



English/Multilingual Learners Newsletter January 2026

ELPA21 Summative and Alt ELPA Assessments

We are getting closer and closer to the ELPA Assessments testing window (January 26-March 13, 2026). As a reminder, districts need to make sure their student information systems have accurate EL information so that all English learners who need to be tested are coded correctly and any students who have already met proficiency are not tested. The NDE upload into TIDE will be **January 7, 2026**. The English Language Testing report in [Advisor](#) is a good one to check. If there are any questions, please contact us and we will be happy to help.

There are many tools in the [resources](#) of our NE Cambium Portal to help prepare for testing. The [Testing Times chart](#) and [Number of Test Questions by Domain](#) can guide planning and scheduling of the domains. Last year, Amanda Skalka shared her [template](#) that helps with scheduling. This year, Tracy Garvey shared ideas from her district at our December EL Coalition meeting. Check out the [One-Stop-Shop](#) for the presentation and recording.

Number of Student Tasks and Test Questions by Domain
School Year 2025-26

KINDERGARTEN

DOMAIN	T	Q
Listening	10	19
Reading	12	22
Writing	14	16
Speaking	4	17*

GRADE 1

DOMAIN	T	Q
Listening	10	20
Reading	16	24
Writing	17	17
Speaking	5	13*

GRADE BAND 2-3

DOMAIN	T	Q
Listening	11	20
Reading	14	26
Writing	12	12
Speaking	5	8*

GRADE BAND 4-5

DOMAIN	T	Q
Listening	13	22
Reading	10	24
Writing	9	9
Speaking	5	11*

GRADE BAND 6-8

DOMAIN	T	Q
Listening	14	26
Reading	7	24
Writing	5	5
Speaking	4	7*

GRADE BAND 9-12

DOMAIN	T	Q
Listening	12	23
Reading	8	26
Writing	4	5
Speaking	3	6*

*Recordings

T

Number of tasks in the domain

Q

Number of questions in the domain

There will be field test tasks in various domains at all grade bands. The totals above do not include the field test tasks. Field test task responses are not included in the students' scores.

Testing Times: Summative Assessment

ELPA21

The estimates indicated below approximate student work time only. Test administrators should allow an additional 15-20 minutes for preparation, such as handing out testing tickets, setting up headphones, student log-in, reading directions, and other testing activities. Student testing time can be affected by a number of factors including familiarity with the online computer testing environment, English proficiency, any specialized student needs, and other internal or external factors.



Estimated Testing Times for Summative Assessment

School Year 2025-26

GRADE	K	1	2-3	4-5	6-8	9-12
Per Domain	5-16	4-18	4-25	4-27	5-35	4-35
All Domains	24-46	24-48	32-68	33-68	44-98	44-104

Times are in minutes

The [ELPA21 Training Modules](#) opened December 1, 2025. There are also great training modules for learning more about the ELPA test administration ([Summative/Alt](#)), and understanding the reports ([Summative/Alt](#)). The [ELPA21 Summative Accessibility Manual](#) and [Alt ELPA Accessibility manual](#) are very helpful in making best decisions for your students.

We want all schools and districts to feel prepared so that your students can do their very best and demonstrate their English language skills on the ELPA2 Summative or Alt ELPA Assessment. Good Luck!



Spotlight: Maggie Sis, NDE Statewide Assessment Program Specialist

Maggie Sis serves as the NDE Statewide Assessment Program Specialist. In this role, she acts as a key liaison between the NDE, public school districts, external programs, and assessment vendors on all matters related to assessment student data. Throughout the year, Maggie oversees the full assessment data lifecycle—from pre-test verification in the fall, to student, test, and report management during testing windows, and finally to post-test verification and student results, including NEP and AQuESTT

data. Maggie is here to support you with any assessment-related questions. And if she doesn't have the answer right away, she'll know exactly where to find it. Maggie's email is margaret.sis@nebraska.gov.

Guidance: According to [Nebraska Rule 15](#), parents have the right to waive English learner services for their children but they still need to take the annual ELPA21 Summative or Alt ELPA assessments. The only way for a student to exit English learner services is through a proficient score on their ELPA21 assessment. Students need to score 4s and/or 5s on each domain (reading, writing, speaking, and listening).

Additional Resources:

- [Engaging Ed - Educational Service Unit 4](#), Conference in Nebraska City February 2, 2026.
- Check out the [December 2025 Seal of Biliteracy Recipients!](#) More information can be found on the [NDE Seal of Biliteracy Website](#).
- [The National Center on Education Outcomes](#) (NCEO) has a number of resources. Check out the resources for [EL students with disabilities](#).
- Lee Perez, OPS EL Teacher has contributed to a new book, [Hispanic Perspectives on Student Support and Community Empowerment](#). His contribution is in Chapter 2.
- [Pathwise](#) (formerly TransACT ParentNotices) There are documents to support all areas of education. NDE currently provides the subscription and anyone can [self-onboard](#). [Log in here](#). (The subscription with NDE will end after this school year.)
- New [Differentiation Flipbook volume 2](#) from ELPA21.
- Check out the [World Language Newsletter](#) from NDE.
- Some of you subscribe to the ELPA21 Insider, but if not - here is the [Winter 2025 edition](#).
- Learn more about POSSUM, [Explicit Vocabulary Instruction Using the POSSUM Approach | Iowa Reading Research Center - The University of Iowa](#).

Questions: Please contact us with any questions or concerns regarding your EL/ML students or program.

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