

A photograph of a teacher with long dark hair and glasses, wearing a denim jacket, pointing with her right hand towards a whiteboard. The whiteboard has some diagrams and text on it. The background is a blurred classroom setting. The image has a blue and purple color overlay.

Connecticut Alternate Assessment of English Language Proficiency (CAAELP) Interpretive Guide to Individual Student Reports (ISRs)

Connecticut Alternate Assessment of English Language Proficiency Assessment
(CAAELP) School Year 2023–2024

This resource is adapted from the document created for the Alt ELPA to reflect Connecticut specific policies and procedures. For permission to use this work, please contact ELPA21.

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Understanding CAAELP Student Reports: A Quick Guide for Educators

Overview of the CAAELP Assessment Program

The Connecticut Alternate Assessment of English Language Proficiency (CAAELP) is a summative assessment designed specifically for English learners/multilingual learners (ELs/MLs) with the most significant cognitive disabilities who are eligible to participate in Connecticut's Alternate Assessment System. It was developed through the Collaborative for the Alternate Assessment of English Language Proficiency project in collaboration with state and national partners.

The purpose of the CAAELP is to provide fair and valid information on the English language proficiency (ELP) of this historically underserved group of students. Consistent with federal law, ELs/MLs are required to be assessed annually on their English proficiency. English learners/multilingual learners with significant cognitive disabilities should have equal opportunities to learn English language skills and participate in ELP testing to demonstrate their progress towards English proficiency. Students in Grades kindergarten through 12, who are dually identified as an EL/ML and special education under an IDEA disability category, and have been determined by their Planning and Placement Team (PPT) as meeting the Connecticut [Alternate Assessment System Eligibility Criteria](#) are eligible to participate in the CAAELP.

The CAAELP consists of four short tests in the four domains of language: Listening, Reading, Speaking, and Writing. The test is designed specifically for each of six grade bands (kindergarten, Grade 1, Grade Band 2–3, Grade Band 4–5, Grade Band 6–8, and Grade Band 9–12). The CAAELP produces an Overall Proficiency Determination Score, which categorizes student performance as Emerging, Progressing, or Proficient. Based on these proficiency determinations, students may be eligible to exit English language acquisition support. The CAAELP scores are described in more detail in this Interpretive Guide.

For additional details about the CAAELP, please visit the Connecticut Alternate Assessment System [CAAELP Resources page](#).

Who is Eligible to Participate in the CAAELP

The CAAELP, which is synonymous with Alt ELPA, is a summative testing instrument designed to measure eligible students' English language proficiency which supports students' ability to access, engage with, and learn grade-level academic content taught in English, as well as meaningfully participate in academic contexts.

All dually identified students who are ELs/MLs with significant cognitive disabilities who have met the Alternate Assessment System eligibility criteria and have this documented within their implemented Individualized Education Plan (IEP) take the CAAELP in the winter.

Scores and Reports

The CAAELP uses innovative technologies with the support of a trained educator to assess a student's language abilities in the four Domains of Listening, Reading, Speaking, and Writing.

Students receive a variety of scores on the Individual Student Report (ISR).

- The Overall Proficiency Determination is a profile score that indicates one of three possible categories: Emerging, Progressing, Proficient.
- The Overall Scale Score provides the student’s overall score across the four Domains.
- The Comprehension Scale Score is based on performance in the Listening and Reading Domains and provides information on language comprehension.
- The Modality and Domain Scores includes both two-digit scale scores (0–99) and Performance Level Scores (1–4).

Scale scores allow for comparisons across grades/grade bands and across forms of the test. Level scores provide a description of what is expected of a typical student at that level and in that modality or domain.

Scale scores are the basic unit of reporting. A scale score is derived from a total number of obtained score points that is statistically adjusted and converted into a consistent, standardized scale that permits direct and fair comparisons of scores from different forms of a test, either within the same administration year or across years (Tan & Michel, 2011).

Performance Level Scores provide a description of what is expected of a typical student at that level and in that Modality or Domain.

Students determined to be Proficient on the CAAELP have demonstrated that they have the level of English necessary to access grade-level academic content and may be exited from the EL/ML program, reclassified and monitored. The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) has approved the [Connecticut English Learner/Multilingual Learner Exit Criteria Grades K-12](#).

What Information is on the CAAELP Individual Student Report (ISR)?

Each ISR (see [Figure 1](#)) contains the following information:

- Overall Scale Score* (based on all Modality Scores: Productive and Receptive)
- Comprehension Scale Score* (Reading and Listening)
- Overall Proficiency Determination
 - Proficiency Level Determination Descriptions
- Modality Scale Scores
 - Productive: Speaking and Writing
 - Receptive: Listening and Reading
 - Modality Performance Level Descriptions
- Domain Scale Scores
 - Speaking, Writing, Listening, and Reading
 - Domain Performance Level Descriptions

**Note.* The Overall and Comprehension Scale Scores are provided for program evaluation purposes and are intended for use by policymakers and administrators.

Figure 1: Summative Individual Student Report (ISR)

Student ID: 000000000 Student DOB: 1/1/2018 Enrolled Grade: KG			Demo Dist 9999
Date Taken: 1/31/2023			Demo School 2
Overall Scale Score: 207±52	Comprehension Scale Score: Not Attempted	Proficiency Determination: Progressing	
<p>Proficiency Determination</p> <p>Proficient – Students show a level of English language proficiency reflected in the Alternate ELP standards that enables full participation or only slightly limits participation in the grade-appropriate classroom activities reflected in the Alternate Academic standards. This is indicated on the Alt ELPA by attaining Level 3 or higher in all modalities. Once Proficient on the Alt ELPA, students may be considered for reclassification.</p> <p>Progressing – Students show a level of English language proficiency reflected in the Alternate ELP standards that moderately limits participation in the grade-appropriate classroom activities reflected in the Alternate Academic standards. This is indicated on the Alt ELPA by attaining above Level 1 and below Level 3 in at least one modality. Students scoring Progressing on the Alt ELPA are eligible for ongoing program support.</p> <p>Emerging – Students show a level of English language proficiency reflected in the Alternate ELP standards that significantly limits participation in the grade-appropriate classroom activities reflected in the Alternate Academic standards. This is indicated on the Alt ELPA by attaining Level 1 in all modalities. Students scoring Emerging on the Alt ELPA are eligible for ongoing program support.</p>			
<p>How Did Your Child Perform on Different Areas of the Test?</p> <p style="text-align: right;"> 1 Beginning 2 Intermediate 3 Early Advanced 4 Advanced </p>			
Domain	Scale Score	Performance	Performance Description
1. Modality: Productive (Speaking and Writing)	33±5	2	Productive Level 2: The Productive modality measures English language performance in Speaking and Writing. Students in Level 2 demonstrate Productive performance reflected in the Alternate ELP standards that moderately limits participation in the relevant grade-appropriate classroom activities reflected in the Alternate Academic standards.
1a. Domain: Speaking	N/A	3	Students in Level 3 with increasingly independent control, prompting, and support can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate simple information or feelings about familiar and novel topics, experiences, or events Identify a feeling or opinion about a familiar topic Indicate the appropriate audience or task from a field of options when presented with familiar phrases and simple sentences Demonstrate developing awareness of the difference between appropriate language for the playground and for the classroom
1b. Domain: Writing	N/A	1	Students in Level 1 with limited control, prompting, and support can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate simple information, including feelings, about a familiar topic or experience Respond to simple yes/no questions about familiar topics Recognize information from experience or from a provided source
2. Modality: Receptive (Listening and Reading)	16±3	1	Receptive Level 1: The Receptive modality measures English language performance in Listening and Reading. Students in Level 1 demonstrate Receptive performance reflected in the Alternate ELP standards that significantly limits participation in the relevant grade-appropriate classroom activities reflected in the Alternate Academic standards.
2a. Domain: Listening	N/A	1	Students in Level 1 typically can show comprehension by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying a few key words from read-alouds and oral presentations Recognizing the meaning of a few frequently occurring words in simple oral presentations and read-alouds about familiar topics, experiences, or events Listening with limited participation in short conversations Responding to simple yes/no questions about familiar topics Recognizing information from experience or from a provided source
2b. Domain: Reading	N/A	1	Students in Level 1 typically can show comprehension by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying a few key words in picture books or simple written text (e.g., labeled pictures) Recognizing the meaning of a few frequently occurring words in simple written texts about familiar topics, experiences, or events Responding to simple yes/no questions about familiar topics Recognizing information from experience or from a provided source
<p>Additional Resources: For additional information on the Alt ELPA, please visit www.elpa21.org/alt-elpa.</p>			

How is Proficiency Determined?

Overall Proficiency is determined by combining a student’s Modality scores. The Overall Proficiency Determinations represent the combination of the Modality scores a student earns for the Productive (Speaking and Writing) and the Receptive (Listening and Reading) Modalities. The student can receive an Overall Proficiency Level of Emerging, Progressing, or Proficient.

The Comprehension Scale Score is from the Receptive Domain (Listening and Reading). For more information on proficiency determinations, please refer to [Table 1](#) below.

Table 1: Overall Proficiency Determination

Proficiency Determination	Definition	Profiles
Emerging	Students show a level of English language proficiency that <i>significantly limits</i> participation in the grade-appropriate classroom activities reflected in the Alternate Academic standards. This is indicated on the CAAELP by attaining Level 1 in both Modalities . Students scoring Emerging on the CAAELP are eligible for ongoing program support.	Level 1 in both Modalities
Progressing	Students show a level of English language proficiency that <i>moderately limits</i> participation in the grade-appropriate classroom activities reflected in the Alternate Academic standards. This is indicated on the CAAELP by attaining above Level 1 and below Level 3 in at least one Modality . Students scoring Progressing on the CAAELP are eligible for ongoing program support.	Above Level 1 and below Level 3 in at least one Modality
Proficient	Students show a level of English language proficiency that enables <i>full participation or only slightly limits participation</i> in the grade-appropriate classroom activities reflected in the Alternate Academic standards. This is indicated on the CAAELP by attaining Level 3 or Level 4 in both Modalities . Once Proficient on CAAELP, students meet the criteria for exiting EL/ML status.	Level 3 or Level 4 in both Modalities

The **Overall Scale Score** and the **Comprehension Scale Score** are derived from applying a statistical analysis, the Item Bifactor Model, to all scored items. This type of in-depth analysis confirms the student’s overall score. These scores are presented as three-digit scale scores (0–999).

The **Overall Scale Score** is calculated based on how well the student performed overall on the CAAELP. The calculation includes performance results from all four Domains (Speaking, Writing, Listening, and Reading). If the student was exempted from a Domain, the Overall Scale Score is calculated based on results from only the Domains assigned to the student.

The **Comprehension Scale Score** is found on the Individual Student Report following the Overall Scale Score. It represents how well the student comprehends English based on their performance in the Listening and Reading domains of the CAAELP. If the student was exempted from either of the comprehension Domains (Listening and Reading), the score is calculated from only the Domains assigned to the student.

Students also receive individual **Domain Scores** (Listening, Reading, Speaking, and Writing) and **Modality Scores** (Productive and Receptive). These are provided as two-digit scale scores (0–99) and Performance Level (1–4) scores. Modality and Domain Scale Scores are based on a scoring method using analysis of the individual items, such as level of difficulty, rather than just “right or wrong” to derive a score. The

scoring method, Multidimensional Item Response Theory (MIRT), allows for a better understanding of how well the student performs in the Modality or Domain. Modality and Domain Scores describe, in general terms, the grade-level skills and abilities needed to access and participate meaningfully in grade-appropriate content and instruction, and the progression a student moves through as they attain the necessary proficiency for that access and participation.

For each of the two Modality main scores and the four Domain sub-scores, the student's performance is classified into one of four performance levels: Beginning (1), Intermediate (2), Early Advanced (3), and Advanced (4). The Modality and Domain Level Scores are derived from applying cut scores to place the student's score in one of these four levels (1–4). Please refer to the [CAAELP Performance Level Descriptors \(PLDs\)](#) and the [CAAELP Overall Proficiency Determinations and Modality Descriptors](#) for more detailed description of each level and the skills demonstrated.

Focusing on students' Modality performance benefits students. First, a student's Modality profile distinguishes between students who may have the same Overall score, but who differ in skills and needs. Second, the Modality profile highlights the relationship between the Domains in a way that the Overall score does not.

What are the CAAELP Reporting Performance Level Descriptors (PLDs)?

The CAAELP [Reporting Performance Level Descriptors \(PLDs\)](#) describe what the English language usage looks like at each performance level (Levels 1-4) as students progress toward independent participation in grade-appropriate activities. Reporting PLDs for each Domain and per grade band are available for educators and guardians/caregivers (please refer to [Figure 2](#)). Each Domain also has a Performance Level Description that may help identify a student's strengths and weaknesses, and, at the student level, help inform reclassification decisions. Using Domain Performance Level information can help a district discern patterns of performance in classrooms or groups of students and identify opportunities for greater instructional collaboration.

What are Some Considerations for Interpreting Results?

The CAAELP scores are only one measure of a student's progress toward English language proficiency; they provide specific but limited information. Like all measures of student proficiency, CAAELP scores should be interpreted along with information like classroom tests, assignments, teacher observations, content area test scores, and grades.

CAAELP scores are most useful when used collaboratively by educators supporting English language development, special education, and content area teachers. Explicit recognition that language acquisition takes place over several years across the content areas benefits the academic experiences of EIs/MLs. Ensuring that English language development does not interfere with access to grade-appropriate content and practices requires a shift in perception from "What language skills does the student have?" to "What is the student able to do with language in the content areas?" Knowing what students are able to do with the academic language necessary to engage in grade-level content instruction is useful to guide instructional practices and to identify necessary supports.

Figure 2: Reporting Performance Level Descriptors

Speaking		How Did Your Child Perform on Different Areas of the Test?			
Level 3: Early Advanced		1 Beginning 2 Intermediate 3 Early Advanced 4 Advanced			
Score Range: TBD		Domain	Scale Score	Performance	Performance Description
Students in Level 3 with increasingly independent control, prompting, and support can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate simple information or feelings about familiar and novel topics, experiences, or events Identify a feeling or opinion about a familiar topic Indicate the appropriate audience or task from a field of options when presented with familiar phrases and simple sentences Demonstrate developing awareness of the difference between appropriate language for the playground and for the classroom 		1. Modality: Productive (Speaking and Writing)	33±5	2	Productive Level 2: The Productive modality measures English language performance in Speaking and Writing. Students in Level 2 demonstrate Productive performance reflected in the Alternate ELP standards that moderately limits participation in the relevant grade-appropriate classroom activities reflected in the Alternate Academic standards.
		1a. Domain: Speaking	N/A	3	Students in Level 3 with increasingly independent control, prompting, and support can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate simple information or feelings about familiar and novel topics, experiences, or events Identify a feeling or opinion about a familiar topic Indicate the appropriate audience or task from a field of options when presented with familiar phrases and simple sentences Demonstrate developing awareness of the difference between appropriate language for the playground and for the classroom
		1b. Domain: Writing	N/A	1	Students in Level 1 with limited control, prompting, and support can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate simple information, including feelings, about a familiar topic or experience Respond to simple yes/no questions about familiar topics Recognize information from experience or from a provided source
		2. Modality: Receptive (Listening and Reading)	16±3	1	Receptive Level 1: The Receptive modality measures English language performance in Listening and Reading. Students in Level 1 demonstrate Receptive performance reflected in the Alternate ELP standards that significantly limits participation in the relevant grade-appropriate classroom activities reflected in the Alternate Academic standards.
		2a. Domain: Listening	N/A	1	Students in Level 1 typically can show comprehension by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying a few key words from read-alouds and oral presentations Recognizing the meaning of a few frequently occurring words in simple oral presentations and read-alouds about familiar topics, experiences, or events Listening with limited participation in short conversations Responding to simple yes/no questions about familiar topics Recognizing information from experience or from a provided source
		2b. Domain: Reading	N/A	1	Students in Level 1 typically can show comprehension by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying a few key words in picture books or simple written text (e.g., labeled pictures) Recognizing the meaning of a few frequently occurring words in simple written texts about familiar topics, experiences, or events Responding to simple yes/no questions about familiar topics Recognizing information from experience or from a provided source

Note: The number noted under the “Performance” column represents the student’s Performance Level in a particular Domain. The Domain descriptions correspond to the Reporting Performance Level Descriptors (PLDs) for each Domain and give us information about the student’s academic language abilities.

What are Appropriate Uses of CAAELP Summative Scores?

CAAELP scores represent a snapshot of student English language proficiency at one point in time. The assessment is designed so that scores may be used to:

- measure English language proficiency progress year to year, allowing teachers and guardians/caregivers to monitor annual progress towards proficiency;
- inform EL/ML reclassification decisions;
- help school officials identify the types of professional development and/or support that teachers need.



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