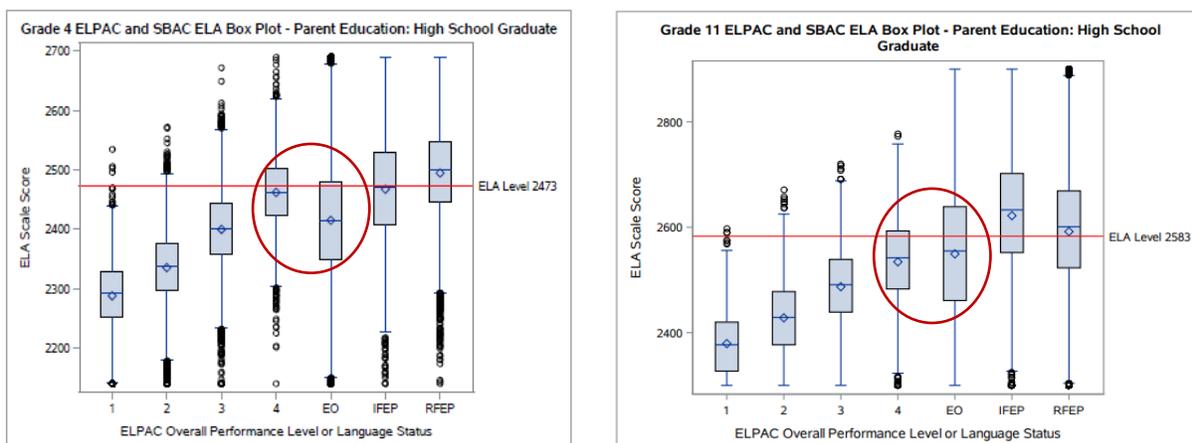
¹² Each of these groups (students not socioeconomically disadvantaged and students whose parents' education levels are college graduate or graduate degree or higher) represents approximately 75,000 EL students, or about 15 percent of the total EL population. It is likely that the two groups overlap significantly as well; they should thus be interpreted as similar ways of representing the same background rather than as distinct student groups.

Figure 5a. In All SBAC ELA–Tested Grades, ELPAC Overall PL 4 Students Whose Parents Did Not Complete High School Do as Well as, or Better Than, EO Students Whose Parents Have the Same Education Level



Note. The figures show that, among students whose parents did not complete high school, EL students at ELPAC overall PL 4 scored higher (in grade 4; left panel) or comparably (in grade 11; right panel) on average on the SBAC ELA assessment compared to EO students whose parents had the same level of education. Across all grades, this group (students with parents who did not complete high school) represents 30 percent of all EL students in the SBAC ELA–tested grades.

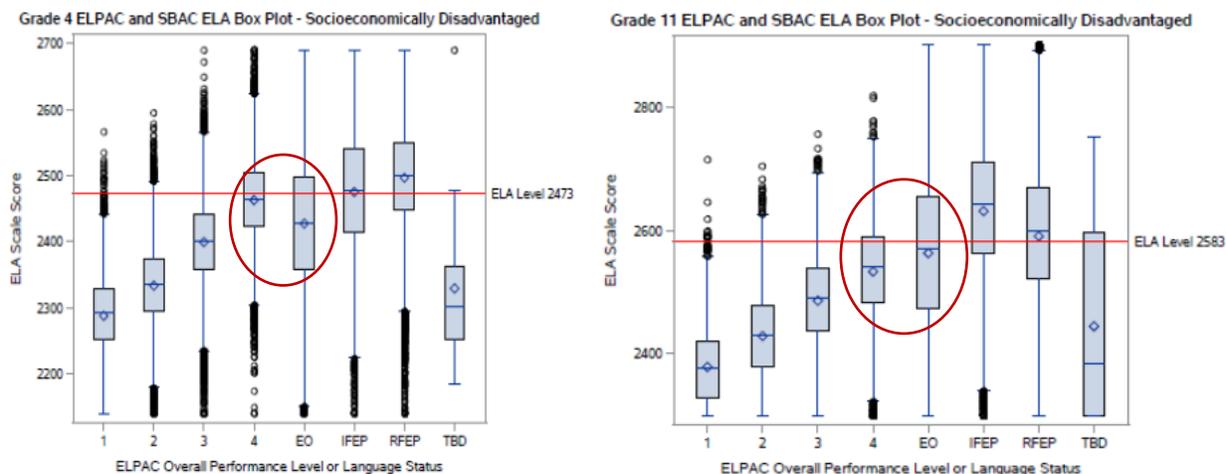
Figure 5b. In All SBAC ELA–Tested Grades, ELPAC Overall PL 4 Students Whose Parents Are High School Graduates Do as Well as, or Better Than, EO Students Whose Parents Have the Same Education Level



Note. The figures show that, among students whose parents' highest level of education was high school, EL students at ELPAC overall PL 4 scored higher (in grade 4; left panel) or comparably (in grade 11; right panel) on average on the SBAC ELA assessment compared to EO students whose parents had the same level of education. Across all grades, this group (students whose parents' highest education level was high school) represents 29 percent of all EL students in the SBAC ELA–tested grades.



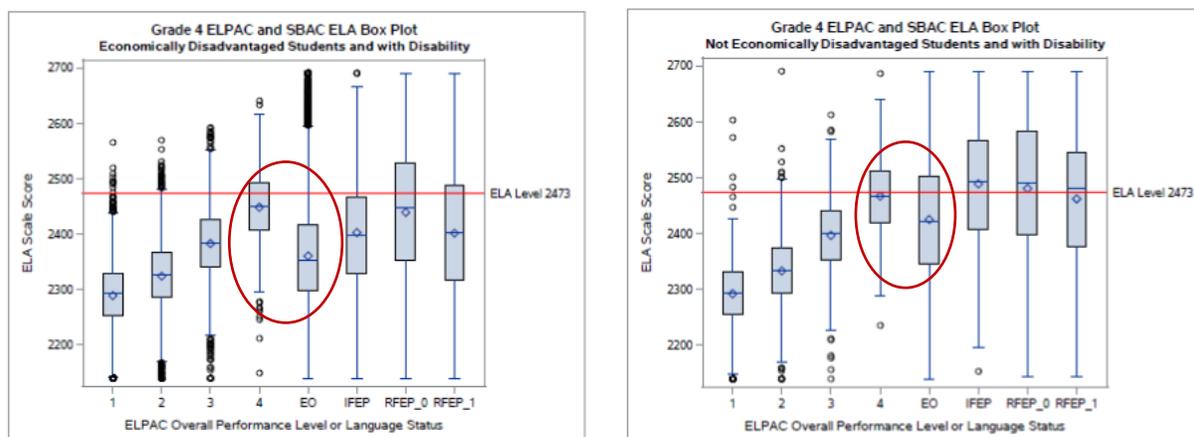
Figure 5c. In All SBAC ELA–Tested Grades, ELPAC Overall PL 4 Students Who Are Socioeconomically Disadvantaged Do as Well as, or Better Than, EO Students With the Same Background



Note. The figures show that, among students who met the state’s definition for socioeconomic disadvantage, EL students at ELPAC overall PL 4 scored higher (in grade 4; left panel) or comparably (in grade 11; right panel) on average on the SBAC ELA assessment compared to EO students who met the state’s definition for socioeconomic disadvantage. Across all grades, this group (socioeconomically disadvantaged) represents 85 percent of all EL students in SBAC ELA–tested grades.

Students may qualify for the CDE’s definition for socioeconomic disadvantage based on one or more of several criteria, including parental education (neither parent received a high school diploma), migratory status, or eligibility for participation in free or reduced-price lunch. The [state’s full criteria for socioeconomic disadvantage](#) are posted online.

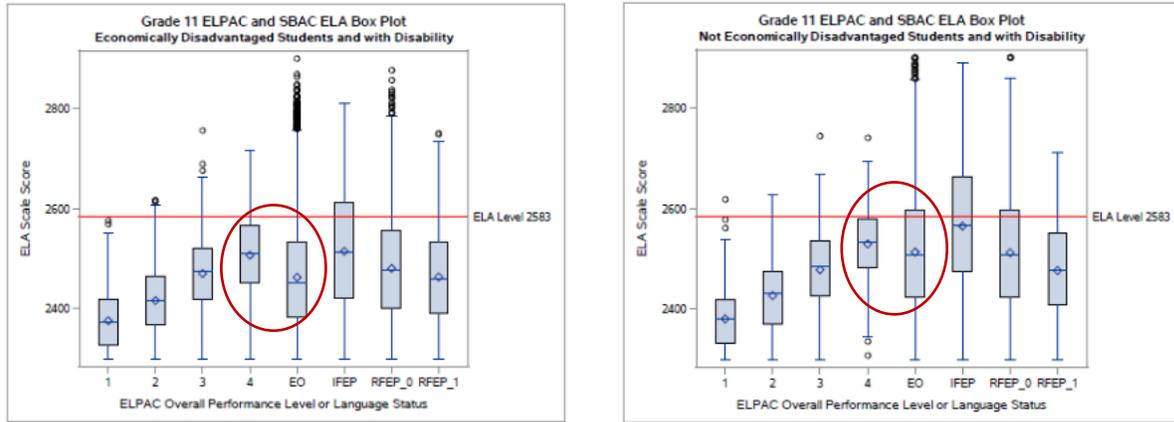
Figure 5d. ELPAC Overall PL 4 Students With Disabilities Outperform EO Students With Disabilities in Grade 4, Regardless of Socioeconomic Status



Note. The figures show that, among grade 4 students with a disability, EL students at ELPAC overall PL 4 score higher on average on the SBAC ELA assessment compared to EO students with a disability regardless of whether they are socioeconomically disadvantaged (left panel) or not (right panel). Across all grades, this group (students with disabilities) represents 18 percent of all EL students in SBAC ELA–tested grades.

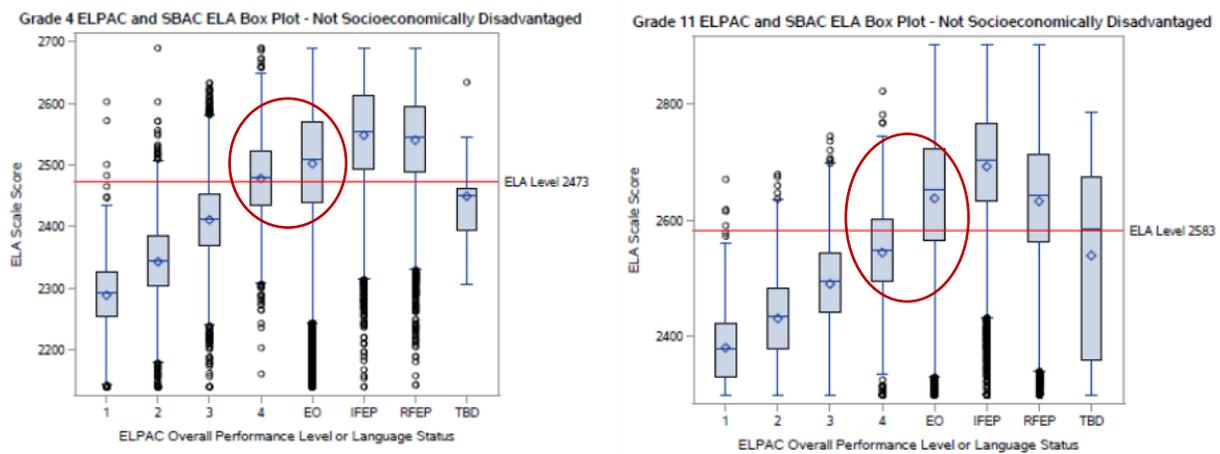


Figure 5e. ELPAC Overall PL 4 Students With Disabilities Outperform EO Students With Disabilities in Grade 11, Regardless of Socioeconomic Status



Note. The figures show that, among grade 11 students with a disability, EL students at ELPAC overall PL 4 score higher on average on the SBAC ELA assessment compared to EO students with a disability, regardless of whether they are socioeconomically disadvantaged (left panel) or not (right panel). Across all grades, this group (students with disabilities) represents 18 percent of all EL students in SBAC ELA–tested grades.

Figure 5f. Among Students Who Are Not Socioeconomically Disadvantaged, ELPAC Overall PL 4 Remains the Best Criterion 1 Threshold, Despite Achievement Gaps With EO Students in Higher Grades



Note. The figures show that, among students who did not meet the state’s definition for socioeconomic disadvantage, EL students at ELPAC overall PL 4 scored comparably (in grade 4; left panel) or lower (in grade 11; right panel) on average on the SBAC ELA assessment compared to EO students who did not meet the state’s definition. Across all grades, this group (not socioeconomically disadvantaged) represents 15 percent of all EL students in SBAC ELA–tested grades. Results are similar for students whose parents have college or graduate degrees; those two parental education groups also represent approximately 15 percent of all EL students in SBAC ELA–tested grades.



Subsequent Academic Achievement of Overall ELPAC 4 Students Who Do and Those Who Do Not Exit EL Classification

The analyses of subsequent academic achievement make use of the fact that not all students who score at ELPAC overall PL 4 go on to be reclassified the next school year, presumably because they do not meet another criterion for reclassification. Significant achievement differences between the two groups of ELPAC PL 4 students could support the idea that they should be treated differently in terms of opportunities or services—whereas a lack of difference would undermine such a claim.¹³ WestEd conducted these analyses for students who were in grades 3 through 7 in spring 2021 or 2022 and moved on to grades 4 through 8 the following year.

The graphs for the analyses of subsequent academic achievement show the average SBAC math or ELA score, plus a confidence interval around the average score, for ELPAC PL 4 students who did (ELP4 RFEP) and who did not (ELP4 EL) get reclassified by the census day of the following school year.¹⁴ The graphs also show scores and confidence intervals for the same student groups shown in the descriptive box plots (EL students at each overall ELPAC PL 1–3 and EO, IFEP, and RFEP students). The scores are standardized so that the average overall score for all students (grand mean) for a grade is set to 0; positive values indicate scores that are above the mean, and negative values are below. Scores with overlapping confidence intervals are comparable to one another, and scores with intervals that include 0 can be considered the same as the average overall score (grand mean). The goal for this method is to determine whether the two ELP4 groups (ELP4 EL and ELP4 RFEP) have overlapping confidence intervals and whether they include (or exceed) the grand mean (0).

Selected visualizations for these results are provided in Figures 6a and 6b. The results show the following:

- Across all years and content areas, **there were minimal or no achievement differences 1 year later between ELPAC overall PL 4 students after controlling for SES.**¹⁵ For example, students who scored at ELPAC overall PL 4 in grade 4 went on to have indistinguishable scores in math and ELA in grade 5, regardless of whether they had exited from EL status after grade 4. Illustrative results from grades 4 and 7 for ELA and math are shown in the tables below.

¹³ It is not possible to determine whether significant differences, if observed, reflect opportunity differences for the two groups or reflect genuine achievement differences.

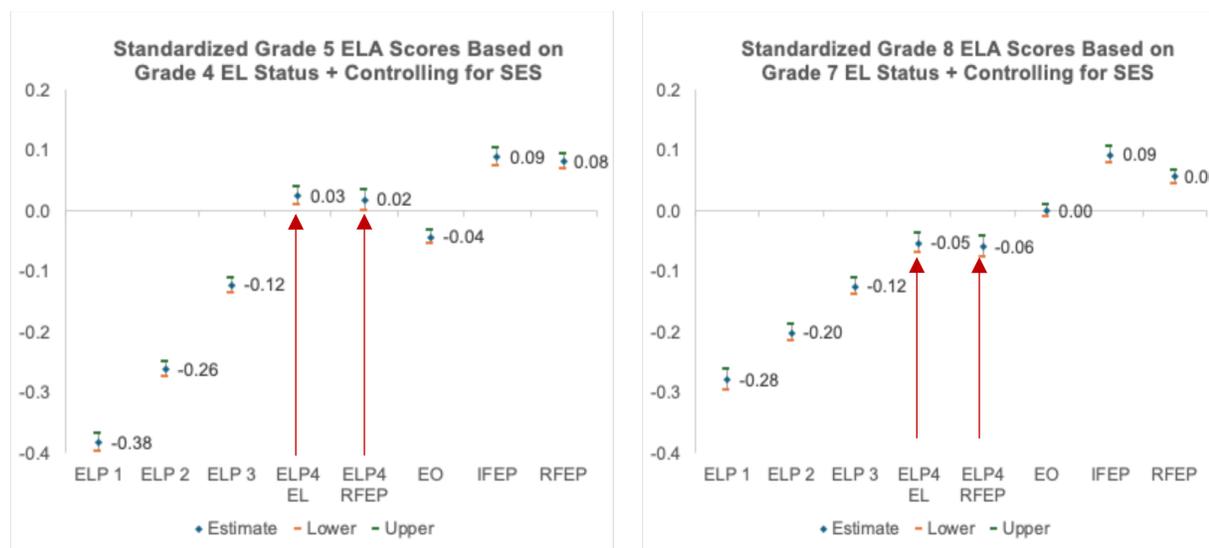
¹⁴ This specification is included here because EL students may get reclassified throughout a year. The census day was 10/05/2022 for school year 2022–23.

¹⁵ The Region 15 Comprehensive Center at WestEd conducted this analysis and did not have the fine-grained variable for level of parent education in our data set, so the comparisons use only a binary flag for whether or not a student is considered by the state to be socioeconomically disadvantaged.

- When differences between the two groups were found, they generally were in higher grades (6 through 8) and favored RFEP students. Both groups were also generally more similar to one another in their scores than to any other EL or EO group.
- Results were **similar for ELA and math**.

This finding suggests that, while there is no immediate harm in having some of these students remain in EL status for at least 1 additional year (presumably, many of these students who did not exit after grade 3 went on to exit after grade 4 or 5), there is also no evidence that remaining in EL status is increasing their achievement. In light of the other findings noted above about the effect of EL status on access to core content and rigorous coursework, these findings would support the argument that these students would likely experience similar achievement and better academic opportunities if they were to exit rather than remain in EL status for an additional semester or more.

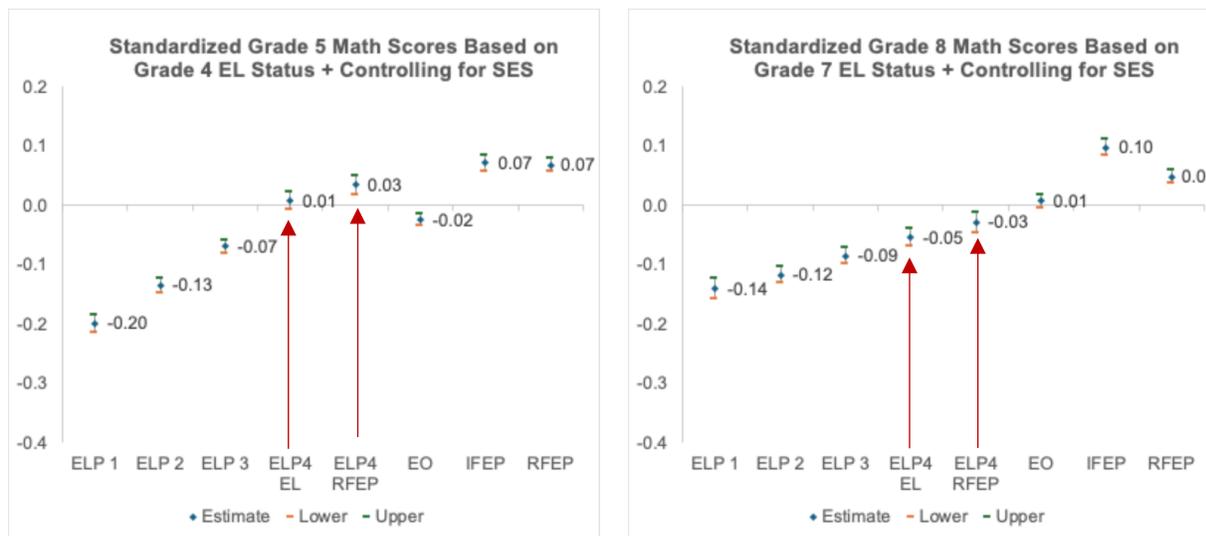
Figure 6a. Students With Similar SES Who Score at ELPAC Overall PL 4 in Grades 4 and 7 Earn Comparable Scores in ELA 1 Year Later Whether They Have Been Reclassified or Not



Note. The figure shows the standardized SBAC ELA scores from the next school year for students who scored at ELPAC overall PL 4 in **grade 4** (left panel) and **grade 7** (right panel) in **spring 2022**. **After controlling for student SES, the SBAC ELA scores 1 year later were essentially the same whether students had exited from EL status (ELP4 RFEP) or stayed in EL status for another semester or more (ELP4 EL).**



Figure 6b. Students With Similar SES Who Score at ELPAC Overall PL 4 in Grades 4 and 7 Earn Comparable Scores in Math 1 Year Later Whether They Have Been Reclassified or Not



Note. The figure shows the standardized SBAC Math scores from the next school year for students who scored at ELPAC overall PL 4 in **grade 4** (left panel) and **grade 7** (right panel) in spring 2022. After controlling for student SES, the SBAC ELA scores 1 year later were essentially the same **whether students had exited from EL status (ELP4 RFEF) or stayed in EL status for another semester or more (ELP4 EL)**.



Conclusion and Recommendations

The collective results detailed above coalesce around two overall conclusions.

Conclusion 1: Existing ELPAC Thresholds Remain Appropriate for Criterion 1

The results from the replication analyses in 2023–24 align closely with the 2018–19 results that were used to set ELPAC overall PL 4 as the Criterion 1 threshold for exit from EL status. The relationships between the SBAC ELA and ELPAC assessments do not appear to have shifted or evolved over time, and ELPAC overall PL 4 continues to best satisfy the threshold selection conditions for the methods applied. **Accordingly, it is reasonable for the CDE to continue to use ELPAC overall PL 4 as the statewide standard for Criterion 1.** Evidence is robust that this standard is rigorous across time, grade levels, and methods and is appropriate as an indicator that EL students are not experiencing linguistic barriers that would inhibit demonstrating their knowledge.

Conclusion 2: Criterion 4 Is Likely Unnecessary and May Raise Fairness Issues

Criterion 4 is intended to ensure that EL students have academically caught up to their non-EL peers before they lose access to EL services. In practice, however, it is not clear that this additional check is needed because

- the CDE has already accounted for students' academic achievement in setting its ELPAC thresholds;
- EL students do as well or better on the SBAC assessment as EO students with the same parental education level, disability status, or SES; and
- the results above suggest that students who score at ELPAC overall PL 4 would be no worse off academically after losing EL services (and, similarly, that such students gain no apparent benefit from maintaining such services).

In light of research evidence that students pay an opportunity cost for staying in EL status (Johnson & Goldenberg, 2020; Umansky et al., 2024), and given the potential that retaining students in EL status may lead systems to spend resources on programs and interventions that students neither need nor benefit from, it is not clear that Criterion 4 is achieving its intent or helping the state achieve its goals and mission related to EL students' success.

Based on these conclusions, WestEd offers the following recommendations for California educators, leaders, and policymakers.

Recommendation 1: Maintain ELPAC Overall PL 4 as the Threshold for Criterion 1

The decision to use ELPAC overall PL 4 as the criterion for reclassification was based on empirical information about how students at this level are likely to score on the statewide ELA assessment. The appropriateness of this standard for reclassification has been consistently upheld across multiple grades, years, and analysis methods.

Recommendation 2: Consider Removing Criterion 4 as a Reclassification Requirement

The findings above lay out several reasons why Criterion 4 might not be functioning as intended relative to the state's aims. Additionally, as noted in the opening sections of this report, most other states have opted not to continue using something like Criterion 4 for reclassification (see Figures 1a and 1b for data on other states' criteria), and many LEA leaders and educators in the state have concerns about this criterion's fairness (see [Table 2](#) for examples of their concerns).

Taken together, these findings suggest that the CDE should consider removing Criterion 4 from the state's reclassification requirements. Given the results described in this report, it is unlikely that the state would observe a major drop in RFEP achievement or that students who are likely to benefit from EL services would lose such services. This is particularly true because any proposed changes to reclassification policy would affect only students who are scoring at ELPAC overall PL 4; students with lower levels of ELP would not experience changes in their EL services. On the other hand, the state might see increases in the number of students who exit from EL status. This would likely result in more students—particularly more students with disabilities or from lower socioeconomic backgrounds—getting access to grade-level programs and content that they might otherwise miss out on.¹⁶

¹⁶ To follow best practice, the state should continue to closely monitor its data over time to evaluate whether this hypothesis is supported.

Recommendation 3: If Criterion 4 Is Removed, Engage With the Field to Consider the Value of Criterion 2 and Criterion 3

As noted earlier, the vast majority of states use only their ELP assessments to make reclassification decisions. The analyses in this report focus specifically on the test-based criteria in California (Criterion 1 and Criterion 4), but any discussions about reducing the number or nature of the state's criteria should also include Criterion 2 and Criterion 3 in the conversation. As noted in the "Why do so many states use only a single exit criterion?" box, more criteria will always reduce students' probability of exiting. If the state opts to drop Criterion 4 but maintain Criteria 2 and 3, this could still result in students reaching ELPAC overall PL 4 but not exiting EL status, which would mean students potentially facing barriers to opportunities as a result.

Recommendation 4: Consider Using Additional Criteria Only in Particular, Prespecified Circumstances

In reviewing other states' reclassification policies, WestEd found 10 states whose policies include multiple pathways to proficiency based on different levels of ELP. For example, students may be assured to exit at one level of ELP but may be allowed to exit within a certain, lower range of ELP if they can show evidence of achievement on another measure. California could consider such an option, wherein EL students who reach ELPAC overall PL 4 are exited automatically without needing evidence of basic skills mastery, whereas students who score at overall PL 3 may be reclassified if they can also provide evidence of academic achievement that is comparable to that of EO peers. This approach might be appropriate for instances in which EL students at ELPAC overall PL 4 actually outperform comparable EO students (which appears particularly likely to occur in lower grades) or might be appropriate as an alternate pathway for EL students with disabilities.

Recommendation 5: Provide Support for LEAs and Schools to Reduce Opportunity Differences Between English Learner Students and Other Students

As noted throughout this report, a central concern in English Learner policy is balancing access to language services with access to rigorous grade-level learning opportunities. It is worth noting that this choice is a false one: There is no reason EL students cannot or should not have both. When EL students have meaningful access to the same environments that all students have, the stakes and impact of reclassification are likely to be reduced. In this case, "access" does not mean conditional access based on meeting some kind of prerequisite standard; nor does it mean placing EL students in the same classrooms as EO students without providing appropriate supports and scaffolds to ensure EL students' equal participation. Rather, reducing the contrast between being and not being classified as an English Learner means fundamentally changing what is taught and how it is taught so that all classrooms are characterized by both rigorous content and high-quality learning opportunities and by skillful scaffolding and

integration that ensure EL students can meaningfully participate with their EO peers as valued equals. The CDE already supports this approach through its universal mandate for integrated English language development (ELD) for all EL students and its efforts to provide resources and examples for schools and classrooms to implement. More work is needed, however, to realize this goal consistently across all classrooms in the state.

Recommendation 6: Integrate Post-Reclassification Monitoring More Meaningfully Into EL Students' Overall Education Trajectory

A common concern with reclassification policy is the prospect of students losing EL services when they still need such services. First, the changes proposed in this report would affect *only* those students who are scoring at ELPAC overall PL 4 because they would continue to be the only students eligible for exit under the proposed changes. Students at lower levels of ELP would not be eligible for reclassification and thus would not be at risk of losing their EL services.

For students at ELPAC overall PL 4, reclassifying from EL status does not necessarily mean that these students must lose access to EL services. The federal government, and therefore the CDE, requires LEAs to monitor RFEP students for up to 4 years after they reclassify. In California, RFEP students are eligible to continue participating in EL services during this monitoring period. Or, even if students do not participate in formal ELD instruction, it is still possible and encouraged for those monitoring a student to ensure they are receiving supports and instruction that will help them continue to thrive. In light of this context, the fact that a student has been reclassified should not be used as an excuse for not supporting the student's ongoing development in both language and content. Assuming that LEAs and schools are providing designated and integrated ELD that reflects the state's ELD standards, students who have exited EL status should continue to have access to learning environments in which they can learn and thrive.

Recommendation 7: Continue to Monitor the Opportunities and Achievement of EL Students, Particularly Those at ELPAC Overall PL 4

Finally, whether the state ultimately pursues policy changes or not, WestEd recommends that the CDE and its constituents continue to monitor EL student opportunities and achievement. This involves continuing to collect and periodically study information about the test scores and progress of EL students at all ELD levels, and it may include future replications of the same analyses described in this report. The state does not currently collect sufficiently detailed information for studying reclassification mechanisms closely (e.g., the state does not require LEAs to report student ratings from the OPTEL or from locally selected assessments for Criterion 4) nor for studying student access to specific courses or pathways. However, LEAs do have the needed information and could contribute to statewide efforts to study reclassification policy by studying these data themselves, sharing them with the state, or sharing them with third-party researchers who can conduct analyses similar to the ones described and cited in this report.

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Appendix A. Methods Details

The methods used by WestEd¹⁷ and the California Department of Education (CDE) for identifying English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC) thresholds (in both 2018–19 and 2023–24) were developed by the U.S. Department of Education as part of a National Evaluation of Title III. These methods were designed specifically to support states in empirically identifying appropriate thresholds for English language proficiency (ELP), and they have since been used by many states—including California—to identify and evaluate thresholds on both general and alternate summative ELP assessments used for accountability (e.g., see, Cook, 2014; Linquanti et al., 2018).

All three methods are based on the facts that (a) English language (EL) status is intended to address language barriers that may affect students' academic learning and performance and (b) monolingual English students demonstrate a range of performance on assessments of academic content such as ELA and mathematics—they are not, in other words, uniformly proficient in these areas.

Accordingly, the methods' developers argue (Policy and Program Studies Service, 2012) that EL students should not be expected to achieve academic proficiency as a condition for exiting EL status. Rather, researchers and decision-makers should look for evidence that students' ELP performance no longer strongly predicts or correlates with their academic content performance. This lack of a strong relationship serves as evidence that students' language proficiency is no longer affecting or driving their academic performance—a sign that the removal of the language services and supports of EL status are less likely to be harmful for students.

In the words of the authors,

[T]here is a point at which EL students have sufficient English language skills to adequately function in English on content assessments; accordingly, there should be observable decreases in the relationship between the two assessments. At or beyond this point is where the ELP performance standard might be considered. (Policy and Program Studies Service, 2012, p. 8)

The methods operationalize this concept by generally seeking the point at which students' ELP performance predicts their academic content achievement (proficient or not proficient) at the level of chance. In other words, if students with the same level of ELP have a 50 percent chance of being proficient on an academic content assessment, this suggests that their ELP is not

¹⁷ The WestEd team was from the California Comprehensive Center and the Region 15 Comprehensive Center.

making a difference in their academic achievement. A stronger level of prediction in either direction would suggest that their ELP is driving their academic content achievement (so removal of services could be harmful).

Accordingly, all three methods use scores from both an ELP assessment and academic content assessments. Each of the three methods seeks to identify the point of separation between performance in language and academic content in a different way:

- 1. Descriptive box plot analysis**¹⁸ examines the distribution of overall scale scores on the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) English language arts (ELA) assessment for EL students by each performance level on the English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC) and for each applicable grade level. This analysis also includes the distribution of overall scale scores on the SBAC ELA for reclassified fluent English proficient (RFEP), initially fluent English proficient (IFEP), and monolingual English (English-only, or EO) students for comparison. The purpose of the analysis is to identify an ELPAC performance level at which either (a) EL students have an equal likelihood of scoring at or above the SBAC ELA Level 3 threshold (Standard Met) or (b) EL students' score distribution on the SBAC ELA is very similar to that of EO students.
- 2. Logistic regression analysis** estimates the probability of reaching Level 3 (Standard Met) on the SBAC ELA for each ELPAC overall scale score. This approach helps to identify the ELPAC overall scale score range in which EL students have a probability equal to or greater than 50 percent of attaining that standard on the SBAC ELA.
- 3. Decision consistency analysis** analyzes the ELPAC and SBAC ELA proficient-level categorizations and optimizes consistent categorization of EL students across the two tests. The analysis determines the ELPAC overall scale score range that maximizes the amount of agreement between achieving ELPAC proficiency and SBAC ELA proficiency. For this analysis, consistency is defined as being proficient either on both the SBAC ELA and ELPAC or on neither. Because states are expected to set their reclassification thresholds at a point at which students have developed the linguistic knowledge and skills they need to function independently in classrooms where English is the language of instruction, a cut score that results in large numbers of "inconsistent" classification scenarios (i.e., students who are considered proficient in ELP but who overwhelmingly fail to reach proficiency in ELA or who are proficient in ELA but still classified as EL students) would suggest that the ELP threshold is not set in the right place.

¹⁸ A box plot shows graphically five-number summaries—the smallest observation, lower quartile, median, upper quartile, and largest observation—as well as individual outliers, if applicable.

In both 2018–19 and 2023–24, WestEd and the CDE applied all three methods separately to each grade-level of the ELPAC for students in grades 3–8 and 11. Across all grades, the 2023–24 results are based on a total of 516,512 EL students in grades 3–8 and 11 and just over 3 million non-EL students. In all, these different approaches resulted in nearly 100 different results to consider collectively in making the recommendations contained in this report.

For the analyses of subsequent academic achievement for all the students in a base grade (e.g., grade 4), WestEd used an ordinary least squares (OLS) regression model to estimate their scores (standardized to the grand mean) on the SBAC math and ELA 1 year later (e.g., grade 5) after controlling for students' prior academic achievement, socioeconomic status, and EL status. Possible values for the latter were ELPAC overall performance level (PL) 1, 2, or 3; ELPAC overall PL 4 students who did or did not exit after the base grade and by the census day of the following school year; and EO, IFEP, or RFEP. This report includes only the results for ELPAC overall PL 4 students. Models were estimated using the SAS Mixed Procedure, maximum likelihood estimation, and model-based fixed effects for standard errors. The overall student sample for these models (including all EO and EL students) was between 375,000 and 400,000 students for each subject and grade.



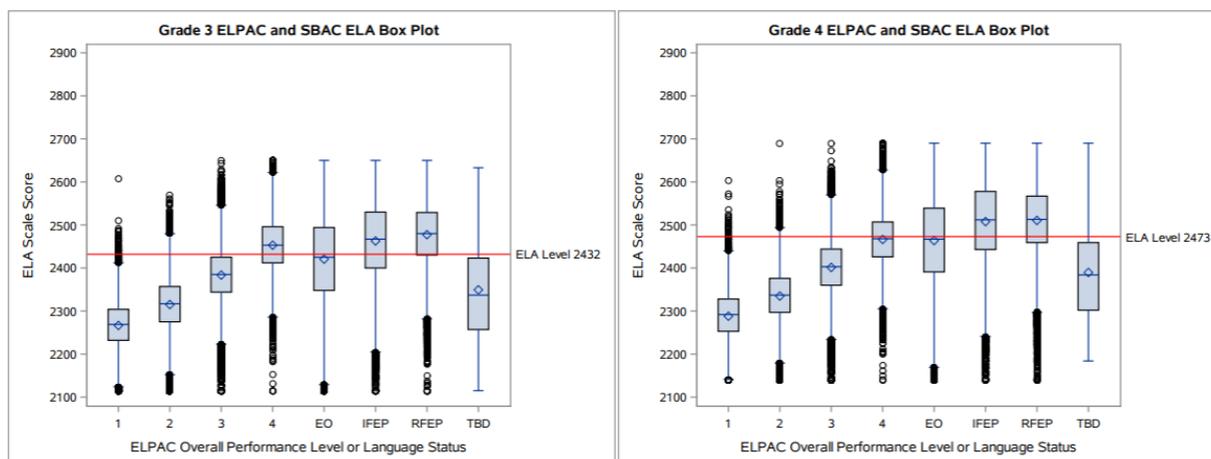
Appendix B. Additional Results for All Methods, Grades

Results from the 2018–19 analyses are posted publicly in a series of documents presented to the California State Board of Education: [Item 09](#) of the [November 2018 meeting](#), a [December 2018 Information Memorandum](#), and [Item 09](#) of the [January 2019 Meeting](#).

The sections and figures in this appendix provide box plot and logistic regression results from the 2023–24 replication analyses for all grades included in the analysis (3–8 and 11) for all students and for students grouped by parental education, socioeconomic status (SES), and disability status.

Figure B1. 2023 Box Plot Results—All Students

The results below show the descriptive box plots for all grades and all English Learner (EL) and English-only (EO) students in the state. Results are limited to SBAC-tested grades (3–8 and 11) and to EL students who could be matched across the ELPAC and SBAC data files. These results represent 100 percent of students who qualified for inclusion in the analysis (3,574,841 students in all, including 516,512 EL students).



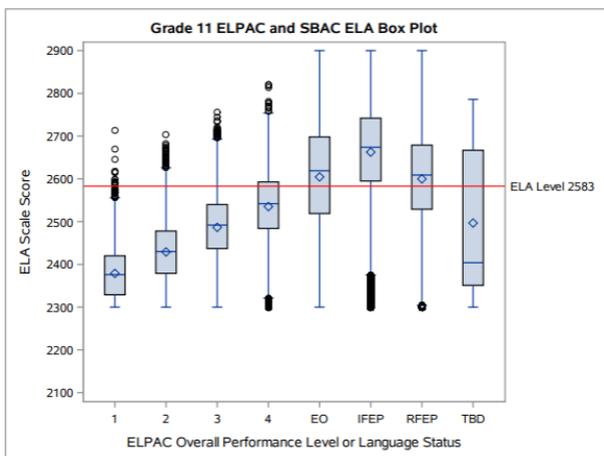
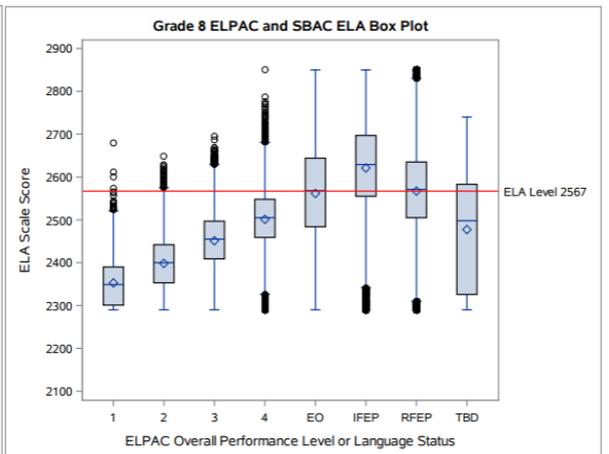
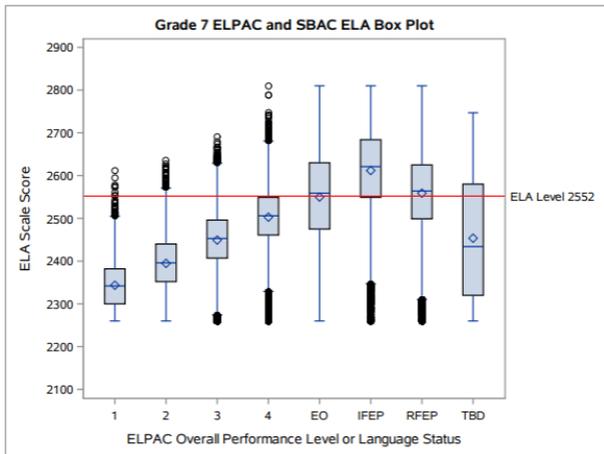
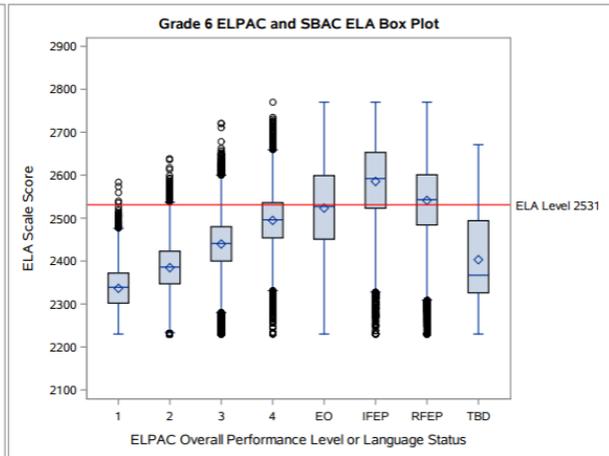
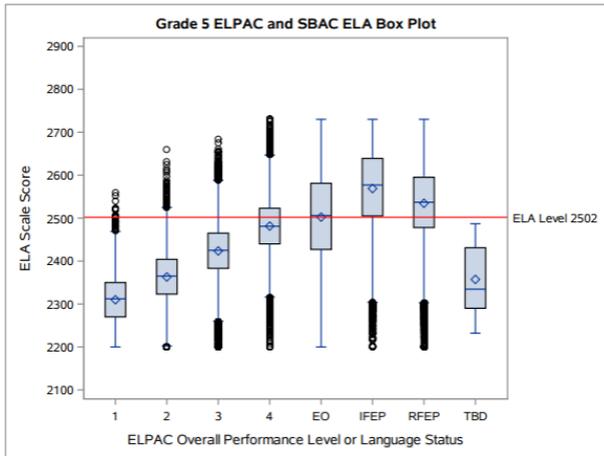
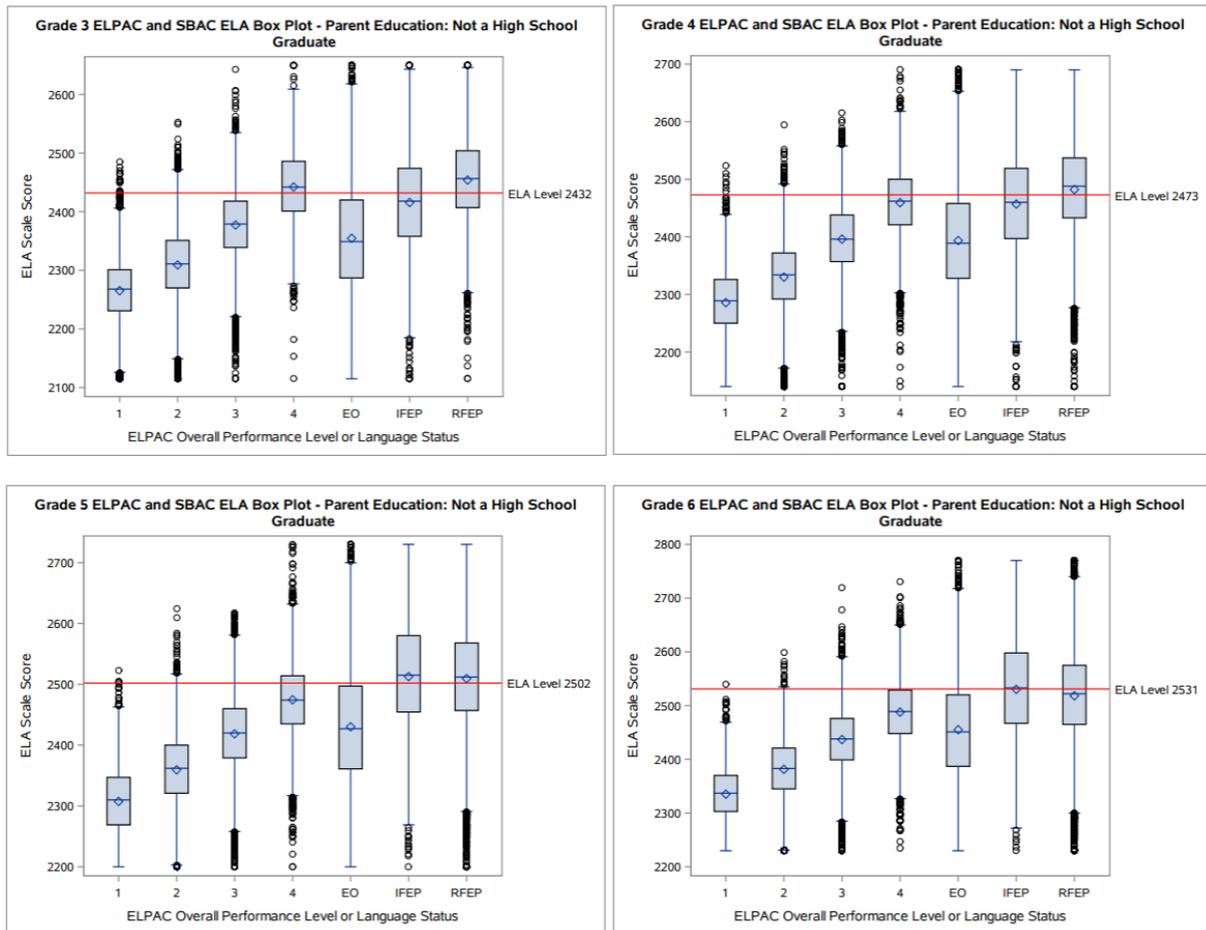


Figure B2. 2023 Box Plot Results—Parental Education = Did Not Finish High School

The results below show the descriptive box plots for all grades and all EL and EO students in the state whose parents did not complete high school. Results are limited to SBAC-tested grades (3–8 and 11) and to EL students who could be matched across the ELPAC and SBAC data files. These results represent approximately 30 percent of EL students and 15 percent of EO students who qualified for inclusion in the analysis (approximately 450,000 EO students and 155,000 EL students).



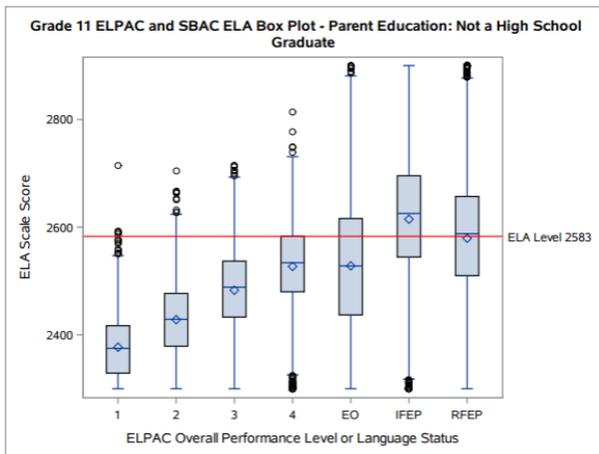
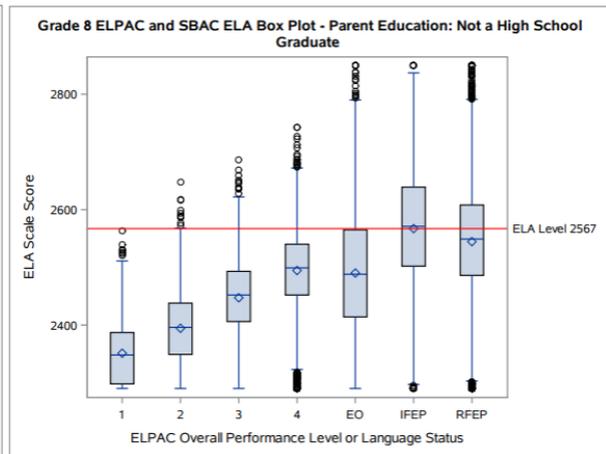
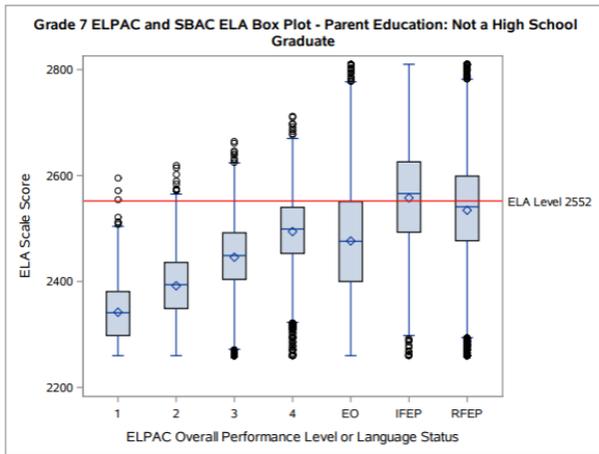
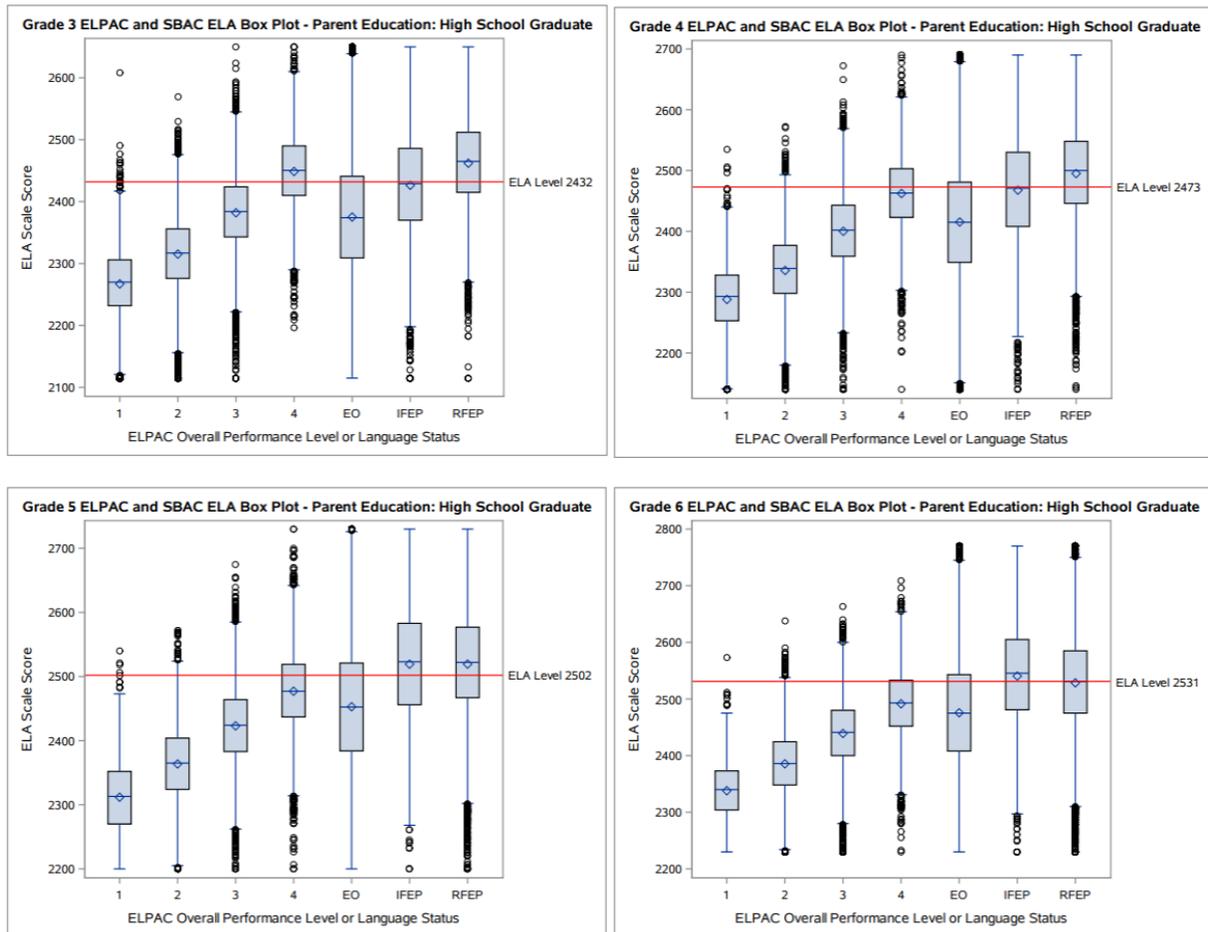


Figure B3. 2023 Box Plot Results—Parental Education = High School

The results below show the descriptive box plots for all grades and all EL and EO students in the state whose parents' highest level of education was completing high school. Results are limited to SBAC-tested grades (3–8 and 11) and to EL students who could be matched across the ELPAC and SBAC data files. These results represent approximately 29 percent of EL students and 22 percent of EO students who qualified for inclusion in the analysis (approximately 782,000 EO students and 148,000 EL students).



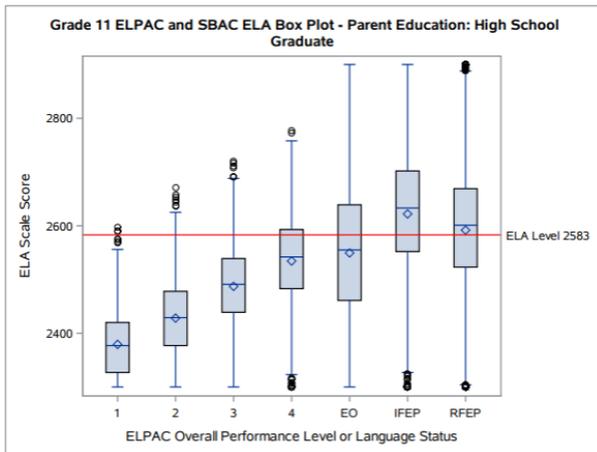
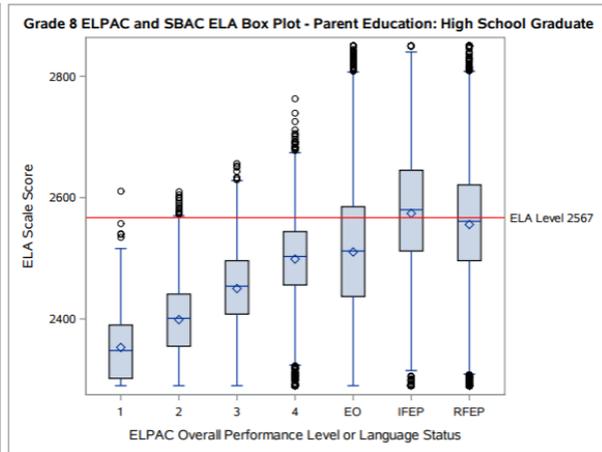
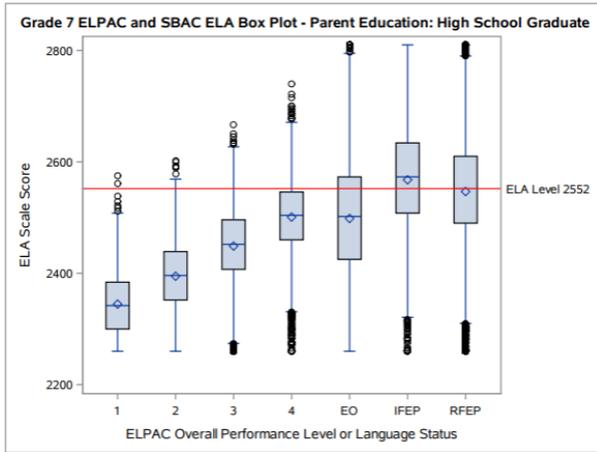
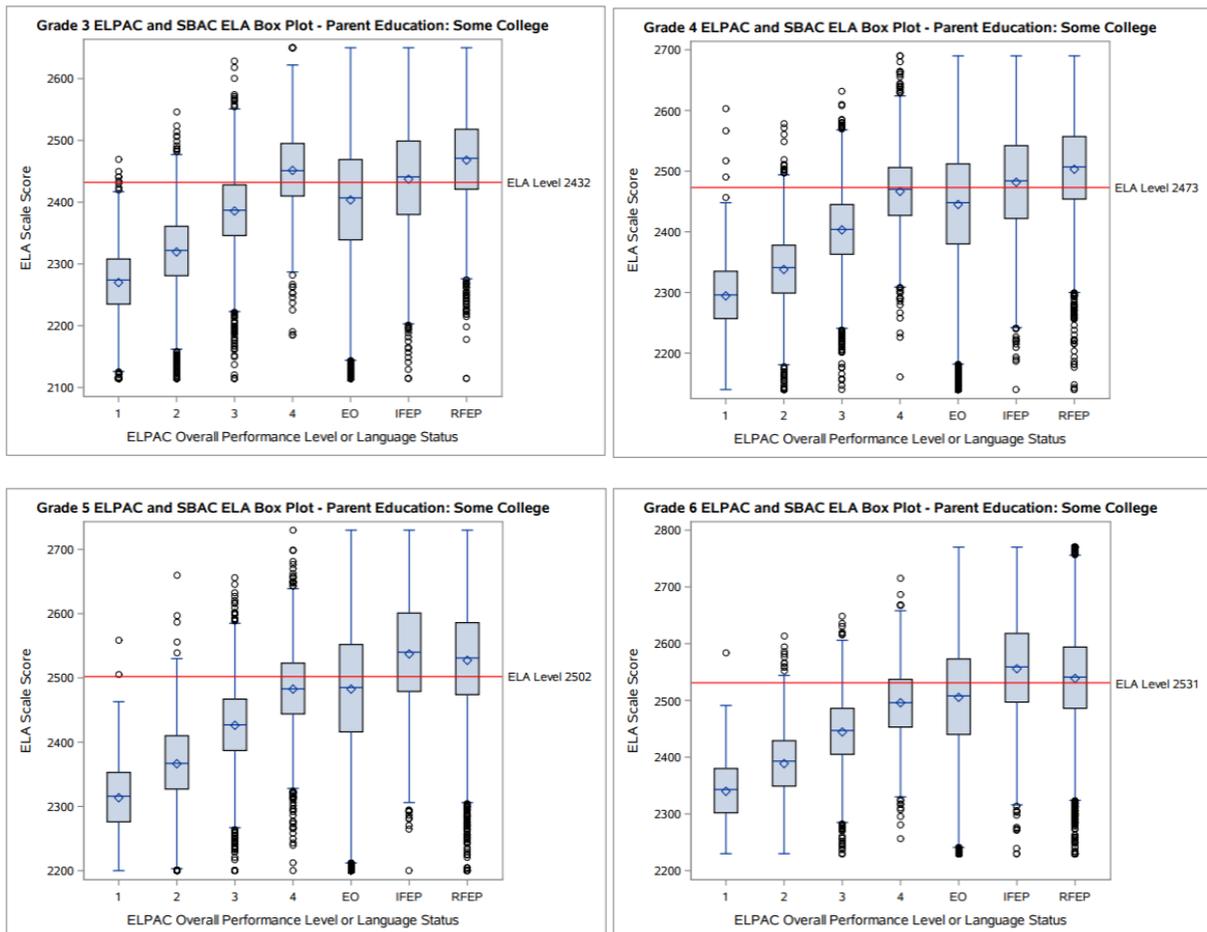


Figure B4. 2023 Box Plot Results—Parental Education = Some College

The results below show the descriptive box plots for all grades and all EL and EO students in the state whose parents' highest level of education was some college. Results are limited to SBAC-tested grades (3–8 and 11) and to EL students who could be matched across the ELPAC and SBAC data files. These results represent approximately 11 percent of EL students and 18 percent of EO students who qualified for inclusion in the analysis (approximately 656,000 EO students and 55,000 EL students).



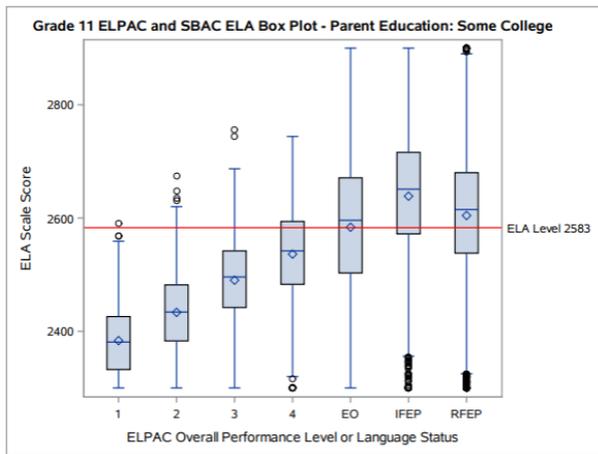
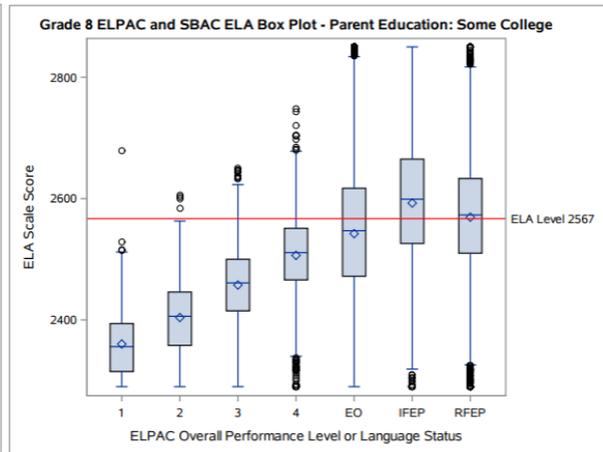
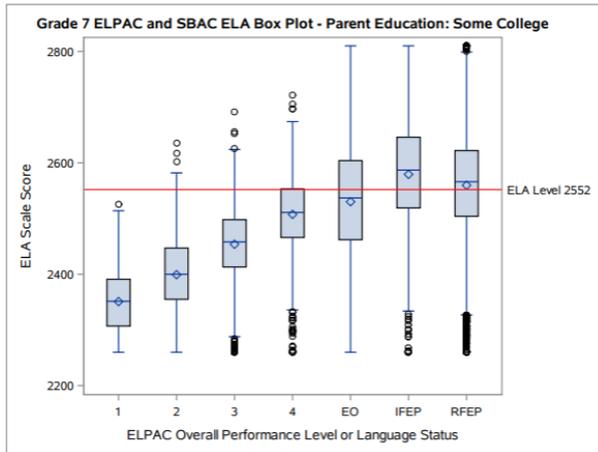
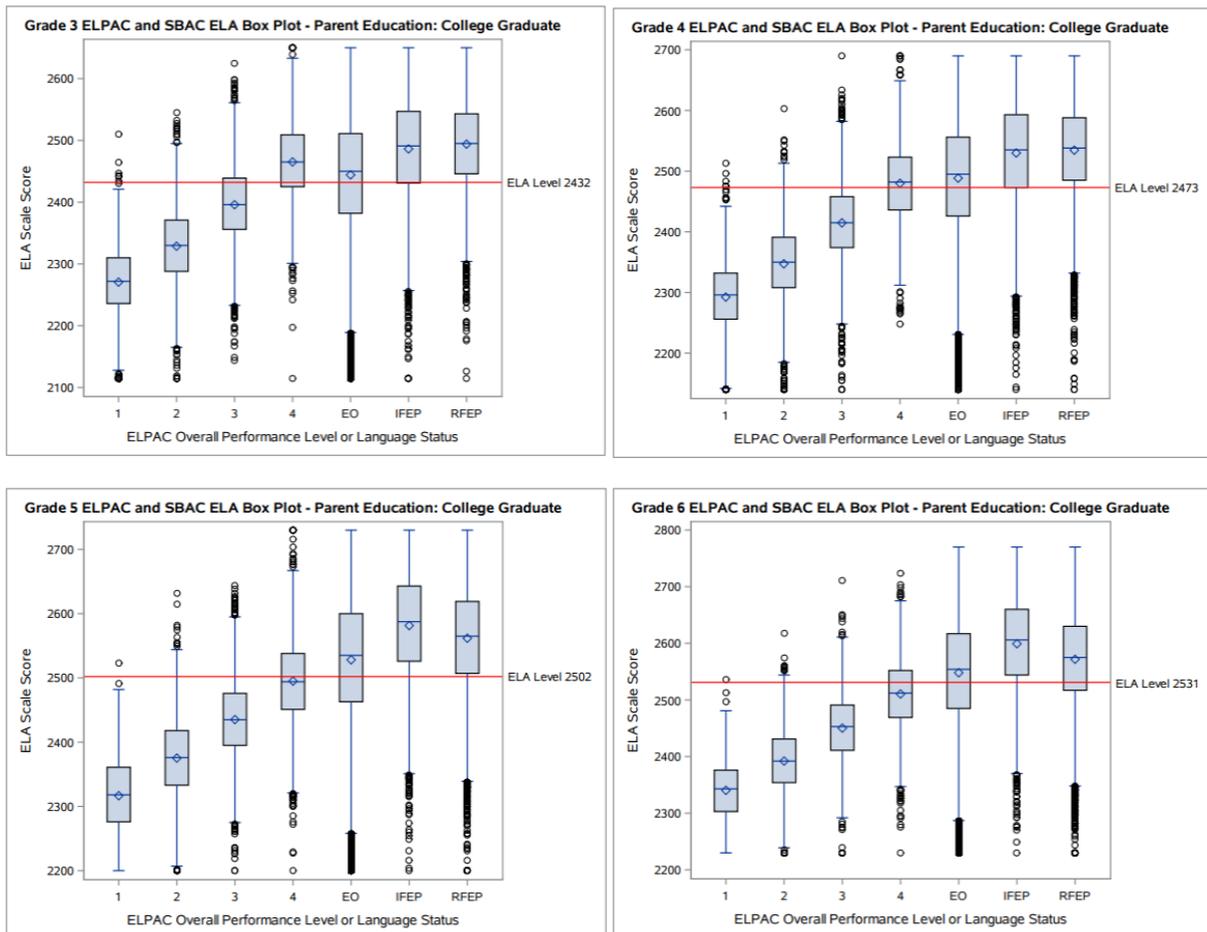


Figure B5. 2023 Box Plot Results—Parental Education = College Graduate

The results below show the descriptive box plots for all grades and all EL and EO students in the state whose parents' highest level of education was a college degree. Results are limited to SBAC-tested grades (3–8 and 11) and to EL students who could be matched across the ELPAC and SBAC data files. These results represent approximately 9 percent of EL students and 19 percent of EO students who qualified for inclusion in the analysis (approximately 684,000 EO students and 48,000 EL students).



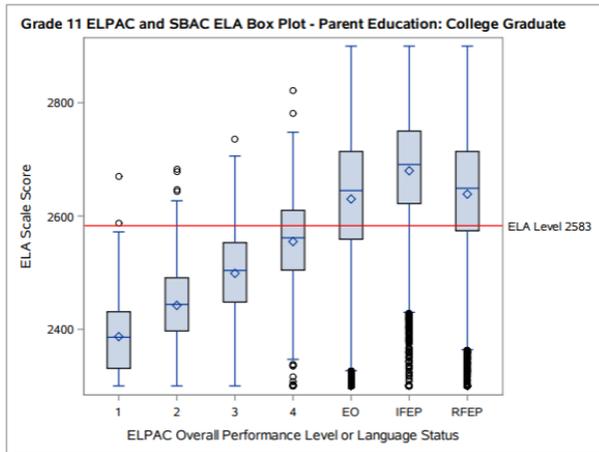
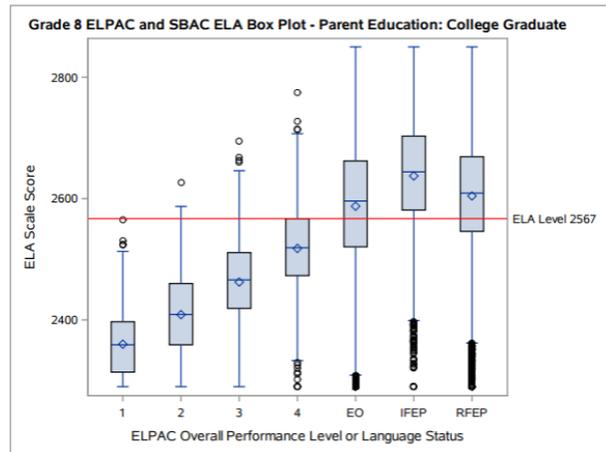
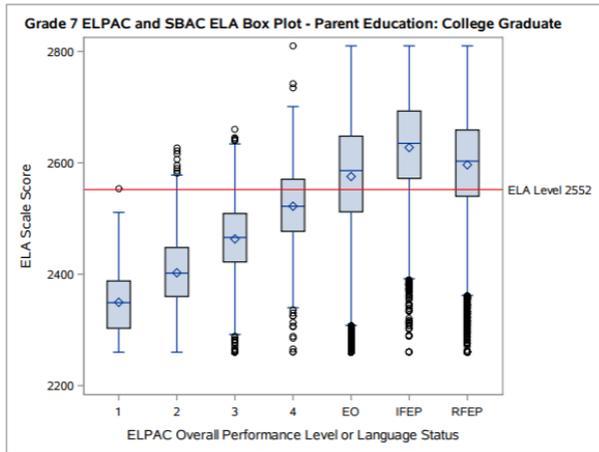
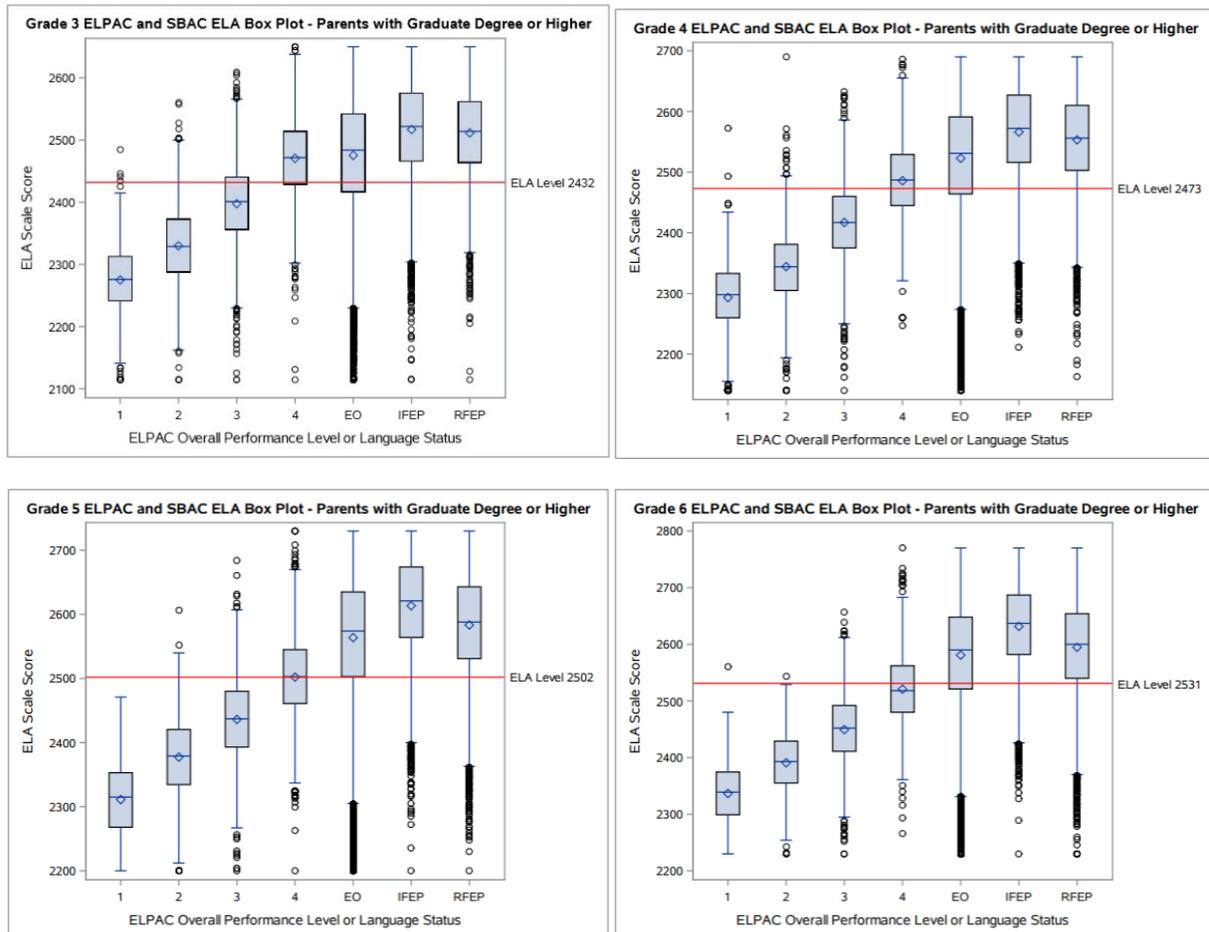


Figure B6. 2023 Box Plot Results—Parental Education = Graduate Degree or Higher

The results below show the descriptive box plots for all grades and all EL and EO students in the state whose parents' highest level of education was a graduate degree or higher. Results are limited to SBAC-tested grades (3–8 and 11) and to EL students who could be matched across the ELPAC and SBAC data files. These results represent approximately 5 percent of EL students and 14 percent of EO students who qualified for inclusion in the analysis (approximately 512,000 EO students and 25,000 EL students).



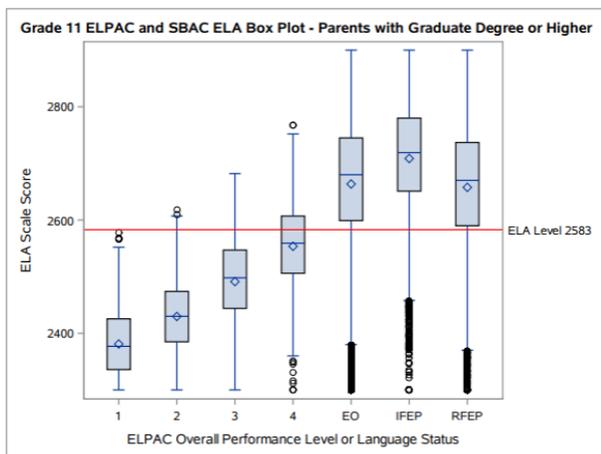
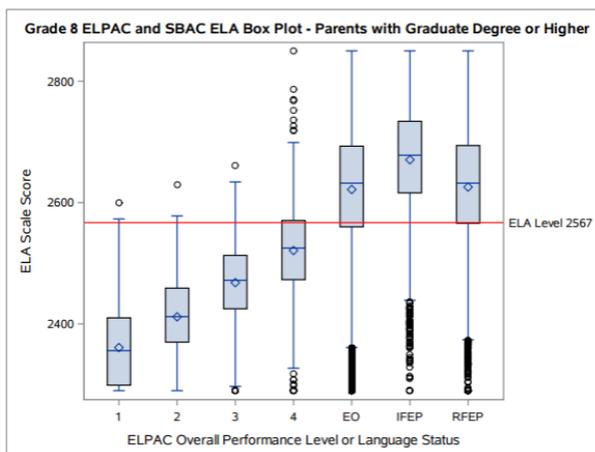
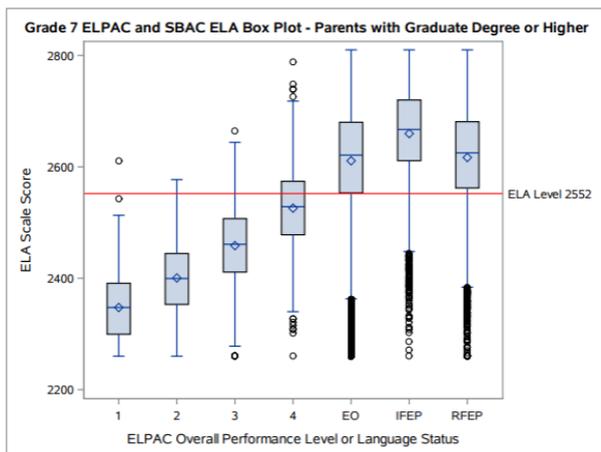
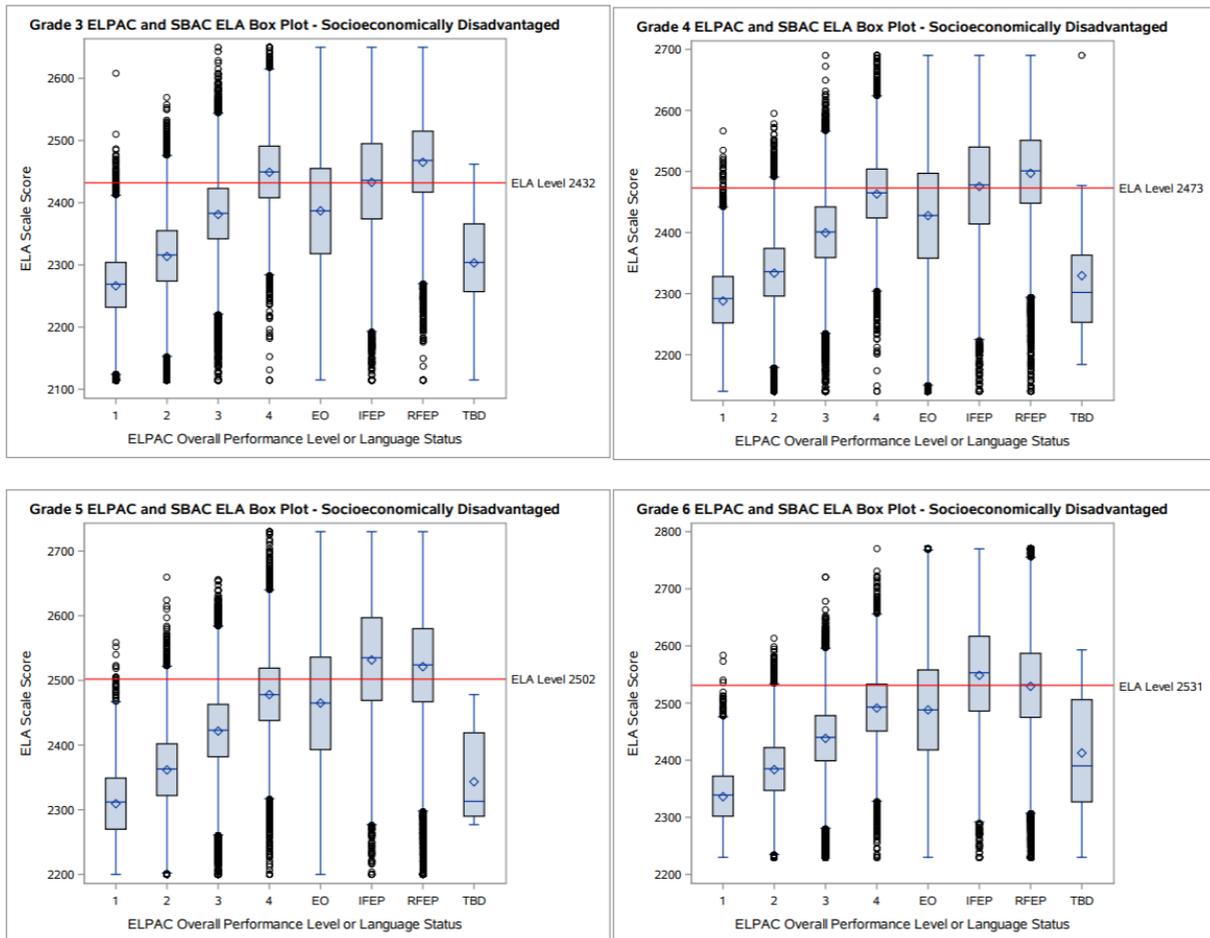


Figure B7. 2023 Box Plot Results—Socioeconomically Disadvantaged

The results below show the descriptive box plots for all grades and all EL and EO students in the state who are considered socioeconomically disadvantaged based on the state's criteria. Results are limited to SBAC-tested grades (3–8 and 11) and to EL students who could be matched across the ELPAC and SBAC data files. These results represent approximately 85 percent of EL students in the analysis (approximately 439,000 students).



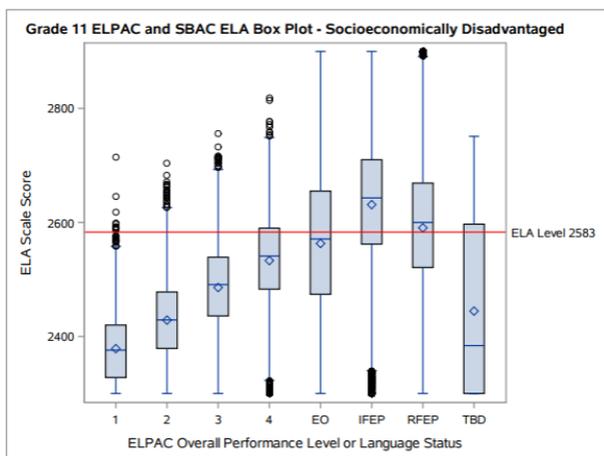
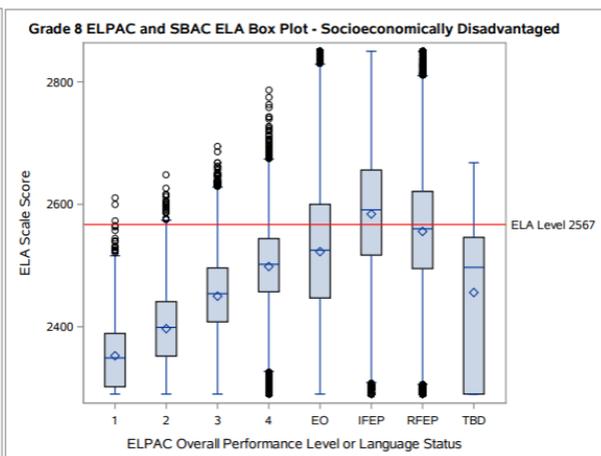
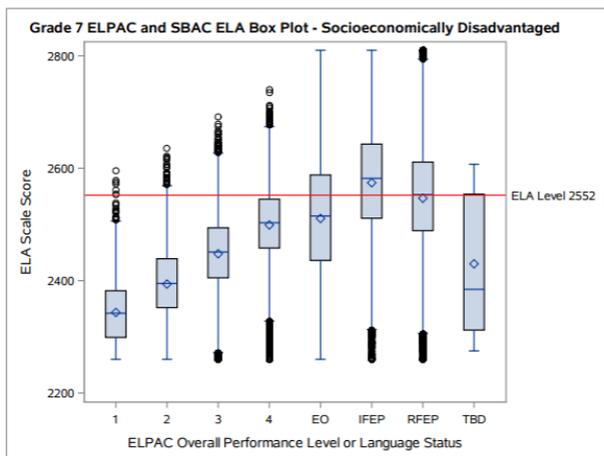
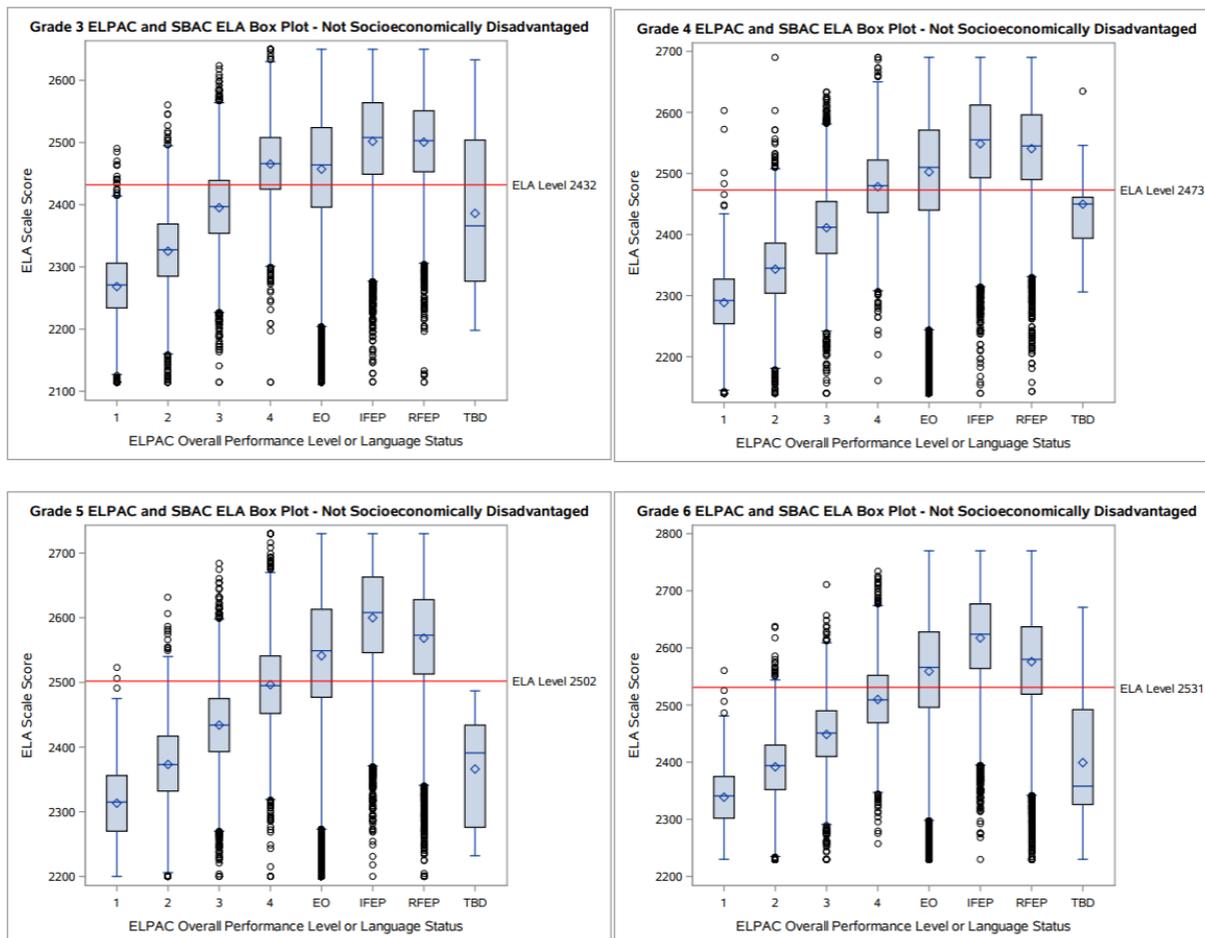


Figure B8. 2023 Box Plot Results—Not Socioeconomically Disadvantaged

The results below show the descriptive box plots for all grades and all EL and EO students in the state who are not considered socioeconomically disadvantaged based on the state's criteria. Results are limited to SBAC-tested grades (3–8 and 11) and to EL students who could be matched across the ELPAC and SBAC data files. These results represent approximately 15 percent of EL students in the analysis (approximately 78,000 students).



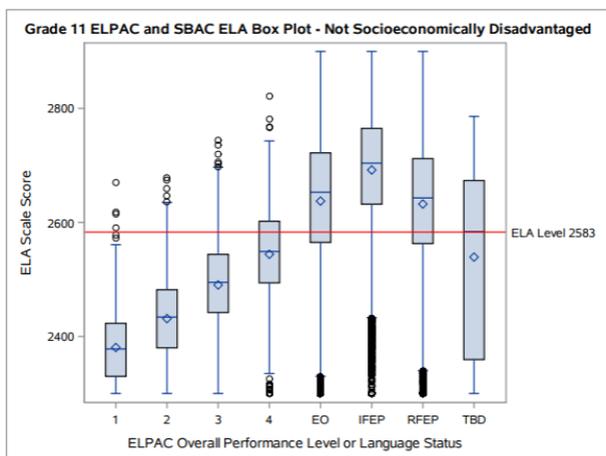
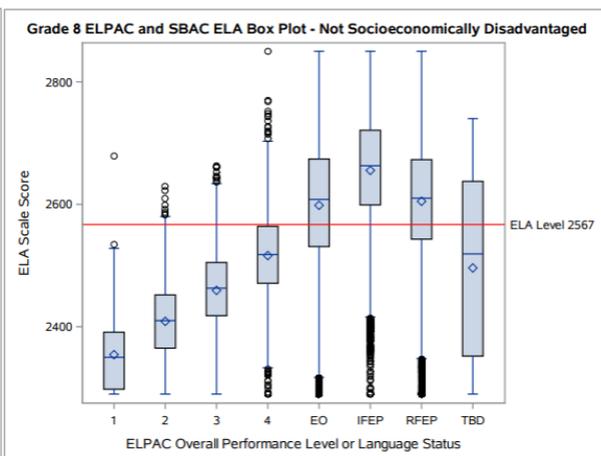
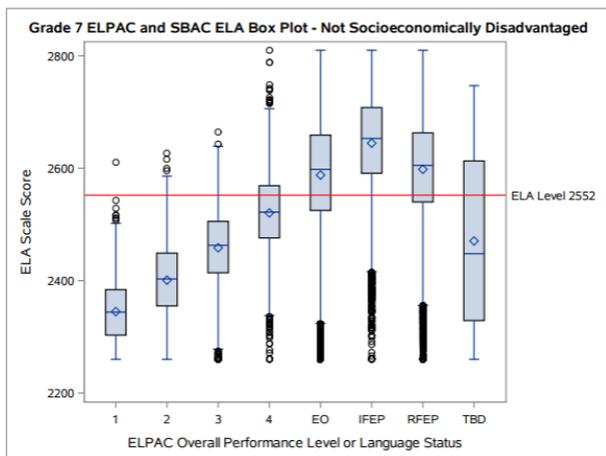
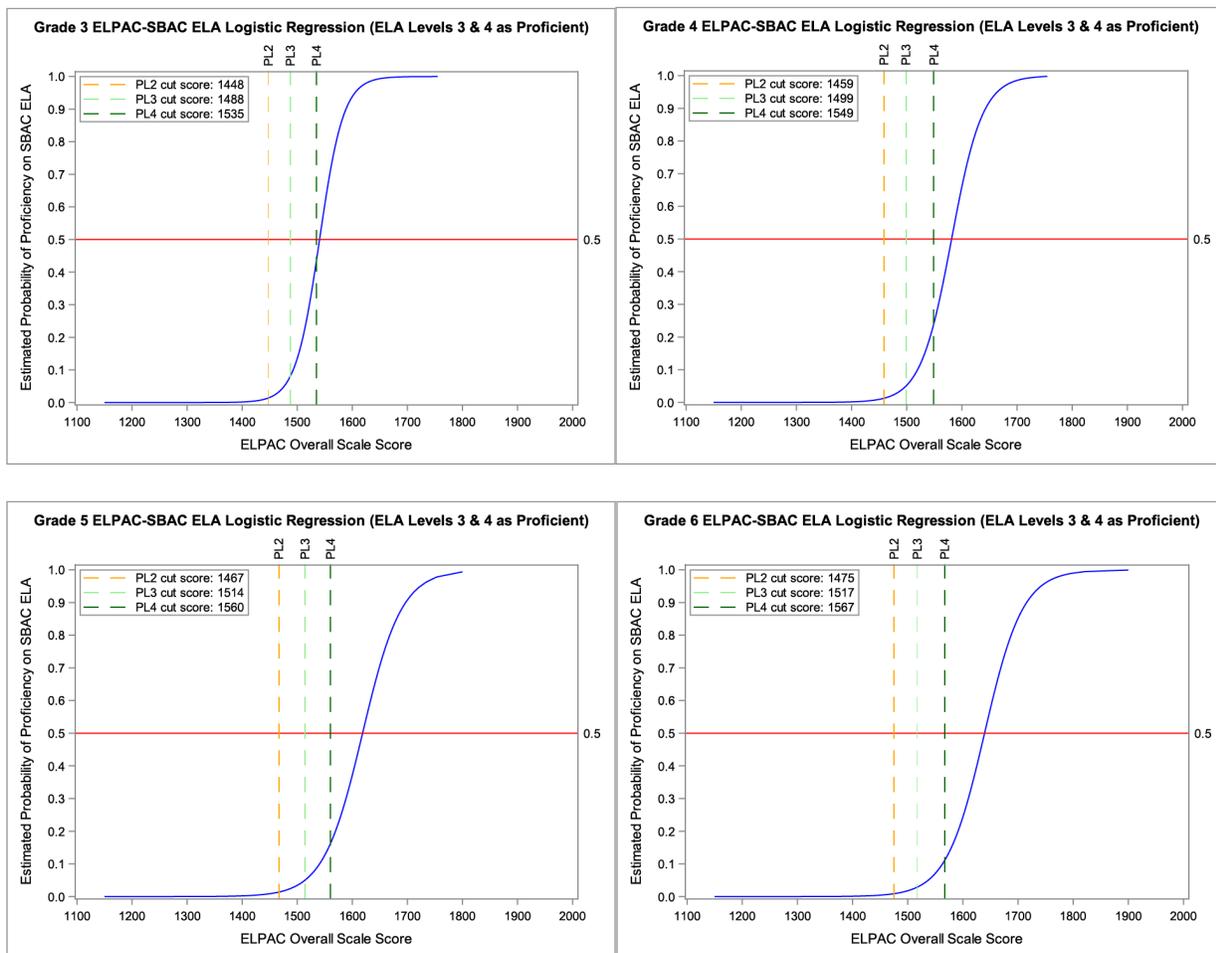


Figure B9. 2023 Logistic Regression Results—All Grades, All Students

The results below show the logistic regression plots for all EL students in SBAC-tested grades (3–8 and 11) who could be matched across the ELPAC and SBAC data files (approximately 516,000 EL students).



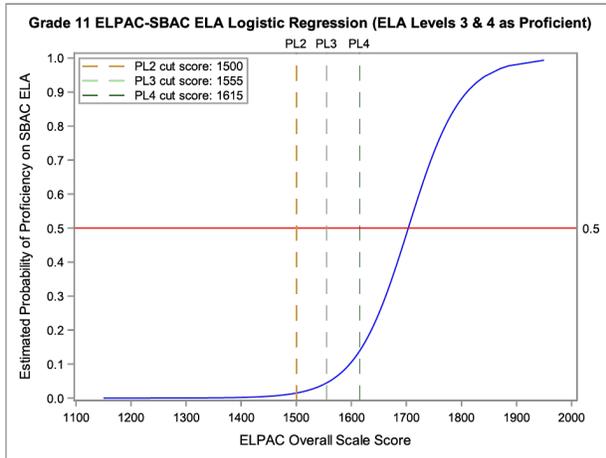
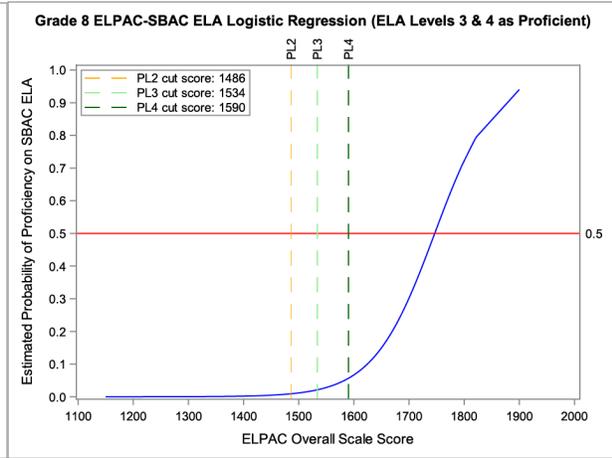
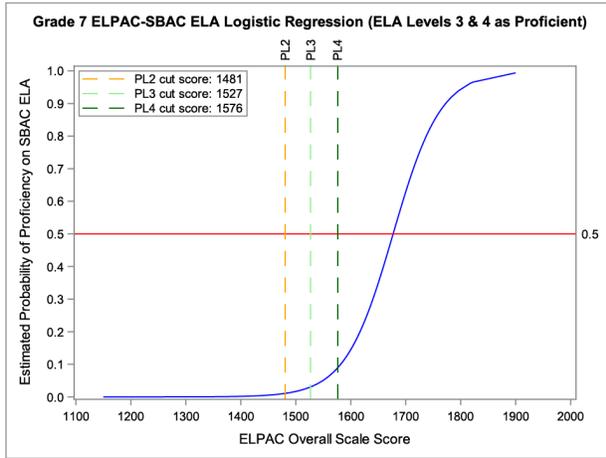


Table B1. Subsequent Academic Achievement for EL Students Who Score at ELPAC Overall PL 4

The results below show the ELA and math achievement, 1 year later, for students who scored at ELPAC overall PL 4 in grades 3 through 7 (“base grade” in the table) and did (ELP4 RFEP) or did not (ELP4 EL) reclassify in the following school year.

Base grade	Group	Average ELA score (lower, upper bounds)	Difference (RFEP – EL)	Average math score (Lower, upper bounds)	Difference (RFEP – EL)
3	ELP4 RFEP	0.1 (0.08, 0.12)		0.08 (0.06, 0.09)	
3	ELP4 EL	0.08 (0.06, 0.09)	0.01	0.08 (0.06, 0.09)	0
4	ELP4 RFEP	0.02 (0, 0.04)		0.03 (0.02, 0.05)	
4	ELP4 EL	0.03 (0.01, 0.04)	-0.01	0.01 (-0.01, 0.02)	0.03*
5	ELP4 RFEP	-0.05 (-0.07, -0.03)		-0.03 (-0.05, -0.01)	
5	ELP4 EL	-0.04 (-0.06, -0.03)	0	-0.03 (-0.05, -0.02)	0.01
6	ELP4 RFEP	-0.01 (-0.03, 0.01)		0.01 (0, 0.03)	
6	ELP4 EL	0.02 (0, 0.03)	-0.02*	-0.01 (-0.02, 0.01)	0.02*
7	ELP4 RFEP	-0.06 (-0.08, -0.04)		-0.03 (-0.05, -0.01)	
7	ELP4 EL	-0.05 (-0.07, -0.04)	-0.01	-0.05 (-0.07, -0.04)	0.03*

* Indicates statistically significant difference between the two ELP4 groups. Positive values mean that ELP4 RFEP students earned higher average scores; negative values mean that ELP4 EL students earned higher average scores.

