WIDA Consortium

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English Language Proficiency Standards for English Language Learners in Kindergarten through Grade 12

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These standards are the result of the collaborative efforts of nine states known as the WIDA Consortium: Wisconsin, Delaware, Arkansas, District of Columbia Public Schools, Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Illinois .

WIDA Consortium

English Language Proficiency Standards for English Language Learners in Kindergarten through Grade 12

FRAMEWORKS FOR LARGE-SCALE STATE AND CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT

Overview Document

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Table of Contents

		Page
I.	Introduction	1
II.	Organization and Format of the Frameworks	2
	A. The English Language Proficiency Standards	3
	B. The Language Domains	3
	C. The Language Proficiency Levels and Performance Definitions	4
	D. The Model Performance Indicators	7
III.	Alignment of the Model Performance Indicators and Versatility of the Frameworks	9
IV.	WIDA's Enhanced Assessment System	9
V.	Rationale for the English Language Proficiency Standards	11
VI.	Designing an Assessment System: The Process of Developing English Language Proficiency Standards	12
	A. Phase I: Setting the parameters for the English language proficiency standards	12
	B. Phase II: Creating and reviewing the K-12 English language proficiency standards	14
	C. Phase III: Developing the K-12 classroom framework	15
	D. Phase IV: Augmenting the model performance indicators within the large-scale state and classroom frameworks	16
	Method 1: Blending English language proficiency or academic content standards with WIDA's model performance indicators	16
	Case Study: Illinois	17
	Method 2: Enhancing the model performance indicators across language domains and frameworks	19

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E. Phase V: Reformatting the frameworks 22

VII. Uses for the English Language Proficiency Standards 22

VIII. Contributors to the Development of WIDA's K-12 English Language Proficiency Standards 23

IX. Glossary of Terms Associated with WIDA's English Language Proficiency Standards 29

X. Source Documents and References 31

XI. Feedback Form 35

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I. Introduction

WIDA's *English Language Proficiency Standards for English Language Learners in Kindergarten through Grade 12: Frameworks for Large-scale State and Classroom Assessment* is the first published product of an enhanced assessment system being developed and implemented by a consortium of states. Federal grant monies available under the *No Child Left Behind Act* of 2001 were awarded to **Wi**sconsin (the lead state), **D**elaware, and **A**rkansas (WIDA), the original partners, in early 2003. Within the first half-year of the project, the District of Columbia, Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont joined the team, followed by Illinois in October 2003.

This document is designed for the many audiences in the field of education who are impacted by English language learners (ELLs), linguistically and culturally diverse students who have been identified as having levels of English language proficiency that preclude them from accessing, processing, and acquiring unmodified grade level content in English. This audience includes: English language learners themselves as well as those with disabilities; teachers; principals; program, district, and regional administrators; test developers; teacher educators; and other stakeholders who are members of the consortium of states under the WIDA umbrella.

The two frameworks that constitute this document are to be used for planning curriculum, instruction, and assessment of English language learners. Their common elements are the following: 1). English language proficiency standards, 2). language domains, 3). grade level clusters, and 4). language proficiency levels. Overlaying the standards are the performance definitions that describe each level of language proficiency. These definitions, by delineating the stages of second language acquisition, provide the parameters in which the model performance indicators operate.

While there are shared elements of the frameworks, there are different foci. The primary thrust of the framework for large-scale state assessment is to identify the range of model performance indicators that will be used to generate the specifications for the English language proficiency test as well as the anchors for the measure itself. On the other hand, the framework for classroom assessment is largely geared toward measuring student performance on classroom-centered indicators. The classroom framework tends to be more topic specific to assist teachers in planning and implementing instruction and assessment.

States, school districts, schools, or programs are welcome to utilize the classroom framework to complement the large-scale state one; in doing so, large-scale assessments may be developed locally for the classroom framework as well. The section on enhancing the model performance indicators across language domains and frameworks (page 16) provides a template for expanding the scope of the standards.

The frameworks for large-scale state and classroom assessment appear like rubrics. This matrix format is intentionally used in order for educators to visualize the developmental nature of language acquisition across language proficiency levels and emphasize the scaffolding of language demands at each grade level cluster. It is built upon the assumption that the effects of

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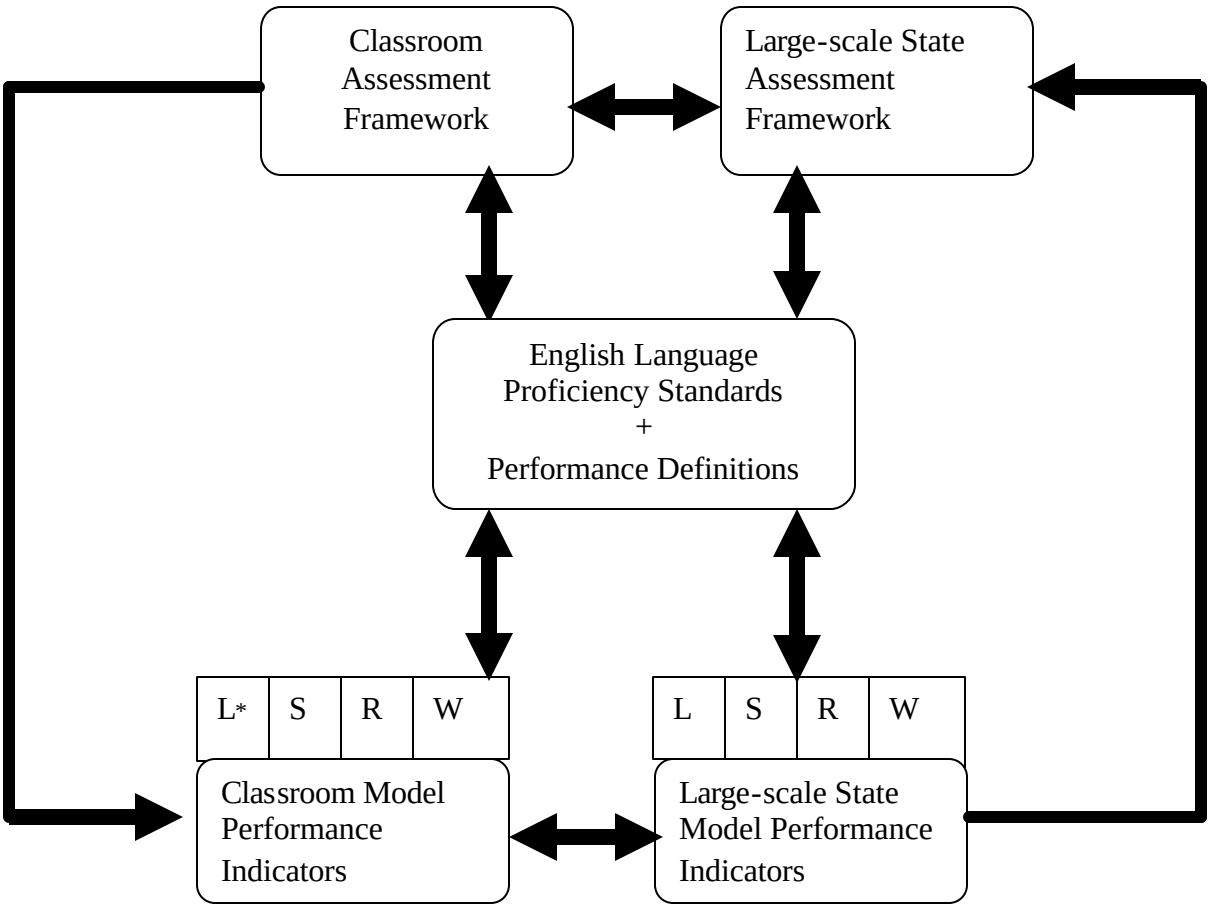
acquiring language at each subsequent grade level cluster and language proficiency level are cumulative.

II. Organization and Format of the Frameworks

The English language proficiency standards are the centerpiece for both the classroom and large-scale state assessment frameworks. Each framework, however, generates a separate set of model performance indicators for the language domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The classroom framework, along with its model performance indicators, informs and enhances the large-scale state framework.



*The language domains: Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing

Figure 1. The organization of WIDA's English language proficiency standards.

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A. The English Language Proficiency Standards

The five **English language proficiency standards** are identical for the classroom and large-scale state assessment frameworks. They reflect the social and academic dimensions of acquiring a second language that are expected of English language learners in grade levels K-12 attending schools in the United States. Each English language proficiency standard addresses a specific context for language acquisition (social and instructional settings as well as language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies) and is divided into four **grade level clusters**: K-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12.

Overall, the language proficiency standards center on the **language** needed and used by English language learners to succeed in school:

English Language Proficiency Standard 1:
English language learners communicate in English for SOCIAL AND INSTRUCTIONAL purposes within the school setting.

English Language Proficiency Standard 2:
English language learners communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of LANGUAGE ARTS.

English Language Proficiency Standard 3:
English language learners communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of MATHEMATICS.

English Language Proficiency Standard 4:
English language learners communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of SCIENCE.

English Language Proficiency Standard 5:
English language learners communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of SOCIAL STUDIES.

B. The Language Domains

Each of the five English language proficiency standards encompasses four **language domains:** listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The language domains reflect the modality of the communication that is further delineated by the language proficiency levels and their model performance indicators. The definitions of the language domains are as follows:

Listening—process, understand, interpret, and evaluate spoken language in a variety of situations

Speaking—engage in oral communication in a variety of situations for an array of purposes and audiences

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Reading—process, interpret and evaluate written language, symbols and text with understanding and fluency

Writing—engage in written communication in a variety of forms for an array of purposes and audiences

Spolsky (1989), in his theory of second language learning, imposes a set of conditions that shape the acquisition process. Among them is the recognition that individual language learners vary in their productive and receptive skills, with receptive language (listening and reading) generally developing prior to and to a higher level than productive language (speaking and writing). Thus, English language learners may not be at a uniform level of English language proficiency across the four domains. This pattern may also be reflected in their native language proficiency. Unless English language learners have been schooled in their native language, their oral language or literacy may not be fully developed for their age level. The differential language acquisition of these students in the four language domains must be taken into consideration in instructional planning and assessment.

C. The Language Proficiency Levels and Performance Definitions

The five **language proficiency levels** outline the progression of language development implied in the acquisition of English as an additional language, from 1, **Entering** the process, to 5, **Bridging** to the attainment of state academic content standards. The language proficiency levels delineate expected performance and describe what English language learners can do within each domain of the standards. Figure 2 illustrates the levels of language proficiency as stepping-stones along the pathway to academic success. The figure is continued on the next page (in Figure 3) where English language learners cross the bridge from English language proficiency to meet state academic content standards.

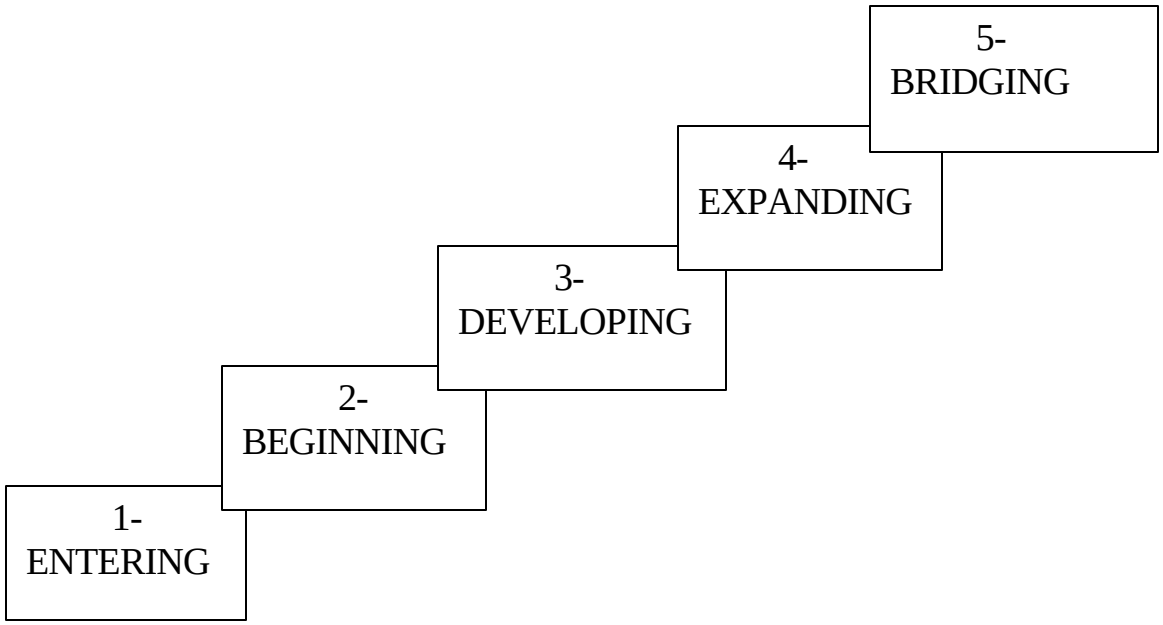

Figure 2. The levels of English language proficiency

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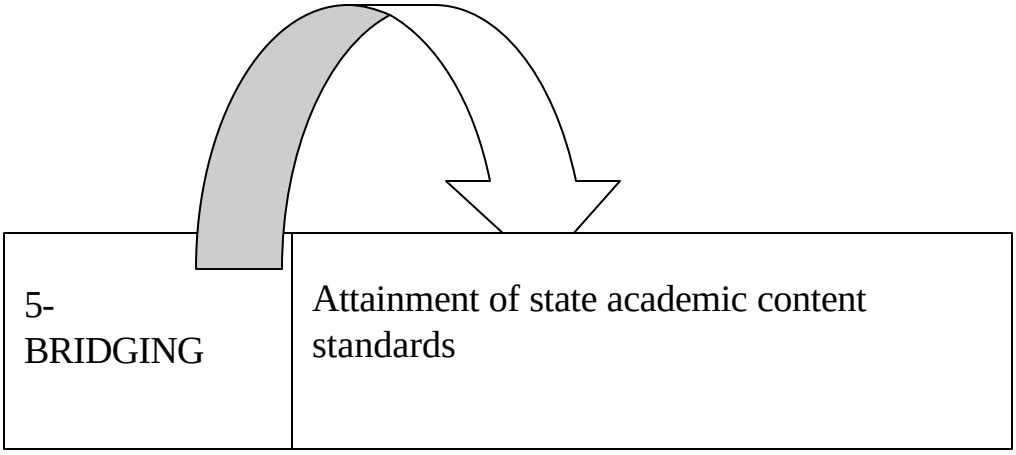

Figure 3. The bridge between English language proficiency and academic achievement for English language learners

The performance definitions provide a global overview of the language acquisition process. They serve as a summary and synthesis of the model performance indicators for each language proficiency level. Three criteria or descriptors have been used to form the definitions. They are based on the students' increasing 1. comprehension and use of the technical language of the content areas, 2. linguistic complexity of oral interaction or writing, and 3. development of phonological, syntactic, and semantic understanding or usage as they move through the second language acquisition continuum. Figure 4 provides the performance definitions for the five language proficiency levels of the English language proficiency standards.

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At the given level of English language proficiency, English language learners will process, understand, produce, or use:	
5- Bridging	• the technical language of the content areas; • a variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity in extended oral or written discourse, including stories, essays, or reports; ➢ oral or written language approaching comparability to that of English proficient peers when presented with grade level material
4- Expanding	• specific and some technical language of the content areas; • a variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity in oral discourse or multiple, related paragraphs; ➢ oral or written language with minimal phonological, syntactic, or semantic errors that do not impede the overall meaning of the communication when presented with oral or written connected discourse with occasional visual and graphic support
3- Developing	• general and some specific language of the content areas; • expanded sentences in oral interaction or written paragraphs; ➢ oral or written language with phonological, syntactic, or semantic errors that may impede the communication but retain much of its meaning when presented with oral or written, narrative or expository descriptions with occasional visual and graphic support
2- Beginning	• general language related to the content areas; • phrases or short sentences; ➢ oral or written language with phonological, syntactic, or semantic errors that often impede the meaning of the communication when presented with one to multiple-step commands, directions, questions, or a series of statements with visual and graphic support
1- Entering	• pictorial or graphic representation of the language of the content areas; • words, phrases, or chunks of language when presented with one-step commands, directions, WH-questions, or statements with visual and graphic support

Figure 4. Performance definitions for the K-12 English language proficiency standards

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D. The Model Performance Indicators

Each language proficiency standard is illustrated by **model performance indicators** that are representative samples from the corpus of language associated with English language learners' acquisition of social and academic proficiencies. The model performance indicators are functional, measurable indices of the language domains (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) and aimed at the targeted age/developmental levels of English language learners.

As their label implies, model performance indicators are merely examples that have been drawn from a myriad of English language proficiency and state academic content standards; suggestions for augmenting what is currently in place are offered in Part D of Section VI. There are three components of a model performance indicator: 1). function (how the students use language), 2). content (what the students are expected to communicate), and 3). modality (how the students process the input either through oral or written language). For some indicators, there are suggested topics that add clarity or specificity; these ideas are introduced by the phrase "such as." Other indicators have "e.g.," followed by an example of an expected language pattern that students may use in their response.

The model performance indicators in these frameworks are adapted from the preK-12 ESL standards (1997) developed by Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) and the academic content standards of states, in particular, Wisconsin, Delaware, Arkansas, and the District of Columbia. The academic content standards of Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Illinois have also been incorporated into the model performance indicators.

The model performance indicators are presented in a developmental sequence across language proficiency levels and grade level clusters. They represent a full range of linguistic complexity and cognitive engagement within and across content areas that incorporate the language necessary for English language learners to move towards the attainment of state academic content standards. For English Language Proficiency Standard 1, the model performance indicators refer to language acquisition that occurs within classroom and school contexts. For English Language Proficiency Standards 2-5 (language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies), language acquisition is reflective of content specific contexts.

The model performance indicators designed for Entering, Beginning and, at times, Developing English language learners (language proficiency levels 1, 2, and 3) incorporate visual or graphic support, realia, or manipulatives in order to provide the students access to meaning through multiple modalities or sources. The model performance indicators for Bridging (language proficiency level 5) assume students are exposed to and working with grade level material.

At times, there are two strands of model performance indicators within a grade level cluster; reviewers of the document felt that these additions were necessary to create a closer alignment with state academic content standards. A visual layout of the components of the standards is displayed in Figure 5. The English language proficiency levels head each column and the grade level clusters begin each row. The remaining cells contain at least one model performance indicator, creating a strand or strands across proficiency levels within a grade level cluster. (Figure 5 points to an example of a strand of performance indicators for grade level cluster 3-5.)

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STANDARD

LANGUAGE DOMAIN

English Language Proficiency Levels

Grade Level Cluster	Level 1 Entering	Level 2 Beginning	Level 3 Developing	Level 4 Expanding	Level 5 Bridging
K-2					
3-5					
6-8					
9-12					

Model Performance Indicator(s)

A Strand of Model Performance Indicators (through grade level cluster)

Figure 5. The format of the English language proficiency standards for large-scale state and classroom frameworks

To summarize, the total of more than **800 unique model performance indicators** in this document is calculated from the:

2 assessment frameworks,

5 English language proficiency standards,

4 language domains,

4 grade level clusters, and

5 levels of language proficiency.

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III. Alignment of the Model Performance Indicators and Versatility of the Frameworks

The spiraling nature of curriculum across all grade levels and the developmental progression of the second language acquisition process across all ages of students have been taken into account in the development of the model performance indicators. Reading the model performance indicators horizontally across language proficiency levels from 1 (Entering) to 5 (Bridging) is the basis for horizontal alignment while reading them downward (vertically) by language proficiency levels across grade level clusters (from K-2 to 9-12) produces vertical alignment. The conscious attempt to align the model performance indicators vertically and horizontally across both frameworks promotes systemic validity, from curriculum planning to delivery of instruction and from the development of the English language proficiency test specifications to the design of the instrument.

The model performance indicators for each grade level cluster are built on the assumption that students have acquired the language proficiency associated with the previous indicators. However, students of limited formal schooling who enter high school may also need to be exposed to requisite model performance indicators from lower grade level clusters as building blocks. The specific tasks designed for these students, however, should be reflective of their age and cognitive development.

With the goal of producing a teacher-friendly document and in order to avoid redundancy (thus reducing the size of the document), model performance indicators have not been repeated (either in other language domains or grade level clusters). To gain a thorough understanding of the scope of the content of the model performance indicators for a grade level cluster, it is best to examine all language domains (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) for both the large-scale state and classroom frameworks.

The model performance indicators at each language proficiency level can be adapted for use across domains and grade level clusters. It may also be applied across language domains and frameworks as described under Phase IV, Method 2, "Augmenting the model performance indicators within the large-scale state and classroom frameworks." Through sustained professional development, teachers should be offered opportunities to adapt the model performance indicators for their classrooms.

IV. WIDA's Enhanced Assessment System

As seen in Figure 6, our vision of this enhanced assessment system is that the components associated with English language proficiency (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) overlay those associated with academic achievement (the content areas of language arts/reading, mathematics, science, and social studies). The English language proficiency standards for the classroom framework for assessment dovetail with those for large-scale state assessment, which, in turn, incorporate state academic content standards.

The process of developing alternate academic assessments parallels that of English language proficiency testing as it is undergirded, in large part, by an identical set of core academic content standards and specifications. The overlap between the sets of components ensures alignment and

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validation of the assessment system. Ultimately, the development of the English language proficiency test, alternate assessment of academic achievement, and state assessment with accommodations for English language learners will all be linked. Thus, the system will produce a continuous stream of data that will allow English language learners to make a seamless transition as they progress toward the attainment of state academic content standards.

Professional development for members of the Consortium will facilitate the implementation and use of the system. Additionally, technology will enhance the ability of the Consortium members to share information, data, and expertise to create a truly exemplary assessment model.

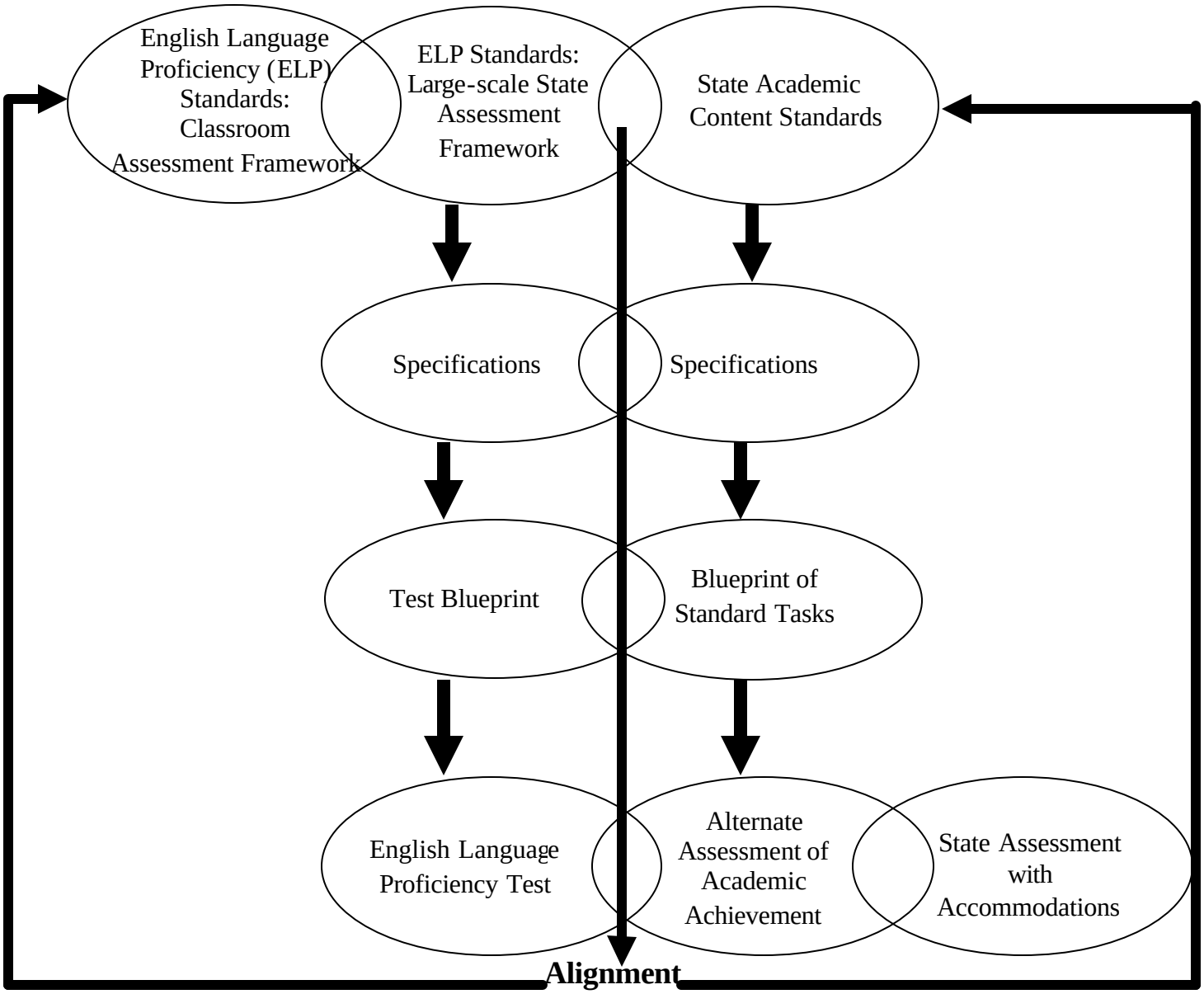

Figure 6. WIDA's enhanced assessment system for English language learners

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V. Rationale for the English Language Proficiency Standards

The need to develop English language proficiency standards that articulate with state academic content standards stems from three sources: 1). pedagogy, 2). assessment, and 3). educational policy. These changes, spurred by the standards-based movement and federal legislation, directly impact English language learners in elementary and secondary schools throughout the United States. States and school districts, now required to implement English language proficiency standards, are responding to this mandate.

The notion of how we, as bilingual and English as a second language (ESL) educators, envision language proficiency as a vehicle for instruction has changed quite drastically over the past decade. In K-12 classrooms with English language learners, subject matter content has become infused into language learning as an instructional approach (Chamot & O'Malley, 1994; Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2000; Snow & Brinton, 1997). As a result, our vision of language proficiency has expanded to encompass both social contexts associated with language acquisition and academic contexts tied to schooling, in general, and standards, curriculum, and instruction, in particular. Standards-based instruction that integrates language and content represents a refinement of the seminal work by Cummins (1980, 1981), in which he first posits the constructs of basic interpersonal communication skills and cognitive academic language proficiency (Gottlieb, 2003a).

English language proficiency standards need to capture the full range and complexities of methodologies that blend language and content learning. To this end, we must expand the coverage of current English language proficiency (or development) standards to bring them into alignment with practice. In addition, we must ensure that English language proficiency standards dovetail academic content standards to create a continuous pathway to academic success for our English language learners.

Language proficiency assessment, in large part, has not remained apace with changing teaching practices for our English language learners. We need to retool existing language proficiency assessment measures to match the pedagogical shift to content-based instruction. English language proficiency standards guide the development of test blueprints, task specifications, and English language proficiency measures. Thus, language proficiency standards are the first step in the construction of reliable and valid assessment tools. We must create rigorous language proficiency standards as the anchor of a sound assessment system for English language learners.

The *No Child Left Behind Act* of 2001 has given us the impetus to embark on this journey of redefining assessment for English language learners. Specific tenets within the Act (under Titles I and III) make it clear that states are to create English language proficiency standards, tied to their academic content standards, as the basis for the development of English language proficiency measures. In addition, English language learners in grade levels K-12 must be assessed annually for their English language proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. English as a second language (ESL) benchmarks for the annual measurable achievement objectives are to be based on state English language proficiency standards. Educational policy regarding English language learners in our schools reiterates the need for states, school districts, and schools to comply with the requirements of this federal legislation.

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VI. Designing an Assessment System: The Process of Developing English Language Proficiency Standards

The K-12 English language proficiency standards represent an amalgam of the thinking of educators of English language learners participating in the WIDA Consortium. More than 65 teachers, administrators, and researchers at the classroom, district, state, university, and national levels, all closely or directly involved with creating and implementing programs for English language learners, have provided invaluable input and feedback to the process. The result is a useful product unique to the field of language testing and teaching. The English language proficiency standards serve to ground large-scale state and classroom assessment as well as stimulate and guide curriculum and instruction. The development of the English language proficiency standards has been a four-phase undertaking.

A. Phase I: Setting the parameters for the English language proficiency standards

The theoretical base for the standards stems from a model (see Figure 7) that envisions academic language proficiency as a three-dimensional figure that addresses language complexity, cognitive engagement, and context within the domains of language (Gottlieb, 2002; 2003). In the case of WIDA's English language proficiency standards, the contexts of interaction are defined by the standards themselves; that is, social and instructional settings, English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Varying degrees of cognitive engagement are incorporated into the model performance indicators while the range of language complexity is expressed by the performance definitions.

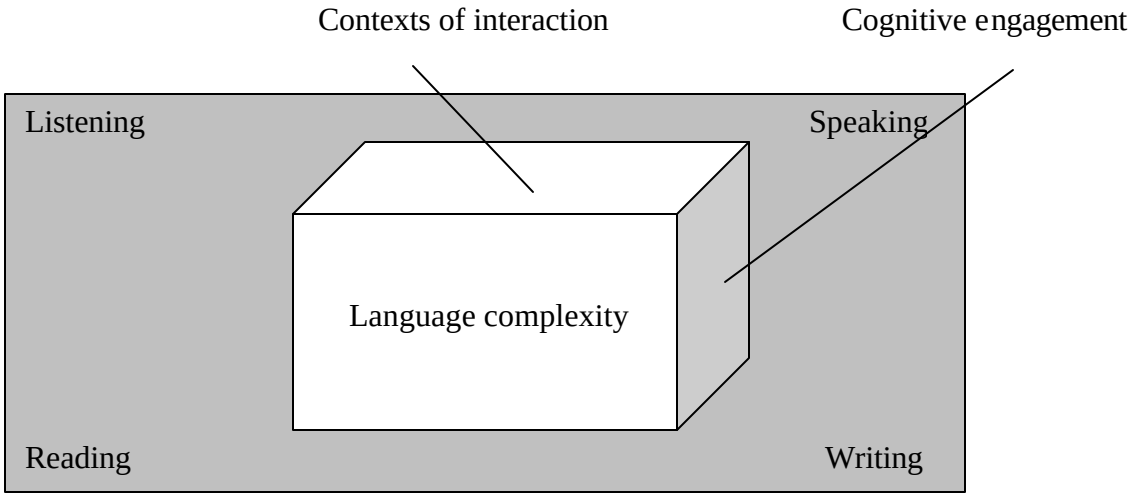

Figure 7. A model of academic language proficiency

The notion of academic language proficiency, the language used in the classroom or other academic settings directly tied to learning, has been acknowledged in research (Bailey & Butler,

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2002; Stevens, Butler, & Castellon-Wellington, 2001) and has, in recent times, transformed instruction into content-based methodologies in second language classrooms. This vision was shared and accepted by educators in the consortium at our initial meeting. Thus, the WIDA English language proficiency standards that evolved from our discussion represent both the social and academic contexts that students encounter in school and provide the roadmap to sound instruction and assessment.

Given this backdrop, several steps were taken to convert theory and research into practice. Because TESOL's (1997) *ESL standards for preK-12 students* have served as the national template, this document was used as a starting point for our analysis. First, descriptors and sample progress indicators for each grade level cluster (preK-3, 4-8, 9-12) were classified as being amenable or not to large-scale state or classroom assessment. Next, the descriptors and sample progress indicators applicable to large-scale state assessment were sorted and color-coded according to language domains (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). Then a matrix was created consisting of 5 language proficiency levels (as used by the lead states in the Consortium) and 4 language domains with relevant progress indicators inserted from TESOL and other states' English language proficiency standards.

Fifty national and local educational experts (see participant list) convened in Madison, Wisconsin, in May 2003. The goal of the two-day meeting was to determine the breadth and depth of the English language proficiency standards and the role of the standards in the enhanced assessment system for English language learners. The first day was devoted to inspecting and expanding existing English language proficiency and English language development standards from TESOL and around the country. Groups applied specific criteria for the selection of progress indicators or student achievement standards for determining their relevance and potential adoption by the Consortium. Next, the groups augmented the progress indicators, taking into account the following considerations:

- The language complexity required of the standard;
- The level of cognitive engagement required of the student;
- The presence of a developmental progression in relation to the other standards; and
- An equal representation of standards across language domains for a given grade level cluster.

At the close of the first day, the entire group reached consensus on the core English language proficiency standards and identified sample progress indicators (later to be named model performance indicators) at each grade level cluster.

On the second day, representatives from individual states examined their academic content standards and, based on a set of criteria derived from linguistic theory (Bachman, 1990; Halliday, 1973, 1976), agreed on a common set of language functions to be used across content areas for the various levels of cognitive engagement. Groups worked with their individual state academic content standards in the areas of language arts/reading, mathematics, science, and social studies to extract the language functions to be applied to the English language proficiency standards.

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From the two-day discussion emerged a consensus among the eight participating states on key decision points. It was agreed upon that there would be four standards (to represent the domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing) to be defined by progress indicators, six areas of language proficiency confined to the school setting (to represent social language, academic language and the language of the content areas of language arts, math, science, and social studies), five levels of language proficiency, four grade level clusters, and two applications [large-scale state and classroom]. In regard to the coverage of specific content areas, *No Child Left Behind* minimally requires the assessment of language arts/reading, mathematics, and science for academic achievement. However, the members of the Consortium strongly felt that the English language proficiency standards, as well as the English language proficiency test, should also address the content area of social studies.

B. Phase II: Creating and reviewing the K-12 English language proficiency standards

The work that the eight groups of participants generated over the two-day meeting was synthesized. The synthesis involved a systematic review of all materials (disks and paper copies) produced. Model performance indicators for each English language proficiency standard, derived from English language proficiency frameworks and state academic content standards, were then plotted onto a map by grade level cluster and language proficiency level. Additional documents from the states (see source documents) provided full sets of the states' academic content standards that helped supplement the model performance indicators. Subsequently, the WIDA development team decided on the most appropriate format to display the performance indicators. The initial K-12 English language proficiency standards were drafted in July 2003.

WIDA's K-12 English language proficiency standards for large-scale state assessment underwent formal review at the Center for Applied Linguistics in Washington, DC in August 2003. Eighteen representatives from consortium states and outside experts participated in the vetting process (see participant list). The purpose of the review was to elicit specific, useful feedback on the standards prior to undergoing revision and refinement. This step was critical as the standards are to serve all member states of the Consortium and are to be used as anchors for task specifications that, in turn, will impact item writing for the language proficiency test.

Each component of the language proficiency standards was meticulously examined, through a set of guiding questions, in small groups divided by grade level clusters. From the whole group debriefing, a set of decisions emerged: 1). the standards should be reorganized (the areas of language proficiency were to become the standards and the current standards were to become the domains); 2). the sample progress indicators should be renamed model performance indicators; 3). for the large-scale state framework, the model performance indicators should largely represent declarative knowledge with some cross-referencing to procedural knowledge that would be mainly captured in the classroom framework; 4). the model performance indicators should maintain a uniform level of specificity; and 5). the model performance indicators should each present a clear focus on language use in content areas rather than on content *per se*.

Based on the recommendations and the materials from the initial development phase, the K-12 English language proficiency standards for large-scale state assessment were revised during August and edited in early September 2003. The names of the proficiency levels were finalized

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and draft performance definitions were proposed for each level. The introduction was amplified to include a rationale and a more thorough description of the process and products of standards development.

C. Phase III: Developing the K-12 classroom framework

The third phase of development of the English language proficiency standards involved the addition of a classroom framework primarily intended for teachers working with English language learners. The classroom framework, like the large-scale state assessment prototype, includes unique model performance indicators that delineate each of the five standards across language domains and language proficiency levels. Likewise, it has been built following the same process and sources.

Its original pool of model performance indicators was derived from TESOL's (1997) descriptors and sample progress indicators for the ESL standards, state English language proficiency frameworks, and the participant states' academic content standards in the areas of language arts/reading, mathematics, science, and social studies. The model performance indicators represent the language and cognitive functions needed for English language learners to reach full language proficiency, as presented along a developmental continuum of the five language proficiency levels. Figure 8 illustrates the crosswalk between the two frameworks.

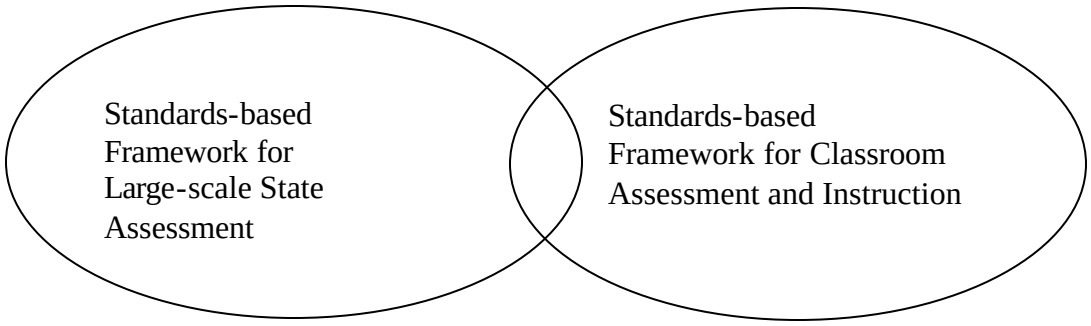

Figure 8. The relationship between the state and classroom frameworks for WIDA's English language proficiency standards

The classroom framework for WIDA's K-12 English language proficiency standards is designed to complement the large-scale state framework; together, the two offer a comprehensive, integrated set of model performance indicators that inform curriculum, instruction, and assessment of English language learners. The large-scale state framework is largely characterized by declarative knowledge or language outcomes that better lend themselves to testing under standard conditions. The classroom framework represents more procedural knowledge associated with the language acquisition process. Thus, the framework for classroom instruction and assessment has a stronger focus on the use of learning strategies, peer and self-assessment, the use of multiple resources, and long-term, classroom-based tasks and projects (such as process writing, inquiry, and student interaction).

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D. Phase IV: Augmenting the model performance indicators within the large-scale state and classroom frameworks

The WIDA model performance indicators serve as a bridge between state or school district English language proficiency standards for English language learners and state academic content standards for all learners, as shown in Figure 9.

State or district English language proficiency or ESL standards →	WIDA's English Language Proficiency Standards	State academic content standards ←

Figure 9. The positioning of WIDA's English language proficiency standards

The large-scale state and classroom frameworks for English language proficiency standards may be used as templates for potential augmentation by member states and school districts of the WIDA Consortium. Member states are invited to enhance the model performance indicators of the frameworks by adding others specific to their state or district English language proficiency standards, if applicable, and academic content standards. The enhancement of the model performance indicators is to be framed within professional development for teachers and administrators. Ideally, teachers should work in teams by grade level clusters (K-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12), validating each other's additions to the WIDA core model performance indicators. There are two methods that may be undertaken in this process.

> *Method 1:* Blending English language proficiency or academic content standards with WIDA's model performance indicators

The following steps are suggested for augmenting the base model performance indicators from WIDA's English language proficiency standards:

1. Consider how to adjust (collapse or expand) your state's available English as a Second Language (ESL) standards and academic content standards to fit the WIDA framework, standards, grade level clusters, domains, and language proficiency levels.
2. Brainstorm ideas on how best to enhance the model performance indicators, such as by introducing new language functions, linguistic structures, or topics for a given content area.
3. Create and implement a way to systematically make the conversion, such as using highlighters or presorting your state's performance indicators by domain (listening, speaking, reading and writing).
4. Use the WIDA framework as the working shell.
5. Match WIDA's model performance indicators with your state's ESL standards (if available) and select those that best reflect curriculum and instruction. Place model performance indicators on a developmental continuum to represent the five English language proficiency levels and add them as bullets to the designated cells in the frameworks.

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6. Repeat the process, matching WIDA's model performance indicators with your state's academic content standards and performance indicators in the areas of language arts/reading, mathematics, science, and social studies. Place the model performance indicators on a developmental continuum to represent the five English language proficiency levels and add them as bullets to the designated cells in the frameworks.
7. Check to ensure that horizontal and vertical alignment has been maintained throughout the document.

Case Study: Illinois

Having joined the Consortium in Fall 2003 after the initial draft of the WIDA English language proficiency standards had been formulated, Illinois became the first test case in augmenting WIDA's model performance indicators. It was a truly collaborative effort on the part of more than 20 Illinois educators (see participant list), including representation from the state assessment office, the Division of English Language Learning, consultants, administrators, coordinators of ESL and bilingual education programs, and teachers, working together over five days.

Illinois was in a unique position in that although the state did not have established English language proficiency standards, its largest district, Chicago, had formulated them. Teachers working with English language learners had participated in professional development on the preK-12 ESL standards and were afforded a wealth of supplemental materials for planning lessons and record keeping. In addition, the state had a history of addressing the needs of its English language learners through task forces and advisory groups. From their work throughout the 1990s, Illinois emerged as the first state to develop a test specifically designed for its English language learners. It also produced accompanying classroom products aimed at improving the language proficiency and academic achievement of this targeted group of students.

Given this historical backdrop and the expertise of the professionals involved, the group utilized what was currently in place as building blocks for the WIDA English language proficiency standards. Figure 10 illustrates how the two sets of Illinois standards blended in the augmentation process.

Chicago Public Schools' ESL Goals and Standards Pre-K through 12 **?**	WIDA's English Language Proficiency Standards	Illinois Learning Standards and Assessment Frameworks **?**

Figure 10. Integrating Chicago's English as a Second Language Goals and Standards with Illinois Learning Standards into WIDA's English Language Proficiency Standards

Having accepted the distinguishing features and parameters of the English language proficiency standards developed by the Consortium, the whole Illinois group was given an orientation to the WIDA project and what had been accomplished to date. The steps outlined at the beginning of this section for enhancing the model performance indicators were generally followed, with some modification. In fact, upon reflecting on the experience, replication of the exact process is quite

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difficult as each state brings its own history and circumstances that ultimately shape the final document.

Prior to embarking on the task of examining the model performance indicators, four groups were formed, corresponding to the grade level clusters. The participants then selected roles for each team member, including the:

a. organizer—responsible for resources, materials, and disks;
b. facilitator—responsible for time keeping (pacing) and decision-making of group;
c. master recorder—responsible for the team's final products (paper and disk); and
d. spokesperson—responsible for providing the team's input during debriefing to the whole group.

The first activity centered on sorting and categorizing Chicago Public Schools' ESL performance indicators, which had been grounded in TESOL's preK-12 standards. The groups inspected the TESOL sample performance indicators reordered by language domain that had been the genesis for the creation of WIDA's English language proficiency Standard 1.

Using the analysis of large-scale state/classroom applications (conducted by the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign) as a resource and a list of criteria, the first sort was to determine the applicability of the performance indicators to state assessment. Those amenable to large-scale state settings were then highlighted, categorized by domain, and examples were posted around the room.

The second activity focused on expanding the selected performance indicators from the prior activity across language proficiency levels. After reading WIDA's English language proficiency standards 1 and 2 for each grade level cluster, the performance indicators from Chicago Public Schools were matched against those from WIDA. If the performance indicators were not represented, the groups added a new bullet at each language proficiency level.

The same matching procedure was repeated with the Illinois Assessment Frameworks, derived from the Illinois Learning Standards for language arts/reading, mathematics, science, and social studies. A summary of the areas and standards offered a sense of the coverage of concepts and skills that were to be anchored in the language proficiency standards. Grade level cluster groups systematically translated these concepts into the language necessary for English language learners to access the content.

The teams representing grade level clusters reviewed the work of their colleagues followed by a discussion by the whole group. Then teams were then assigned a domain and examined the vertical and horizontal alignment of all the model performance indicators. The input and feedback of the group were incorporated into the large-scale state assessment framework.

The draft documents were disseminated, accompanied by a description of the rationale, process, and products, to approximately 750 educators at the Illinois Annual Statewide Conference for Teachers Serving Linguistically and Culturally Diverse Students (December 9-12, 2003). Participants who attended the sessions were encouraged to submit the feedback form. In addition, an external review of the English language proficiency standards was conducted with

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the largest school districts in Illinois. The draft frameworks were also shared with WIDA partner states for comment.

Method 2: Enhancing the model performance indicators across language domains and frameworks

2a. Another way of expanding the number of model performance indicators for a designated grade level cluster is to replicate the content stem across the various language domains and provide additional language functions appropriate for listening, speaking, reading, and writing. An example from the speaking domain (bolded) from Standard 4 for grade level cluster K-2 in the large-scale state assessment framework is illustrated in Figure 10 (page 19). It shows how the given model performance indicators for speaking at each language proficiency level may be modified and applied to create additional, complementary model performance indicators for listening, reading, and writing.

This expansion activity is useful for developing integrated lessons and curriculum for English language learners around a content-based topic. It also has application for assessment; teachers can create tools that can require the use of multiple language domains. In conducting professional development around the English language proficiency standards, teachers can envision how each one of the model performance indicators within large-scale state and classroom frameworks can be the genesis for numerous other related ones.

2b. The second step to this method expands the strands of model performance indicators even further. Once the full range of indicators has been created for one framework, they can readily be converted to the other. Using the example in Figure 11 from the large-scale state framework for Standard 4, science, the strand of model performance indicators for grade level cluster K-2 may now be modified for the classroom framework. Figure 12 (page 22) provides an example of how to adapt the model performance indicators for a grade level cluster from one assessment framework to the other (in this case in the domain of speaking). Note that in the conversion to the classroom framework, student interaction and the suggestion of real-world assessment methods, as in the use of scientific tools (such as thermometers) and observation by students, are introduced.

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English Language Proficiency Standard 4:
English language learners communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of SCIENCE.

Grade Level Cluster: K-2

Language Domain	Level 1 Entering	Level 2 Beginning	Level 3 Developing	Level 4 Expanding	Level 5 Bridging
Listening	identify scientific facts about weather or environment depicted in pictures or photographs (such as temperature, seasons, precipitation) from oral statements	find examples of scientific hypotheses about weather or environment from pictures or photographs and oral descriptions	respond to oral questions about weather or environment using pictures or photographs	predict results related to scientific hypotheses about weather or environment from pictures or photographs and oral scenarios	interpret results, along with reasons, based on scientific hypotheses about weather or environment from pictures or photographs and oral reading of grade level materials
Speaking	**use words or phrases related to weather or environment from pictures/photographs (such as temperatures, seasons, or precipitation)**	**restate scientific hypotheses about weather or environment from pictures or photographs**	**ask WH- questions about weather or environment from pictures or photographs**	**predict results and provide reasons based on scientific hypotheses about weather or environment from oral or written information**	**evaluate and weigh options related to scientific hypotheses about weather or environment from oral or written information**
Reading	locate scientific words about weather or environment from pictures or photographs (such as seasons, temperature, precipitation)	select scientific hypotheses about weather or environment from pictures or photographs with text	respond to scientific questions about weather or environment from visually supported text	atch predictions and reasons related to scientific hypotheses about weather or environment to written text	infer results and reasons based on scientific hypotheses about weather or environment based on grade level text
Writing	produce scientific words or diagrams about weather or environment from pictures or photographs (such as seasons, temperature, precipitation)	(re)state scientific hypotheses about weather or environment from pictures or photographs	answer scientific questions about weather or environment from pictures or photographs	make predictions and/or give reasons based on scientific hypotheses about weather or environment	explain results and provide reasons based on scientific hypotheses about weather or environment

Figure 11. Enhancing the model performance indicators across language domains within a grade level cluster: An example from the large-scale state assessment framework

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English Language Proficiency Standard 4:
English language learners communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of SCIENCE.

Grade Level Cluster: K-2

Large-scale state assessment framework:

Grade Level Cluster	Level 1 Entering	Level 2 Beginning	Level 3 Developing	Level 4 Expanding	Level 5 Bridging
Speaking	**use words or phrases related to weather or environment from pictures/photographs (such as seasons, temperatures, or precipitation)**	**restate scientific hypotheses about weather or environment from pictures or photographs**	**ask WH- questions about weather or environment from pictures or photographs**	**predict results and provide reasons based on scientific hypotheses about weather or environment from oral or written information**	**evaluate and weigh options related to scientific hypotheses about weather or environment from oral or written information**

Possible extensions of a strand from the large-scale assessment framework to a strand in the classroom assessment framework:

Grade Level Cluster	Level 1 Entering	Level 2 Beginning	Level 3 Developing	Level 4 Expanding	Level 5 Bridging
Speaking	use words or phrases related to weather or based on observation and instruments (such as thermometers)	state and test scientific hypotheses about weather or environment based on observation and instruments (individually or in small groups)	ask and answer scientific questions about weather or environment based on observation and instruments (in pairs or small groups)	predict and confirm results, along with reasons, based on scientific hypotheses about weather or environment from experiments conducted (individually or in small groups)	evaluate and weigh results from experiments and provide evidence based on scientific hypotheses about weather or environment

Figure 12. Adapting model performance indicators from one assessment framework to the other

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E. Phase V: Reformatting the frameworks

The two frameworks have been designed for various purposes and are to be used by numerous stakeholders, from teachers to school boards. Once the frameworks have been disseminated and educators have had opportunities to provide feedback, we anticipate having several formats available. In order to maximize the usefulness of the documents, we plan to rearrange them into three other configurations. These include offering the model performance indicators by:

1. grade level clusters,
2. language domains, and
3. English language proficiency levels.

VII. Uses for the English Language Proficiency Standards

The primary use of the English language proficiency standards is to guide and align curriculum, instruction, and assessment for English language learners. In doing so, the English language proficiency standards, by incorporating the language of the classroom as well as that of the academic subject areas, provide a pathway for English language learners to academic success.

Acquiring a new language involves the integration of all language domains; listening, speaking, reading, and writing are naturally interwoven in the instruction of English language learners. It is suggested, therefore, that for teaching, the series of model performance indicators at a grade level cluster serve as the starting point for creating integrated language lessons. By enhancing the model performance indicators across language domains and frameworks described in this document, teachers and administrators will gain a sense of how to maximize the use of the language proficiency standards.

Likewise, the intersection of different content areas lends itself to thematic teaching, an endorsed approach for English language learners (Freeman & Freeman, 2002). Teachers are invited to use the model performance indicators to develop curricular themes or units of instruction that involve multiple content areas. Furthermore, teachers can formulate both language and content objectives for both curriculum and instruction from the standards' model performance indicators.

The large-scale state assessment framework provides a skeleton and the parameters for the creation of the specifications for the English language proficiency test. Concomitantly, it offers teachers and administrators a measurable index for supporting instruction. The classroom framework dovetails with that for large-scale state assessment. Its primary use is to serve as a tool for instruction and formative assessment.

The K-12 English language proficiency standards developed by the WIDA Consortium are carefully crafted to meet compliance with the requirements of Titles I and III of the *No Child Left Behind Act* of 2001. Representing the work and commitment of dedicated professionals, it is our sincere wish that educators find these standards a useful starting point in the education of their English language learners in elementary, middle, and high schools around the United States.

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Augmenting the English Language Proficiency Standards, Large-scale State Assessment Framework for Illinois, October/November 2003

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IX. Glossary of Terms Associated with WIDA's English Language Proficiency Standards

Academic content standards: statements that define what students are expected to know and be able to do in order to attain competency in challenging subject matter associated with schooling

Academic success: demonstrated knowledge needed to meet state academic content standards

Commands: imperative statements

Communicate: express understanding and use of language through listening, speaking, reading, or writing

Descriptions: a cohesive series of sentences that include explanations with details (more than three but less than discourse level)

Directions: two or three sentences of explanation

Discourse: extended, connected language that may include explanations, descriptions, and propositions

English language learners: linguistically and culturally diverse students who have been identified through reliable and valid assessment as having levels of English language proficiency that preclude them from accessing, processing, and acquiring unmodified grade level content in English and, thereby, qualifying for support services

Framework for classroom assessment: English language proficiency standards that include model performance indicators that largely represent procedural knowledge, involving the processes of learning

Framework for large-scale state assessment: English language proficiency standards that include model performance indicators that largely represent declarative knowledge, involving the products of learning

Functions: descriptions of how language is used or definitions of the intent of the communication

Instructional purposes: related to learning in the classroom and school environments

Language domains: the areas of language proficiency—listening, speaking, reading and writing

Language proficiency levels: the demarcations along the second language acquisition continuum that are defined within the standards by a series of model performance indicators

Language proficiency standards: statements that define the language necessary for English language learners to attain social and academic competencies associated with schooling

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Listening: the domain of language proficiency that encompasses how students process, understand, interpret, and evaluate spoken language in a variety of situations

Model performance indicators: sample kernel ideas or concepts composed of language functions, content, and contexts that exemplify the language proficiency levels of the language proficiency standards

Performance standards: statements that define the extent to which students are meeting the stated standards; in the instance of English language proficiency standards, performance definitions correspond to descriptions of what students can do at each language proficiency level

Reading: the domain of language proficiency that encompasses how students process, interpret, and evaluate written language, symbols, and text with understanding and fluency

Realia: real-life objects, displays, or materials, such as having young children sort colors using M and Ms rather than picture cards of different colors

Social purposes: the basic fluency needed to interact or communicate effectively in a variety of situations within school

Speaking: the domain of language proficiency that encompasses how students engage in oral communication in a variety of situations for a variety of purposes and audiences

Statements: declarative sentences of fact

Strand: the series of model performance indicators from language proficiency level 1, Entering, through 5, Bridging, within a grade level cluster and language domain

Visually supported: print or text that is accompanied by pictures, illustrations, photographs, charts, tables, graphs, graphic organizers, or reproductions that enables English language learners opportunities to access meaning from multiple sources

Writing: the domain of language proficiency that encompasses how students engage in written communication in a variety of forms for a variety of purposes and audiences

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X. Source Documents for the Development of WIDA's K-12 English Language Proficiency Standards

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XI. WIDA K-12 English Language Proficiency (ELP) Standards Feedback Form

Directions: To what extent are the ELP Overview Document, frameworks, standards, and model performance indicators representative of the second language acquisition process and compliant with the requirements of the *No Child Left Behind Act*? Please complete the following rating scale by circling 1 (not at all), 2 (somewhat), or 3 (fully). Any additional comments are welcome; contact Margo Gottlieb by e-mail, mgottlieb@thecenterweb.org, fax, (847) 803-2828, or send the form to the Illinois Resource Center, 1855 Mt. Prospect Road, Des Plaines, IL 10018-1805. Thank you!

	1 Not at all	2 Somewhat	3 Fully
1. The Overview Document			
a) Does the Overview Document adequately describe the format and organization of the standards?	1	2	3
b) Does the Overview Document adequately explain the rationale and uses for the standards?	1	2	3
c) Does the Overview Document adequately describe the development process?	1	2	3
2. The Classroom and Large-scale State Frameworks			
a) Do the frameworks help guide assessment?	1	2	3
b) Do the frameworks help inform curriculum and instruction?	1	2	3
3. Standards			
a) Are the standards clear and informative?	1	2	3
b) Do the standards reflect the domains being described?	1	2	3
4. Model performance indicators (PIs)			
a) Do the model PIs represent a useful level of specificity?	1	2	3
b) Are the model PIs of adequate depth and breadth?	1	2	3
c) Are the model PIs vertically and horizontally aligned?	1	2	3
d) Do the model PIs adequately reflect the L2 acquisition continuum?	1	2	3

Name (optional): E-mail (optional):

Position: State:

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