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MEMORANDUM

TO: District Superintendents

FROM: Cheri Pierson Yecke, Ph.D.

DATE: October 30, 2006

CONTACT INFORMATION
Lisa C. Saavedra
(850) 245-5074
lisa.saavedra@fldoe.org

K 12: 2006-161

SUBJECT: Participation in Comprehensive English Language Learner Assessment (CELLA) Standard Setting

The purpose of this memorandum is to solicit your recommendations for educators and community members from your school district to serve as panelists who will propose achievement standards for English language proficiency on the Comprehensive English Language Learning Assessment (CELLA). The Florida Department of Education, in collaboration with the Department's contractor ETS, will conduct a meeting to gather input from educators around the state. Meeting participants will review CELLA test items and make recommendations for cut scores on Writing, Reading, and Oral Skills (Listening and Speaking). These cut scores will define three English proficiency levels – Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced – for each area. Panelists will make judgments about the items in the test and discuss their judgments with the other panelists. There will be training and practice about the procedures to be used and expert staff will guide the process.

There are four levels of CELLA each spanning 3-4 grade levels. The Department will appoint four separate standard-setting panels corresponding to the CELLA levels. Each panel will be composed of 12-15 persons from Florida including teachers of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), ESOL coordinators, curriculum specialists, assessment specialists, and other education professionals. Because standard setting is based on expert judgment—informed by performance data—it is important that panelists, collectively, reflect the diversity of the students they educate. The Department will appoint panels that are representative in terms of (a) the geographic and socioeconomic diversity of the school districts in the state; (b) gender and the major racial/ethnic group demographics in the state; and (c) the state's ELL student population, including economically disadvantaged students and students with disabilities. Therefore, it will not be possible for the Department to appoint everyone who is nominated.

The standard setting panels will be convened on December 13-15, 2006**,** in a central Florida city to minimize participants' time away from their regular responsibilities. Specific details about the meeting will be forwarded to the persons appointed to the panel. The Department will cover per diem, travel, and other related expenses for participants, but cannot cover substitute costs. I encourage you to give your teachers and administrators permission to participate in this meeting. We want to make sure the view points of educators in your district are adequately represented.

Please identify nominees based on their knowledge of the curriculum and content being assessed, their familiarity with English language learners in the grade levels for which they will recommend cut scores, their understanding of large-scale assessments, and their appreciation of the potential impact of setting these cut scores. To facilitate the nomination process, we have attached a nomination form and a more detailed description of the CELLA standard setting process. Each school district may submit **up to three** nomination forms for the **educator** standard setting panels. Nominations for the educator panel are due to the DOE by **November 13, 2006**.

In addition to the standard setting panels, the Department will convene two separate reactor panels. The purpose of these separate groups will be to review the recommendations of the educator panels and to assess the soundness of the process and results. They also will be asked to affirm the recommendations of the educator panelists or present alternative recommendations. The reactor panel will be provided an overview of CELLA and the standard setting and process, an orientation to the achievement descriptors and the method used to identify the cut scores, a description of the participants involved and their characteristics, and the results of the educator judgments. I encourage you to nominate a community leader (business person or chamber of commerce member) or an educational policy representative (school board member, yourself, or an assistant superintendent) to serve on one of the reactor panels. Each school district may submit **up to two** nomination forms for the **reactor** panels. Nominations for the reactor panel are due to the DOE by **November 29, 2006**.

You may contact Lisa C. Saavedra, Executive Director, Academic Achievement through Language Acquisition, by phone at (850) 245-5074 or via e-mail at mailto:lisa.saavedra@fldoe.org if you have questions or need additional information.

CPY/lcs

Attachments: CELLA Nomination Form
CELLA Standard Setting Process Summary

cc: District Coordinator of ESOL
District Coordinator of Assessment
Hanna Skandera
Cornelia Orr
Lisa C. Saavedra

SUMMARY FOR SETTING STANDARDS ON THE COMPREHENSIVE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING ASSESSMENT (CELLA) FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION & GOAL

Title III of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) requires states to ensure that children who have limited English proficiency, including immigrant children, attain English proficiency, develop high levels of academic attainment in English, and meet the same challenging state academic content and achievement standards all children are expected to meet. Florida administers the Comprehensive English Language Learning Assessment (CELLA) to meet the requirement of NCLB to measure student English language proficiency.
The CELLA consists of four levels, with each level addressing a different grade span. Each level measures students' English writing, reading, and oral (listening and speaking) skills. The levels cover grades as follows:

- Level A, Kindergarten-Grade 2;
- Level B, Grades 3-5;
- Level C, Grades 7-8; and
- Level D, Grades 9-12.

Florida will establish, for each level —A, B, C, D— of the CELLA tests —Writing, Reading, Oral Skills (Listening and Speaking), four levels of student proficiency. The proficiency levels are Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced, and English Proficient (no longer needing ESOL services). To accomplish this, proficiency levels must be defined, and a cut score—the *minimum* score required to be classified at a given proficiency level—must be identified.

To assist Florida in defining the cut scores, Educational Testing Service (ETS) will plan and conduct a standard-setting study using the bookmark method of standard setting. The process is designed to produce the cut scores in a valid and systematic manner by involving panels of content area experts, policymakers, and other stakeholders in the standard-setting process.

The study will be conducted in two phases and will result in three recommended cut scores for each level—A, B, C, D— of the three CELLA tests—Writing, Reading, Oral Skills (Listening and Speaking). The first phase of the study will be a workshop with four panels of Florida educators (one panel for each CELLA level) in central Florida, to be held December 13-15, 2006. The second phase of the study will be a series of two reactor meetings in January during which ETS will orient the reactor panelists to the method and materials used in the educator workshop, present summary data from the educator workshop and the recommended cut scores, and facilitate discussion of the results and the formulation of a final set of recommendations.

ETS will present to the Department a report on both phases of the study. Department staff will review and analyze the results of both phases of the study and make a recommendation about the final cut scores to the Commissioner of Education. The Commissioner will present his recommendation for the final cut scores to the State Board of Education for their discussion, review/revision, and adoption.

PHASE 1: EDUCATOR PANEL WORKSHOP (BOOKMARK METHOD)

For each of the four CELLA levels, the Department will appoint a separate standard-setting panel. Each panel will be comprised of 12-15 Florida teachers of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), ESOL coordinators, and other professional educators. The Department will identify panelists based on their knowledge of the curriculum and content being assessed, familiarity with students in the grade levels for which they will recommend cut scores, understanding of large-scale assessments, and appreciation of the consequences of setting these cut scores.

Because standard setting is based on expert judgment—informed by performance data—it is important that panelists, collectively, reflect the diversity of the students they educate. The Department will make special efforts to ensure that the panels appointed are representative of Florida in terms of (a) the geographic and socioeconomic diversity of the school districts in the state; (b) the gender and the major racial/ethnic group demographics in the state; and (c) the state's ELL student population, including economically disadvantaged students and students with disabilities.

Within each level, panelists will be assigned to small groups, with an approximately equal number of panelists at each table. This table format, rather than an exclusively full-group session, provides an environment more conducive to panelists sharing their opinions and rationales, as some panelists may be less inclined to speak or have less opportunity to be heard in a large group. The table format—standard in most applications of the bookmark method—also increases the independence of the cut-score recommendations, by guarding against potential influences more likely in a large-group setting. Each individual provides his/her own recommendations, which are then aggregated for each table and across all the tables.

Before beginning the cut-score development, proficiency level descriptors (PLDs) will be developed to describe what is expected at each level of proficiency. These PLDs define the benchmark that panelists will use in the standard-setting process by describing performance of those students who *just meet* the criteria of each level (or a hypothetical *target* student) above the three cut scores to be set. In addition, it is helpful to have a definition of what a student at the Beginner level may know and be able to do to help distinguish knowledge that is important but not sufficient to reach the Intermediate level.

ETS will instruct all panelists together on how to review the curriculum or content standards and develop PLDs. Panelists will work in three separate content area groups aligned to the three tests—Writing, Reading, Oral Skills—to draft PLDs, following which the full group will be brought back together to present and discuss the PLDs and refine the drafts as a full group.

ETS will use the bookmark method of setting cut scores, and the PLDs will be used extensively in implementing this method. Panelists will be reorganized into four CELLA level groups, and will be asked to think of students who fit the criteria defined by the PLDs. Time will be spent discussing the *target* student for each proficiency level—the hypothetical student who has *just enough* knowledge and skill to be considered performing at that level as defined by the PLDs.

Facilitators will provide extensive training in the bookmark method and how it is to be carried out, and panelists will have the opportunity to practice. Facilitators will lead panelists to examine items that compose the test and estimate, for each proficiency level, how the *target* student—the hypothetical student who demonstrates *just enough* knowledge and skill to be classified at that level—will perform. Panelists will be instructed to keep in mind the target student for a specified proficiency level as they progress through a book of test items that have been ordered from least difficult to most difficult based on student performance. For each proficiency level, panelists will place a bookmark at the point at which the

target student is most likely to be able to answer correctly the items up to that point, but not likely to be able to answer correctly the items beyond that point because the items are considered too difficult[1].

ETS will implement the process in three rounds, as is typical in the bookmark method. After the first round, information on panelists' bookmark judgments will be shared, and facilitators will lead panelists to share the rationales for their judgments. A second round of bookmark judgments will follow this panel discussion. When the second round has been completed, performance data from the actual CELLA administration to Florida students in the fall of 2006 will be shared with panelists. More discussion among the panelists will follow, and a third, final round of bookmark placements will be completed.

PHASE 2: REACTOR PANEL MEETINGS

The Department will appoint reactor panels comprised of community and education policy stakeholders. Reactor panelists will be recruited, oriented, and reimbursed in the same manner as the educator panelists. The Department will include as reactor panelists parents, representatives of businesses that employ English language learners, representatives of higher education in Florida, and other stakeholders. As much as possible the Department will identify reactor panelists who are familiar with students in the grade levels for which they will recommend cut scores and show an appreciation of the consequences of setting these cut scores. It is important that each reactor panel also reflect the diversity of the state in terms of (a) the geographic and socioeconomic diversity of the school districts in the state; (b) the gender and the major racial/ethnic group demographics in the state; and (c) the state's ELL student population, including economically disadvantaged students and students with disabilities.

The Department will begin each reactor meeting by welcoming the panel members and presenting background information on the educator workshop. ETS then will present an overview of CELLA and standard setting, an orientation to the PLDs and the bookmark method, documentation of the bookmark process followed in the educator panels, the characteristics of the participants involved, and the results of the bookmark process. The process, procedures, and materials will be prepared by ETS and will be designed specifically to enable the reactor panelists to assess the soundness of the process and results and to affirm the recommendations or present alternative recommendations.

1 In several application of the Bookmark Method, a target probability of two-thirds is used to define "most likely." See, for example, Lewis D. M., Mitzel, H. C., & Green, D. R. (June 1996). "Standard Setting: A Bookmark approach." Paper presented at the Council of Chief State School Officers National Conference on Large-Scale Assessment, Boulder, CO.

FLORIDA CELLA STANDARD SETTING AND REACTOR PANEL NOMINATION FORM

Area of Expertise: ☐ **Reading/Writing** ☐ **Gen. Curriculum** ☐ **ESE** ☐ **ESOL** ☐ **Assessment**
(Check all that apply) ☐ **Teacher** ☐ **Administrator** ☐ **Community Representative**

Level of Expertise: ☐ **K-2** ☐ **3-5** ☐ **6-8** ☐ **9-12** ☐ **General**

Nominated for: ☐ **Educator Panel (Due 11/13/06)** ☐ **Reactor Panel (Due 11/29/06)**

Nominated by: _____
PLEASE PRINT

FAX to: (850-245-0846)

Please complete all applicable sections below

First Name:_____ **Last Name:**_____ **Gender: M __ F __**

County/District:_____**Position:**_____ **Title: Ms.___ Mr.___ Dr:___**

Race/Ethnicity: ☐African-American ☐Asian ☐Caucasian ☐Hispanic ☐Native American

School/Work Name: _____

School/Work Department: _____

School/Work Address: _____

_____

_____**ZIP:**_____

Work Phone: ( )_____ **Work FAX: ( )**_____

Work E-mail Address: _____

HOME* **Address:** _____

_____

Home Phone: ( )_____ **Home E-mail Address:**_____

Home contact name: _____ **Phone Number: ( )**_____

Comments: _____
Note any special dietary needs or accommodation requirements.

_____

_____

*Home information is not required, but is extremely helpful in the case of emergency cancellations of meetings for hurricanes, etc. or for contacting immediate family in case of an emergency during a meeting.

Fax completed form to 850-245-0846, or Email completed form to FloridaCELLA@fldoe.org
Call Lisa C. Saavedra with questions at 850-245-5074.