



## FACT SHEET ON STANDARDIZED TESTING OF ELL's

From RI Teachers of English Language Learners

1. Testing students in a language the state's proficiency testing has verified they do not read or write proficiently is neither valid nor reliable. The following professional associations all oppose this practice in their Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing: American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association, National Council on Measurement in Education, and the National Research Council .

Even more egregious, the state is using the results of such questionable assessment to make life-changing events like graduation from high school. This practice must be stopped. It is clearly differentially impacting ELLs when 61% of ELL seniors are at risk of not graduating (ProJo 11/11/14)

2. All of the testing going on in classrooms narrows and dominates the curriculum. Teachers are losing valuable teaching time due to the heavy emphasis on testing (as much as 2 months when all the testing time is added together) and they are gearing the curriculum to the types of skills appearing on high stakes test. This is affecting what is being taught and usurping the time for teaching that could lead to greater student success.

3. Causing students sit for tests that are administered in English after they have been in the country as little as a month, as is done in the case of the Mathematics NECAP assessment, is punishing to ELLs and their teachers. The students cannot read or understand the tests and teachers must administer them anyway, causing emotional stress to both parties. When students are at the Entering, Emerging and Developing proficiency levels as measured by the WIDA ACCESS test, they cannot read and interpret the questions sufficient to demonstrate their mathematical abilities

4. RITELL has proposed the following testing practices: 1) Use of multiple measures (teacher judgement, curriculum-based assessments, grades in sheltered ESL content classes) with least weight going to standardized testing conducted in English, 2) testing literate students in their native languages for high incidence languages (Spanish, Portuguese) and administering Plain English forms of the test for all other ELLs (with results only one of the multiple measures used to judge their competence), consideration of proficiency when determining who can reliably take measures administered in English (perhaps only using results for students who score at Bridging and Reaching).

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TESTIMONY by Michael Paul, ESL Teacher of Central Falls High School paulm@cfschools.net

Today I am representing RITELL, the professional organization for ELL educators, and my ESL students at CFHS.

I am here to support H7095 because current and proposed standardized testing measures are unfair to ELL's and do not show what they really know.

Following RIDE regulations, school districts place ESL students in special classes because they are not proficient in English. Assessing ESL students with the same test used for regular education students and then using results for graduation seems illogical to my colleagues and me. We support forming a committee to study the impact of PARCC and Common Core on ELL's in order to identify more effective assessment strategies.

As I'm sure you are aware, ELLs enter RI schools at all grades and ages.

Because of this, ESL students have a very different exposure to our curriculum than native-born students in this state.

They also bring varying educational levels and literacy levels in

their native languages. As a result, many ESL students do not have the same learning opportunities as regular education students, and therefore, they cannot be expected to perform at the same level.

At CFHS, we already have a process for students to demonstrate what they know. All of our students have to create a portfolio including 24 tasks from various content areas, and present this portfolio to a faculty panel.

Nancy Cloud of Rhode Island Teachers of English Language Learners has stated: “Over 60% of seniors who are in the process of learning English are in danger of not graduating. This testing practice is indefensible and runs contrary to the guidance of all of our professional measurement associations. We are not learning what English Language Learners know or don’t know; all we are learning is that they don’t know English, something we already knew when we identified them as ELL. We believe it’s time to take a hard look at the damage this testing requirement is inflicting on our students.”