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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

RACE TO THE TOP ASSESSMENT PROGRAM
PUBLIC & EXPERT INPUT MEETING

ASSESSMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

9:00 a.m.
Wednesday
December 2, 2009

Capitol Peak Ballroom
Grand Hyatt Denver
1750 Welton Street
Denver, Colorado

FACILITATOR: JOANNE WEISS

PANEL MEMBERS:

JAMAL ABEDI
ROBERT LINQUANTI
THELMA MELENDEZ
CHARLENE RIVERA
MIKE SMITH
ANN WHALEN

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P R O C E E D I N G S

(9:00 a.m.)

MS. WEISS: Good morning, everybody. It's a pretty full house. I'm happy to see that. I wasn't sure how hard it was going to be for people to get here this morning.

Let me start by asking whether there's anybody in the audience today who need interpretation services. If so, identify yourself and we'll make sure you've got a seat up front so that you can see. Okay. Thank you.

So, good morning. I'm going to start by just asking for a show of hands of how many people were here yesterday. Oh, a lot. Okay. Wait, let me now ask how many were not here yesterday. Okay. So in that case, I am going to sort of dash through this front end organizer so that those who weren't here just get a quick sense of things and I don't bore the people who were here too much.

My name's Joanne Weiss. I'm the

1 Director of the Race to the Top Program at the
2 Department of Education. And it's my pleasure
3 to welcome you to the last in our series of
4 expert and public input meetings around the
5 assessment competition issues. Although
6 they've been so productive and helpful to us
7 that you might want to keep your eyes peeled
8 because there might be a couple of more topics
9 that we're going to have meetings on over the
10 next couple of -- I guess right after the
11 holidays probably. So we will definitely
12 announce that and let you know if we have a
13 couple of additional topics that we're going
14 to do meetings like this around.

15 But just to make sure everybody
16 knows why they're here, despite what the
17 program says, you are here for the English
18 Language Learner session. Not Students with
19 Disabilities, we did that in Atlanta a couple
20 of weeks ago. We are also not here to talk
21 about the Race to the Top competition; we're
22 here to talk about the Race to the Top
23 assessment competition.

1 We did a question yesterday, and a
2 few more questions subsequently where people
3 were just interested in understanding how
4 these two competitions relate to one another.

5 And the answer is that the Race to the Top
6 competition is by and large built around the
7 expectation that there's a common set of K-12
8 standards that a number of states are going to
9 be moving to, and the work to transition to
10 these standards is one non-trivial part of the
11 Race to the Top competition. It's a place
12 where people can use the funding to really
13 think through both the curriculum, the
14 assessment and the professional development
15 aspects of managing a transition like that.

16 The assessment competition is where
17 we ask states to come together and do the hard
18 work of figuring out how to develop the
19 assessments against common standards. So the
20 development of the assessments themselves is
21 in the Race to the Top assessment competition,
22 the implementation of new standards, which of
23 course involves assessments, is in the Race to

1 the Top state competition.

2 We're happy to sort of talk more
3 about this. I'm assuming that many of you, at
4 least folks from the states, may be coming
5 tomorrow to our technical assistance workshop
6 on Race to the Top, so there we're happy to
7 take lots of questions from you and see if we
8 can help people understand how this all, in
9 our heads anyway, is designed to work
10 together.

11 As you know, I think the applicants
12 for the assessment competition are consortia
13 of states, and like the regular Race to the
14 Top competition, 50 percent of the funds do
15 have to flow through to districts, so you'll
16 hear us talking today probably a little about
17 what appropriate uses of funds might be at the
18 district level.

19 The time line for this is up on the
20 slide, so I will not read it to you. I will
21 instead just make it clear that the goals of
22 the assessment program are to support states
23 in delivering a system of more effective and

1 more instructionally useful assessments than
2 perhaps we have today. Not only do we want
3 more accurate information about what students
4 know and can do, but we really want
5 assessments that support and reflect good
6 instructionally practice. Yesterday I think a
7 number of our experts talked about people will
8 always teach to test, so let's design tests
9 that are worth teaching to. That's the
10 implication of this.

11 And most importantly for today's
12 meeting, we're really concerned that these
13 assessments include all students, English
14 Language Learners and students with
15 disabilities in particular, at the front end
16 of the design, and that meeting the needs of
17 these students is not something that we do as
18 an afterthought or tack on at the back end,
19 but rather something that is considered up
20 front as an integral part of the design.

21 Any of you who have been to the
22 other meetings know that we've had voices on
23 the panel at every meeting of people who are

1 talking about ELL and students with
2 disabilities. In addition we've had specific
3 panels, like this one, dedicated to those
4 topics so that when we've got specific issues
5 we can get a little bit deeper into them and
6 make sure that as we're writing the notice we
7 understand the best way to make sure that
8 those students' needs are accommodated
9 properly in the design.

10 One other thing that I will say,
11 the sort of elephant in the room around all of
12 this is that, of course, we're putting the
13 cart and the horse in a funny order here by
14 talking about assessments in the absence of
15 having reauthorization of Elementary and
16 Secondary Education Act underway. So we're in
17 this place where we currently have No Child
18 Left Behind as the laws that we are complying
19 with, but we know that that's up for
20 reauthorization, but we don't know what that
21 reauthorization is going to look like yet. So
22 we're designing an assessment system without
23 the benefit of really understanding how it may

1 in the future fit into an accountability
2 system, and that unfortunately is just the
3 sort of hand we've been dealt here.

4 I will say that I know, in ELL in
5 particular, there are some issues around this
6 because of the way that Title I tests and
7 Title III tests interplay, so we'll talk about
8 it a little bit, but we can't solve that
9 problem here, although we do realize that's an
10 issue that we'll need to address when we deal
11 with ESEA reauthorization hopefully in the
12 coming year, but it's not entirely up to us,
13 so we'll see how Congress feels about the
14 timing.

15 So that leads us to how we got the
16 requirements for this, that the minimum
17 requirements that we have for the new set of
18 assessments have to at least comply with the
19 current ESEA regulations. So at a minimum we
20 need to deal with reading, language arts, and
21 mathematics in grades 3 through 8 and high
22 school. We need to be developing summative
23 tests, but we can think about those in all

1 kinds of creative and different ways in terms
2 of when they're given throughout the year, how
3 many tests are in a particular assessment
4 system, and what the item formats look like.

5 We can think of these as tests that
6 would replace rather than add to the current
7 battery of tests that we're using, and of
8 course issues of validity, reliability and
9 fairness are always important, but in the ELL
10 context there may be some specific things that
11 we get into around that.

12 The reason that we're having these
13 meetings around the country is really
14 threefold. First, we wanted to have a
15 conversation that was very public and allowed
16 us to paint a vision for what assessment could
17 and should look like if it was actually
18 supportive of instruction and provided the
19 kind of information that students and parents
20 were anxious to get about their own learning.

21 We also wanted to make sure that we
22 were getting very concrete expert input to us
23 at the Department at the front end as we put

1 forward the regulations for this competition
2 that really as we know will help shape not
3 only the assessment infrastructure for the
4 country, but we know that assessment also
5 helps shape a lot of the instructional issues
6 that go on, whether we like the order in which
7 those things happen or not, it's just the
8 truth, and so we're taking very, very
9 seriously the goal of helping -- of trying to
10 design a competition that really meets the
11 needs that we, as a country, have for
12 assessment in some different ways than the
13 current vision of assessment has been
14 implemented.

15 Third, we also know that you as
16 states have the charge of figuring out what
17 you want to propose in response to those
18 assessments and every bit as much you will
19 benefit from hearing from these experts as we
20 in the Department will benefit from hearing
21 from these experts, so we wanted to make the
22 meetings public and open and accessible to all
23 of you so that you're hearing the same things

1 that we're hearing and getting the benefit of
2 this expertise.

3 The agenda, you'll see up here
4 today we're going to have expert presentations
5 followed by a round table discussion, and
6 after that we'll have public speakers. All of
7 you, I think, got index cards when you came
8 in, so feel free to write your questions on
9 those cards and drop them off up here.

10 Mark, if you'll just waive your
11 hand. You can bring out to the registration
12 desk, or you can just bring them up to Mark
13 and he'll get them up to me. We are
14 preferencing the states' questions since
15 they're the ones who are the applicants, but
16 everybody is welcome to provide questions. We
17 have time keeping going on up here that you'll
18 see us doing. Please make sure you put your
19 cell phones on vibrate.

20 And know that the website that the
21 Department is maintaining around Race to the
22 Top assessment competition has not only
23 transcripts from all their past meetings, it

1 will have transcripts from yesterday and
2 today's meeting within a couple of days, and
3 all the presentations that you see today are
4 posted up there, as well as any written input
5 that we have received from experts or members
6 of the public. So that's a good resource for
7 you, we hope.

8 Thank you again to all the states
9 that have been traveling around the country
10 with us as we've been doing these meetings.
11 People, as you can see, have come from far and
12 wide to be here and participate, and I know
13 that our experts appreciate that as well.

14 Let me just take a minute to go
15 around and have everybody on the panel
16 introduce themselves. I will say that Gene
17 Garcia was supposed to be here with us today,
18 and unfortunately had a family emergency and
19 wasn't able to come. But we have plenty to
20 talk about.

21 So with that, let me, Robert, ask
22 you to just do a quick introduction.

23 MR. LINQUANTI: Robert Linquanti,

1 Director and Senior Researcher at WestEd in
2 San Francisco, California.

3 MR. ABEDI: Jamal Abedi, Professor
4 of Education, University of California Davis.

5 MS. RIVERA: Charlene Rivera. I'm
6 the Executive Director of the Center for
7 Equity and Excellence in Education at George
8 Washington University, and a research
9 professor.

10 Can you hear us?

11 MS. WEISS: Yes, I think Jamal just
12 needs -- you need to just put --

13 MR. ABEDI: Yes, the mike --

14 MS. WEISS: -- the mike right up to
15 you when you're speaking.

16 Thelma?

17 MS. MELENDEZ: Thelma Melendez de
18 Santana, Assistant Secretary of Elementary and
19 Secondary Education.

20 MR. SMITH: Mike Smith in the
21 Office of the Secretary.

22 MS. WHALEN: Ann Whalen in the
23 Office of the Secretary, Department of

1 Education.

2 MS. WEISS: Great. So today these
3 are the key questions that we've asked the
4 experts to respond to, they were published in
5 our notice. And let me just read them to you
6 very quickly. The first is, how you would --
7 how would you recommend that assessments take
8 into account the variations in English
9 language proficiency of students in a manner
10 that enables them to demonstrate their
11 knowledge and skills in core academic areas;
12 given the innovations in both assessment
13 design and technology, how would you propose
14 that we take this into account as we're
15 thinking about potential accommodations or
16 design issues; and in the context of
17 reflecting student achievement, what are the
18 relative merits of developing and
19 administering content assessments in native
20 languages together with all of the technical,
21 logistical and financial requirements that
22 might go with that.

23 So with that I'm going to turn it

1 over to our first speakers, who is --

2 Is it you, Charlene?

3 MALE VOICE: Charlene, yes.

4 MS. WEISS: Who's Charlene.

5 MS. RIVERA: Good morning,
6 everyone. I'm really pleased to be here and
7 to have this opportunity to share thoughts
8 about the Race to the Top assessment
9 competition. It's an important competition
10 and one where English Language Learner
11 certainly have to be thought of in many --
12 from the beginning.

13 So what I'm doing today -- let's
14 see if -- okay. I'm going to -- my
15 presentation is going to -- I'm going to focus
16 on these five topics: general design issues
17 for the new assessment system, ELL's
18 linguistic and sociocultural needs,
19 instruction context, design of accommodated
20 tests, and state assessment policy.

21 With regard to general design, I
22 have, I guess, some advice for the Department
23 in terms of thinking about this competition,

1 and the first thing is to design the entire
2 assessment system with students in -- with all
3 students in mind, including English Language
4 Learners. We need to recognize the
5 heterogeneity of the language minority
6 population, which constitutes a continuum.
7 English Language Learners in the early stages
8 of learning English to ELLs at the advanced
9 stages of learning English, as well as former
10 ELLs, or students who have moved beyond the
11 English Language Learner designation.

12 This entire continuum of ELLs needs
13 to be taken into consideration when the
14 assessment system is designed. It's been
15 problematic in the past, and so we need to
16 retrofit our assessment systems using
17 accommodations and other things.

18 So this Race to the -- we need to
19 recognize that the needs of the students who
20 are learning English are distinct from those
21 that are -- from students with disabilities,
22 and unfortunately this has not always been the
23 case in the past. We've simply retrofitted

1 what was designed for students with
2 disabilities to -- and addressed it and
3 assigned it to English Language Learners. We
4 need to really think separately, although
5 there are some commonalities, but we need to
6 think about what the needs of English Language
7 Learners are: it is language and they need to
8 have access to language.

9 So the Race to the Top program is
10 an attempt to allow the consortia of states to
11 design comprehensive and inclusive assessment
12 systems. But the scope is dauntingly
13 challenging. And I'll go through some of
14 those ideas.

15 First of all, we need to consider
16 the composition of the consortia. The
17 consortia from the beginning needs to have
18 incentives and it has to have some
19 underpinnings where it is required that
20 individuals who are knowledgeable about
21 English Language Learners are involved in the
22 consortia and are part of the management
23 structure and part of the development team

1 that is in -- that is designing the assessment
2 system.

3 So we need to establish priorities,
4 we need to identify stakeholders across the
5 consortium within each SEA and LEA, leaders
6 and developers for the assessment system need
7 to be knowledgeable about the number of ELLs
8 and the languages spoken within each state and
9 across the consortia. We have to plan this
10 assessment system knowing who the target is,
11 who the students are, what the audience is.

12 And this is a point, I don't know,
13 it may be controversial, but if different ELP
14 assessments are being given across the
15 consortia states, I would suggest that we
16 consider -- that states consider establishing
17 a common scale to allow content assessments to
18 be benchmarked against students' different
19 levels of English language proficiency. The
20 relationship between ELP and content
21 assessments is very important, and I think my
22 colleagues here will probably be emphasizing
23 that more as we go through the morning.

1 We have to modify curriculum to
2 reflect the new standards. It's very
3 important to spend the time up front to make
4 sure we understand what we're teaching and
5 what the expectations are. We need to have
6 professional development in this process. It
7 cannot just be something that falls out of the
8 sky, it has to happen with people involved and
9 with stakeholders involved. So with the
10 teachers, with the districts, with the LEAs,
11 et cetera. People have to be involved from
12 the beginning in understanding what is to be
13 taught and what is to be assessed.

14 So the suggestion is that we scale
15 up the assessment in stages, establish
16 reasonable time lines for development, et
17 cetera. Establish clear expectations and
18 approaches for bridging from the current state
19 standards in assessment systems to the new
20 system. We can't just throw everything out
21 and expect that we're going to start anew. We
22 have to figure out what is the bridge, what
23 have we been doing, what -- you know, where

1 are the -- if we're using common course
2 standards, what -- how do those match what
3 we've been doing, and how can we build on some
4 of that or what parts of it do we have to
5 replace. All of that needs to be thought out.

6 And this is another controversial
7 thing, I mean and it's been problematic for
8 NCLB, you know, in terms of requiring ELLs to
9 participate in English language arts and
10 mathematics assessments after being in school
11 for at least -- for a year. And, you know,
12 we've gone back and forth and said these -- if
13 a student takes an ELA test at a very low
14 level of English language proficiency, it's
15 not valid, they don't -- it doesn't have
16 meaning, and so what can we do. So one option
17 is to extend the ELA scale so that it includes
18 English Language Learners at these lower
19 levels.

20 And another option would be to use
21 the ELP test as a proxy, be the reading and
22 writing components of the ELP test as a proxy
23 for ELA until students can meaningfully take

1 the ELA test.

2 The advantage of extending the ELA
3 continuum is that the test can be scored on
4 the same scale. Also, if a computer-adaptive
5 test is used, adjustments can be made so
6 students can access items of appropriate
7 difficulty. And another option might be to
8 try to place the ELP reading and writing
9 assessments on the same scale as the ELA test.

10 That's perhaps a more -- an interesting thing
11 to think about. I don't know if people have
12 started to develop that idea. But in some way
13 it needs -- we need to have a continuum.

14 Another piece of this is that we
15 need a reporting system that provides timely
16 information about individual student
17 achievement in classrooms, et cetera, whatever
18 the point is. I mean the consortium will have
19 to design that. But what's important is that
20 that reporting system also include information
21 about English Language -- ELLs, their English
22 language proficiency, and their proficiency in
23 content. We also need to have information

1 about how former ELLs are doing. It's
2 critical that that also be reported.

3 We also need to have a monitoring
4 system, and this has been one of -- this is a
5 big bugaboo. We really don't know how things
6 are being implemented without monitoring, you
7 know, without tracking and looking forward.
8 So we need to look at -- we have to monitor
9 the progress of ELLs as well as former ELLs.

10 With over five million ELLs
11 enrolled in US schools, it's, you know, it's
12 obvious that this population has increased
13 tremendously, nearly 60 percent over the past
14 10 years. And we all know that this
15 population represents great diversity, and I
16 know Robert will talk about this and others,
17 but the way I've kind of looked at it, just in
18 general, is we have migrants from Puerto Rico
19 who are educated in Spanish, we have children
20 from US territories, immigrants from all over
21 the world, we have refugees, and then the
22 bottom line is, all of these folks that are in
23 those upper levels have children and they're

1 here in the US, and those children come to
2 school often not speaking English fluently, or
3 are speaking a language other than English,
4 and those folks all need to be taken into
5 consideration in this process.

6 Design test specifications with the
7 involvement of specialists who are
8 knowledgeable about the academic language
9 demands of content for ELLs at different grade
10 levels. Involve stakeholders in each
11 consortium who are knowledgeable about the
12 continuum of needs of second language
13 learners.

14 We need to think about governance a
15 little bit. And, you know, this may be only,
16 you know, maybe at a sublevel of governance,
17 it's not the big governance structure, but one
18 thing that needs to be thought about is
19 perhaps involving or putting together some
20 kind of a management structure. And one that
21 comes to mind is creating TACs, creating a TAC
22 for both the consortia and TACs in the
23 individual states where there are experts,

1 members who can provide input and have
2 understanding of ELL issues related to their
3 assessment.

4 We also need to think about the
5 fact that the assessments must be valid and
6 reliable for specific purposes, for all
7 subcategories of students including ELLs at
8 different stages of English language
9 acquisition. This implies that studies that
10 are done, validity studies that are done have
11 to involve those populations. We cannot
12 exclude them from those studies, which I know
13 is often done. And so we need to make sure
14 that those students are included in those
15 validity studies and we make adjustments to
16 the assessment as appropriate.

17 Some instructional -- some advice
18 around the instructional context, and perhaps
19 it's really just more general advice. The
20 assessment is an integral part of instruction
21 and not -- and should not just be an add-on.
22 Teachers should be part of the development
23 teams and there should be consideration of

1 implications for teaching and learning. This
2 was discussed yesterday and I would strongly
3 support that.

4 Teachers should also be involved,
5 and this may be the ways that the LEAs can be
6 involved, they should be involved in providing
7 professional development to their colleagues
8 to support quality instruction that will
9 enable valid assessment of all students,
10 including English Language Learners.

11 Expect that leaders and SEAs and
12 LEAs have introduced the new standards and
13 that the teachers feel comfortable teaching
14 the subject matter to be tested. Very
15 important. Expect that leaders have the same
16 high expectations for ELLs as they have for
17 all other students. Require SEAs and LEAs to
18 conduct professional development on how to
19 teach academic language needed for ELLs to
20 acquire content, especially at middle and high
21 school.

22 We have a project at GWCEEE around
23 academic language, and the concept is that

1 every content has its own vocabulary, its own
2 grammar, usage, et cetera which ELLs need to
3 understand. And so it's very important that
4 we address this issue of academic language for
5 specific content areas. Not just generic
6 academic language, that's important too, but
7 we need to address it for specific academic
8 subject areas. So biology, let's say algebra,
9 physics, whatever it is.

10 We need to examine what is the
11 academic language required for those students,
12 for ELLs, and for all students really, to be
13 successful in that content. And then how do
14 we teach our teachers, how do we translate
15 those standards and those -- that information,
16 how do we teach our teachers so that they can
17 then teach the students what it is that they
18 need to know. But teachers have to understand
19 it too, it isn't just that we create some
20 abstract concept of what the academic language
21 is, we have to have a very strong way of
22 helping teachers to understand what needs to
23 be taught.

1 Now, let's see. This is sort of
2 more of -- require each state in the
3 consortium to conduct professional development
4 for teachers and others. I think I've said
5 this. It really -- we need to -- the
6 professional development needs to be about the
7 new assessment and the expectations for
8 student performance. We need to require
9 consortium members and test developers to
10 consider how ELP outcomes can and should be
11 used to inform the outcomes of content
12 assessments.

13 With regard to the design of
14 accommodated tests, accommodations involve
15 changes to testing procedures, materials, or
16 situation to allow students meaningful
17 participation in an assessment, effective
18 accommodations for ELLs address unique
19 linguistic and sociocultural needs of the
20 student without altering the test construct.
21 Accommodated scores should be sufficiently
22 equivalent in scale to be pooled with
23 unaccommodated scores. These are all

1 requirements that need to be incorporated into
2 the plan for the assessment.

3 In the work that we've done we've
4 created a taxonomy, and we've -- in examining
5 state policies, we've realized that states
6 have not been very clear about which
7 accommodations are appropriate for English
8 Language Learners and which should be offered
9 to students with disabilities.

10 So we've created the taxonomy of
11 ELL responsive accommodations where we talk
12 about direct and indirect linguistic support.

13 Direct linguistic support implies adjustment
14 to the language of the test in either English
15 or another language, and indirect linguistic
16 support implies adjustment to the conditions
17 under which a test is taken. So, for example,
18 extra time for students to process the test
19 items.

20 With regard to universal design,
21 it's good, but not always sufficient to make
22 test items accessible to ELLs, even if second
23 language testing experts are part of the

1 universal design team. So, and even if they
2 are, it may be necessary to create alternative
3 forms of assessment, such as linguistically
4 simplified assessments. So universal design
5 is good. I'm not saying, you know, get rid of
6 it, but I'm just saying we have to be
7 attentive to the needs of English Language
8 Learners.

9 Appropriate accommodations for ELLs
10 should, at a minimum, be standardized, and
11 that is not always happening across the
12 states. The ELL responsive and include use of
13 English and other language accommodations as
14 appropriate.

15 Consider whether an accommodation
16 is intended to help students at low, moderate
17 or advanced levels of English language
18 proficiency. Research is needed to examine
19 this relationship. We've done some work in
20 trying do that by bringing together an expert
21 panel, but we don't have any basic research
22 around this. We need to develop that.

23 The issue with regard to

1 technology, technology has the potential to
2 standardize the delivery of accommodation.
3 However, it's important to recognize the need
4 for instruction and practice in using
5 technology accommodations. Whether delivered
6 with technology or otherwise, there must be
7 supports -- it must be a support and asset to
8 learning and assessments, not an impediment.

9 Students must be able to access the
10 use of technology in meaningful ways to
11 support its use in a test. Computer-based
12 testing has the promise of making
13 accommodations more efficient and uniform. It
14 can also be used to monitor the actual use of
15 specific accommodations.

16 With regard to native language
17 accommodations, it's important to consider
18 whether a student -- what kind of language
19 background the student has. Does the student
20 have oral knowledge of the language and
21 literacy skills to take advantage of the
22 accommodations. There are several questions
23 that I've raised here about what I think

1 people need to consider, what is the student's
2 level of ELP, how long has the student been in
3 the US -- in US schools, what is the student's
4 oral and literacy skills in the second and
5 third language, has the student received
6 instruction in the native language and in the
7 content tested.

8 Very important if we're going to
9 use native language accommodations that there
10 be some knowledge of the content tested. It's
11 very different to learn algebra in English and
12 learn algebra in Spanish, let's say. The
13 vocabulary will be different, so students need
14 to have that exposure if it's going to be
15 meaningful.

16 Most native language accommodations
17 are designed for native speakers currently,
18 but perhaps through the consortia model the
19 cost -- it might make it feasible to create
20 native language -- to use -- to create native
21 language accommodations in multiple languages.

22 So this may be an advantage of the consortia.
23 Regardless, we need more research about

1 native language accommodations. We have very
2 little -- we have 14 studies in total,
3 experimental studies to examine specific
4 accommodations and the effects on student
5 achievement. So these are some of the
6 accommodations that are listed there in that
7 that have been studied.

8 Native language accommodations,
9 especially dual language test booklets,
10 translated and adapted tests have great
11 promise and they do allow students to
12 demonstrate knowledge in either English or the
13 native language thereby reducing construct-
14 irrelevant variance. And critically, if the
15 student is literate in the language or has
16 some oral knowledge of the language. So it's
17 very important to consider that.

18 One -- just an idea of a, you know,
19 of an accommodation that I know Ohio uses is a
20 recorded audio translation. It allows the
21 student to access the content whether
22 they're -- even if they only have oral
23 language knowledge of -- native oral language

1 knowledge. It's a standardized accommodation
2 and it doesn't have the pitfalls that sight
3 translation and oral translations have, which
4 are done -- which are not standardized.

5 Many accommodations are -- many
6 states list accommodations, and the majority
7 of those accommodations are for test
8 directions. They simplify the language or
9 they clarify the language, but I would submit
10 that this is not sufficient and that we really
11 need to focus on providing accommodations that
12 address the specific items of the test,
13 allowing -- enabling students to access the
14 content of the item, it isn't -- or of the
15 assessment -- the question that's being asked,
16 it's really not about -- only about
17 directions. APA does require that all
18 students understand what the parameters are of
19 the test, and so it seems that we should
20 really be focusing on trying to create
21 accommodations that address the specific
22 items.

23 States also have in their list of

1 accommodations what they call administrative
2 supports. Some states are starting to call
3 them that and to cull them out of the list of
4 accommodations. These are, for example,
5 providing an assessment in a small group
6 setting, or in a separate room, or having an
7 individual teacher work with the students.

8 If we start -- if we really think
9 about this, and some states have started to
10 think about this, it's really the -- it's for
11 the convenience of the administrator for the
12 school to organize these administrative
13 practices. So I would suggest that we -- that
14 states also -- and the consortia think about
15 how to cull out some of these things and to be
16 very clear about what accommodations are and
17 how they can be specific for English Language
18 Learners.

19 We need research, research,
20 research. We need to track the effectiveness
21 of accommodations so that decisions can be
22 made about their use and improvements, and
23 this is something that the consortia should

1 really build into their plan, how they are
2 going to collect data and make improvements to
3 the assessment as they move along.

4 We need -- as I say, we need
5 research about the implementation of
6 accommodations. Implement -- we really don't
7 know what accommodations students take. We
8 have lists of accommodations, we have
9 policies, we have lots of things. We don't
10 know what students are actually doing, when
11 they're offered an accommodation, and we need
12 to figure that out, we need to spend time, we
13 need to develop that research so that we can
14 make improvements and we can really understand
15 if accommodations are effective and whether
16 they're really supporting students.

17 So accommodations are not a
18 panacea, but they are a support and should be
19 used. The new assessment system should build
20 into its design methods for monitoring the use
21 of specific accommodations, assessing utility,
22 feasibility and the quality of accommodations
23 to support ELLs at different levels of English

1 language proficiency.

2 There's a lack of uniform
3 implementation of assessments and
4 accommodations for ELLs, in part due to the
5 lack of clear state assessment policies.
6 States create policies, but they really don't
7 always create the communication plan to get
8 the information out to the districts and to
9 the LEAs so that they know how they're to
10 implement the assessments and the
11 accommodations. Therefore, with the design of
12 the new assessment system, each consortia
13 should develop policy that can be adapted by
14 each participating SEA that includes a plan
15 for communicating to LEAs and school staff.

16 Very important, this
17 professional -- the accommodations and other
18 implementation issues can't be done well if
19 people don't really know what they're doing,
20 or what they're -- what's expected of them
21 when they are asked to monitor or to proctor
22 an assessment.

23 So some final thoughts. Hold ELLs

1 to the same high expectations as all other
2 students, consider the needs of ELLs from the
3 beginning when developing the assessment
4 system, involve teachers, second language
5 testers and content specialists in the
6 development of the assessment system, involve
7 teachers in professional development to
8 address curriculum and roll out of the
9 assessment system, make sure that ELLs are
10 instructed in the content tested, make sure
11 accommodations differentiate ELLs at different
12 levels of English language proficiency, and
13 consider extending the continuum of English
14 language arts assessments to include students
15 at beginner levels of ELP and who have been in
16 US schools fewer than three years. Thank you.

17 MS. WEISS: Thanks, Charlene.

18 (General applause.)

19 MS. WEISS: Questions?

20 MS. MELENDEZ: Charlene, I have a
21 question. Could you speak a little bit more
22 regarding your last statement, your final
23 thought, which talked about extending the

1 continuum of English language arts assessment
2 to include students at beginning levels of ELP
3 who have been in the US schools fewer than
4 three years, and then you talked a little bit
5 about possibly using the ELP assessment as a
6 proxy. Would you mind expanding a little bit
7 on that?

8 MS. RIVERA: Well, I mean -- well,
9 I think we need to figure out how we're going
10 to include those students in the assessment
11 system if that's the requirement. And that's
12 the assumption I'm going on, that there is --
13 the NCLB requirement to include students in
14 ELA and math. And I think that's also what's
15 in the requirements in this competition are
16 going to be.

17 So we need to figure out how to do
18 this meaningfully. It's not meaningful if we
19 give a student an assessment and they -- we
20 just get gibberish back. We need to make sure
21 that we find ways to include those students in
22 meaningful ways. And so the thought is to
23 think about ELA and to simply think about,

1 well, okay, what happens -- sort of line
2 demarcating in the sense where native speakers
3 start and then where English Language
4 Learners -- where are more advanced students
5 sort of are and you kind of move down the
6 continuum until you get to those students who
7 are at very early stages of learning English
8 and where it may not be appropriate at all to
9 give an English language arts assessment.

10 But to bring it down -- to bring
11 the continuum down so that you can begin to
12 put the scores of these students on the same
13 scale and you can say, Okay, well, this
14 student is at a stage where they are moving
15 into the -- to the point where they can take
16 the regular ELA assessment and it has some
17 meaning.

18 The other option that I suggested
19 is using the ELP assessment, the reading and
20 writing assessment as a proxy and simply
21 saying that for students who are at very early
22 stages of learning English language
23 proficiency, this is sufficient, and we know

1 enough about how, you know, they are
2 progressing in some way. It would be nice if
3 that could be scaled to the ELA assessment,
4 but I'm not sure that that's possible, or, you
5 know, how it could be done exactly.

6 But to consider what -- you know,
7 we need you to think about how those students
8 are progressing, we have to think of English
9 language proficiency. It's a continuum. The
10 student, you know, is at -- begins at early
11 stages. We all -- if we're going to learn any
12 language, we start with learning words and
13 doing -- perhaps putting sentences together,
14 and that's what's happening with these
15 students, and so eventually they get to the
16 point where they can handle big chunks of
17 language.

18 But that doesn't mean that we stop
19 teaching them. We need to keep the content
20 going because they still have the capacity and
21 ability to really learn mathematics, to learn
22 other subject matter, and we have to do that
23 in meaningful ways as well. But I just think

1 extending the continuum would be one way to
2 approach this problem that we've got.

3 MS. WEISS: Thanks. I'm going to
4 move on to Jamal and remind us to keep an eye
5 on the timer as we're going. Thanks.

6 MR. ABEDI: Good morning. First, I
7 wanted to thank the Department for a really
8 great job of getting feedback from the --
9 everyone. This is great. Assessment needs
10 attention, especially assessment for English
11 Language Learners. So that's first.

12 Second thing, I wanted to thank the
13 Department to making assessment for English
14 Language Learners and the students with
15 disabilities separately, in two different
16 locations in the nation because often English
17 Language Learners, in research on policy, and
18 students with disabilities are often mentioned
19 together. They are a completely different
20 thing, as Charlene mentioned. Bilingualism is
21 not a disability, it's a plus, is a big plus.

22 And if you are instructed and assessed --

23 (General applause.)

1 MR. ABEDI: -- if you are
2 instructed and --

3 MS. WEISS: He just took care of a
4 couple of the questions that we got from the
5 audience already.

6 (General laughter.)

7 MR. ABEDI: If they are instructed
8 and assessed in proper ways, they would be
9 really among the most successful students in
10 this country. So that's the second thing I
11 wanted to say.

12 Then -- how do I -- okay. So
13 that's my presentation. Okay. So --

14 (General laughter.)

15 MR. ABEDI: -- assessment results
16 have major impact on ELL students, much more
17 so than other students. Why I am saying this,
18 because assessment is used for classification.

19 For non-ELL there is no classification
20 issues. Assessment is used prior to
21 instruction for English Language Learners in
22 order to establish, in order to plan for
23 instruction. Assessments for English Language

1 Learners are used for double accountability
2 system in Title I and Title III. In fact, ELL
3 students are the only subgroup that go through
4 the accountability twice, one for English
5 language proficiency and one for subject
6 matters, and also for promotion
7 reclassification assessment results are
8 important.

9 So these are major issues. So
10 again I want to say how important is
11 assessment, and how grateful I am as former or
12 even current ELL to see this level of
13 attention to ELLs.

14 Okay. So, now, the -- again, as I
15 mentioned, assessment -- ELL assessment -- ELL
16 students go through assessment on
17 accountability requirements and challenges
18 twice, one Title III assessment for AMA01 and
19 AMA02, and also on Title I assessment. And
20 therefore, they are faced with challenges in
21 both assessment issues, if there are issues in
22 any of those assessments, ELL are faced with
23 those challenges.

1 Okay. Now, focus of my
2 presentation is -- I'm going to talk about
3 general assessment issues that were discussed
4 in prior meetings for Race to the Top. I
5 wanted to talk about the assessments that
6 specific to ELL students, and then I wanted to
7 answer questions, direct answer to the
8 questions that the Department are actually
9 raising about these issues. So there
10 are three components to my presentation.

11 Now, regarding the part of
12 presentation with the general assessment
13 issues, in the prior meetings there has been
14 attention to several different areas of at
15 least non-issues. Theory of action for
16 students is extremely important. We have to
17 lay down our theory of action, what do we need
18 to do, what needs to be done in order to make
19 assessment more accessible for English
20 Language Learners.

21 Link between assessment and
22 instruction is extremely important, and I'm
23 going to talk about not all of these issues

1 that I mention here, listing here, only select
2 some of them that are more related to English
3 Language Learners. Using multiple measures,
4 interim and formative assessments for English
5 Language Learners, preparation of RFP, use of
6 technology, common content assessment, growth
7 measure over time, and providing teacher
8 professional development, and so forth.

9 Let's talk about link between
10 assessment and instruction. As Darling-
11 Hammond mentioned, high-achieving nations use
12 open-ended performance tasks and school-based
13 curriculum-embedded assessments to give the
14 students opportunities to develop and
15 demonstrate higher-order thinking. The
16 instruction should inform the development of
17 assessment and assessment should inform
18 instruction. So it's a two-way street. We
19 really cannot design an assessment without
20 paying assessment -- attention to instruction.

21 If ELL students are not instructed, if they
22 have difficulty in instruction or
23 understanding the instruction, they may not be

1 assessed.

2 It is therefore essential to
3 involve state assessment folks and teachers in
4 the process of test item writing and test item
5 development. Teachers should be trained and
6 be involved in all different phases of test
7 development process and use for ELL students
8 including item writing, scoring, and
9 interpretation. And also the assessment
10 process should help teachers in preparing
11 students for college and career readiness.

12 Using multiple measures. Once a
13 year assessments in Title I or Title III
14 assessment is not enough with all the
15 limitations and problems with the assessment.

16 I just wanted to bring -- show you one case
17 on just the reliability of assessments. There
18 has been a lot of analysis on many different
19 state assessments. Some of these assessments
20 have reliability. I just wanted to focus on
21 one aspect, the reliability of .50, meaning
22 that there is a lot of measurement error.

23 Having a measurement of reliability

1 of .50, meaning that decision is made like
2 flipping a coin, heads, a student is
3 proficient; tails, a student is not
4 proficient. I'm not saying all assessments
5 are like this, but there are some assessments
6 with that level of problem issues with
7 psychometric and content characteristics. So
8 there is a need to multiple measures and
9 multiple assessment for English Language
10 Learners. A series of measures from different
11 test with different formats, different tasks,
12 given at different times would be needed to
13 make fair judgment about assessment, and
14 instruction, and decisions regarding these
15 students.

16 Use of the interim and formative
17 assessments. It is extremely important --
18 again, summative assessment is too little too
19 late and may not help for creating -- helping
20 with the instruction and creating good
21 assessment for English Language Learners. A
22 summative assessment, even though I am not
23 saying that these are -- should not be given,

1 it's they are so important for accountability
2 purposes, but in addition to summative
3 assessments, formative assessments should also
4 be given to these students.

5 Interim and formative assessments
6 provide teachers with information needed to
7 help ELL students. Outcomes -- sorry, let's
8 go back -- okay. Outcomes of formative
9 assessments may also help parents of ELL
10 students to identify areas that their children
11 need.

12 Use of technology. As Charlene
13 mentioned, technology can help a great deal in
14 the assessment of English Language Learners.
15 I wanted to use a computer assessment as an
16 example of the use of technology in
17 assessment. Computer assessment system has
18 the flexibility and capability of
19 incorporating many accessibility features for
20 students of ELL assessment. Many of the
21 accommodations that Charlene mentioned could
22 be implemented through computer assessments.

23 Examples of English -- of

1 accommodations that could be incorporated into
2 computer assessment could be bilingual
3 glossary, read aloud of content assessment,
4 providing English dictionary, and so forth and
5 so on. Also, assigning test items with
6 different levels of linguistic complexities to
7 a student at different level of English
8 language proficiency could be accomplished by
9 computer assessment, and also providing
10 opportunities for students to be tested in a
11 language that produces the most valid
12 outcomes.

13 Now I wanted to talk about the
14 growth measure over time. These are issues
15 that were discussed where all students, and I
16 think this is extremely important for English
17 Language Learners, especially for areas like
18 in AMA02s and so forth. So it is important,
19 but at the same time we have to be aware of
20 some of the issues that could be associated,
21 could be with the growth model, we have to be
22 aware of the issues concerning the baseline
23 changes and the measures over time, the nature

1 of content being assessed, and establishing a
2 meaningful vertical scale assessment.

3 Now I wanted to go to the B section
4 of my presentation, and that's issues that are
5 specific to English Language Learners. One
6 thing I wanted to say is about the
7 misconception that ELL students are only
8 quantitatively different. We usually use ELL
9 students, or think of ELL students as they are
10 low-performing. So they are quantitatively
11 lower than -- but we need to be aware that
12 they are qualitatively different. There are a
13 lot of issues that are considered for ELL
14 assessments that may not be true for non-ELL
15 assessments.

16 The language issues, we don't have
17 that issue for real, cultural issues. So
18 there are qualitative issues, extra issues
19 that are important for ELL students. That's
20 something you need to consider. So issues
21 concerning ELL students in specific are
22 understanding of two different assessment
23 systems for ELLs, and I'm going to elaborate

1 on these.

2 A lack of interaction between the
3 two systems, the English language proficiency
4 and content assessment. Construct-irrelevant
5 sources of measurement for ELL students,
6 applicability of measurement theories for ELL
7 students, impact of L1 proficiency on
8 assessment and instruction of ELL students,
9 and classification, reclassification, of
10 English Language -- of ELL students.

11 So let's talk about the first --
12 and I'm going to provide my recommendations on
13 each of those sections. Meanwhile, I'm paying
14 attention to the clock, so I have only two --

15 MALE VOICE: Minutes.

16 MR. ABEDI: -- two minutes, and
17 maybe I can take -- no, no.

18 Understanding of the two different
19 assessment systems for ELL students, their
20 similarities and differences. You know,
21 again, as I said, only for ELL students there
22 are two different accountability and
23 assessment systems. One, they involve

1 different test based on different content
2 standards and different objectives. They
3 should work together.

4 You know, we have made sufficient
5 progress in the assessment of ELL -- for ELP,
6 English language proficiency, in the nation,
7 examples are access for ELLs, create
8 assessments, ELDA, LAS LINK, SELP, and so
9 forth. There are good assessments in the
10 nation, but still they need support to
11 actually make it more accessible.

12 There is a need for the students to
13 work on -- there is a lot of need for
14 improving Title I assessment, however, because
15 we have not made much good progress on Title I
16 assessment. So my recommendation here is
17 provide support for more improvement in Title
18 III assessments and support creating more
19 valid assessment system in measuring ELL
20 content assessment.

21 Lack of interaction between ELP and
22 content assessment. ELL students must be at
23 certain level of English language proficiency

1 to be able to meaningfully participate in
2 Title I assessments. Only student at
3 proficiency level 4 or above may be able to
4 participate in Title I assessments. However,
5 there is a disconnect between the student's
6 level of ELP and their participation in
7 content-based assessment.

8 Charlene mentioned about this as
9 well. We have to make sure that when we ask
10 ELL students to participate or go through the
11 content assessment, they have the level of
12 English proficiency that they could handle for
13 the assessment.

14 So my recommendation is include ELL
15 students in content assessments in English if
16 they are at the proficiency level to
17 meaningfully participate; usually we recommend
18 level 4 or above of English proficiency;
19 otherwise, provide valid alternatives such as
20 native language testing, relevant
21 accommodations, and so forth.

22 Construct-irrelevant variance.
23 Charlene mentioned about this. There are many

1 different sources of construct irrelevant
2 variance affecting ELL students assessment,
3 which is -- may not be the case for general
4 assessment for non-ELL assessment. For
5 instance, unnecessary linguistic complexity of
6 assessment as a source of construct irrelevant
7 variance adds additional factor to assessment
8 of English Language Learners. Other sources
9 of construct irrelevance, such as cultural
10 biases also add additional dimension to
11 assessment outcomes for ELL students.

12 My recommendation is provide ELL
13 professional training to test item writers and
14 include teachers and linguistic/cultural
15 experts at the item development process to
16 control for such issues.

17 I don't want to spend -- take up
18 too much time because I don't have much time
19 left, but I just wanted to say that current
20 theory of measurement really do not apply.
21 There are many, many issues for English
22 Language Learners that the current assessment
23 theories do not address or have not been

1 thinking of those assessments. If you are
2 interested, I'll be more than happy to send
3 you some research that has been done in the
4 nation about application of current theory of
5 measurement.

6 So I wanted to go fast through
7 this. Impact of L1 proficiency on assessment
8 and instruction for ELL students. A major
9 oversight in the assessment of ELL students is
10 the lack of attention to their level of native
11 language proficiency. Proficiency in L1 would
12 help in both instruction and assessment of ELL
13 students. Native language instruction and
14 assessment could be a great success if the
15 students are academically proficient. This is
16 very important. Proficiency in L1 is not
17 sufficient, they have to be proficient
18 academically in their L1, and if they are
19 proficient in L1, then L1 instruction and
20 assessment could be of great value for English
21 Language Learners.

22 So my recommendation is include
23 valid and comprehensive measuring of ELL

1 students' level of L1 academic proficiency --
2 and, again, I wanted to focus on the concept
3 of academic proficiency in L1, not any
4 proficiency in all of Aviar's sub skills,
5 reading, writing, speaking and listening, and
6 seriously consider the results in planning
7 their curriculum and assessment.

8 The next one is classification and
9 reclassification. I don't want to spend too
10 much time on this. There are major issues.
11 Sometimes I can say with a lot of confidence,
12 sometimes, we don't really know who these
13 students are because some of them are -- in
14 some of the research that has been done by us,
15 by others, some of the ELL students have
16 higher level of proficiency in English than
17 non-ELL students. If that's the case, then
18 why they are still in the ELL category.

19 Again, as Charlene mentioned, and
20 Robert elaborates, there will -- there are a
21 lot -- a huge distribution of level of English
22 language proficiency among ELL students, and
23 treating them, all of them, as ELL is not

1 really a good practice because we know ELL
2 students are different in many, many different
3 aspects, including their level of English
4 proficiency.

5 So going through this very quickly,
6 I'm going to my C section, which is the most
7 important section I wanted to say, answers to
8 the questions. Okay. One of the questions.
9 These are the questions -- I wanted to
10 elaborate on these questions. I wanted to go
11 through this quickly.

12 So, the first question. Okay.
13 First question, provide recommendations for
14 the development and administration of
15 assessments for each content areas that are
16 valid and reliable for English Language
17 Learners. I believe this question should be
18 rephrased. We have to ask this question, how
19 we can make assessments more accessible for
20 English Language Learners.

21 We never -- we don't want -- I
22 really strongly say that -- we don't want a
23 new assessment or different assessment for

1 English Language Learners. We do not expect
2 English Language Learners to do less. We do
3 not provide alternate assessments for English
4 Language Learners. We want them to take
5 exactly the same assessment as others, but we
6 do want assessment to be accessible in term of
7 linguistic/cultural issues and stuff like
8 that.

9 So providing assessments for
10 English Language Learners specific to them may
11 not be a good idea, but making assessment that
12 everyone takes and making them more accessible
13 in term of language and cultural issues is
14 extremely important. So then assessment
15 that -- so ELL students should not be treated
16 differently in the content being assessed.

17 I just wanted to mention just one
18 more thing regarding these kids. As I
19 mentioned at the beginning of my presentation,
20 if these students are provided with the proper
21 instruction on assessment, they do -- they
22 would be among the most successful students.
23 They are tested. Others are tested, ELL

1 students who exited ELL, and they have been
2 achieving at a higher level than some of the
3 average non-ELL students. But when they have
4 been in that group and they have not been
5 provided with more English assistance, they
6 started to give performance to be -- to
7 decrease.

8 So multiple measures should be
9 implemented in both Title I and Title III
10 assessments, provide accommodations that
11 reduces the effect of content irrelevant
12 assessment, language-related assessment as
13 Charlene mentioned.

14 And I don't know whether I
15 should -- okay. So how would you recommend
16 that assessment take into account the
17 variation in English language proficiency,
18 provide assessments with varying degree of
19 language complexity, provide appropriate
20 accommodations for ELL students to help them
21 with their common needs of language
22 assistance, provide native language testing
23 opportunities for students who are

1 academically proficient and are instructed in
2 their native language.

3 One more question to -- a couple of
4 more questions. How can we -- how can
5 technology be utilized to make assessment more
6 inclusive for ELL students? Provide computer
7 assessments that are capable of offering
8 effective and valid accessibility features,
9 including appropriate accommodation, provide
10 web-based tutorial for ELL students who are
11 having additional opportunity to learn,
12 provide web-based training for parents to help
13 their students, provide diagnostic information
14 to teachers, parents and the students on the
15 areas that need attention.

16 Question 2a, in the context of
17 reflecting a student's achievement, what are
18 the relative merits of developing and
19 administering content assessments in native
20 language. Again, as I said, if the students
21 are proficient academically in their native
22 language, providing native language
23 assessments is a big process, is a great idea.

1 But if they are not proficient and if they
2 are not instructed in native language, then
3 native language assessment may not help at
4 all.

5 I think I should stop at this
6 point. And we have a few minutes.

7 MS. WEISS: Thank you.

8 Questions?

9 MR. SMITH: Just something to put
10 on the table for the round table, I think.
11 You mentioned formative assessments. There's
12 diagnostic assessments as well, and we are
13 thinking about an overall system of
14 evaluation. We ought to be thinking hard
15 about that. Is there something different
16 about formative assessments for ELL kids? I
17 would guess that there would be, particularly
18 for --

19 MR. ABEDI: Absolutely.

20 MR. SMITH: -- so we ought to talk
21 about that a little bit --

22 MR. ABEDI: Absolutely.

23 MR. SMITH: -- get some sense of

1 it. And also there are these diagnostic
2 instruments that are out there that are
3 commonly used today. Are they as good as
4 you'd like, or are there different ways of
5 thinking about the diagnostic instruments --

6 MR. ABEDI: Right.

7 MR. SMITH: -- different ways of
8 thinking about tracking a student's level of
9 proficiency both in casual or oral speaking
10 language, but also in academic language?

11 MR. ABEDI: Great question.
12 Formative -- first off, I wanted to say that
13 we don't -- there is no need to create a
14 formative assessment. Existing assessments
15 could be used formatively. You could create
16 formative assessments or you could use
17 existing assessment formatively. But for ELL
18 students how that could be different.

19 If language on cultural issues, or
20 issues in assessment, we have to make sure
21 that those issues, or those problems are not
22 going to be in formative assessments because
23 if the language is an issue and we don't get a

1 really good estimate of the student's
2 knowledge, but they learn because of the
3 language restriction and language complexity
4 of assessment, then formative assessment may
5 not be helpful, just like any other
6 assessment.

7 So we have to be careful of
8 incorporating all accessibility features into
9 formative assessment, even more so than
10 summative assessment because we want to learn
11 from those assessment. So that's the
12 particular issues for English Language
13 Learners.

14 MS. WEISS: Great. Let's move on to
15 Robert.

16 MR. LINQUANTI: Okay. Thank you.
17 Thank you for having me again today, after
18 being here yesterday on the general panel, so
19 I'm assuming you haven't cut my mike, that's a
20 good sign. I also want to acknowledge to the
21 folks who were here yesterday that there will
22 be a fair amount of repeat in some of the
23 slides, but then we're also going to just be

1 working through the rest of Jamal's
2 presentation here, but there will also be some
3 new material. So I hope you reset my clock
4 while I get this.

5 so, again, the way I'm going to --
6 I'm going to inflect this a little
7 differently. The good news about following
8 Charlene and Jamal is that they've done all
9 the heavy lifting basically. And so I can
10 just work on some the edges of some of things
11 that they've talked about. I agree virtually
12 completely with everything they've said, and I
13 think maybe I'll just bring up a couple of
14 qualifying issues.

15 And really what I have here is how
16 to strengthen the signal, meaning the
17 assessments we're our ELs, are we getting a
18 clear signal about what they're telling us,
19 and how do we use them to inform our
20 instructional practice.

21 So what I'm going to try and do --
22 and the other thing that I really appreciate
23 about what Jamal and Charlene did is, they

1 went way over their time and so that allows
2 me -- which I always do anyway, so now I'm
3 sort of part of the norm group here --

4 (General laughter.)

5 MR. LINQUANTI: -- so what I'm
6 actually going to do in this session is really
7 touch very briefly --

8 MS. WEISS: It's a good thing Gene
9 Garcia's not here.

10 (General laughter.)

11 MR. LINQUANTI: Yes. Right. We
12 will fill the vacuum very quickly.

13 MS. WEISS: Yes.

14 MR. LINQUANTI: -- touch on very
15 few key aspects of the English learner status
16 relevant to the topic. And, again, I'll
17 probably be just re-emphasizing or stating
18 differently the issues that Jamal and Charlene
19 raised.

20 Then I'm going to examine some
21 approaches for this program, this assessment
22 program, that could improve assessment and
23 instruction for Els. I think, as both these

1 folks have said, we really have to not
2 separate these two, we have see them as part
3 of an integrated process. So there's going to
4 be learning progressions, very clear
5 standards, formative and summative
6 assessments, interim assessments, and they all
7 have to inform instruction. If we don't help
8 teachers improve what they do in classrooms
9 with kids, then this is really not worth the
10 effort or the resources. So we need to be
11 holding ourselves to that standards.

12 And then I'm going to reflect a
13 little bit on the role and feasibility of
14 primary language assessments, and, oh, by the
15 way, of course, looking at approaches to the
16 assessment program to improve assessment
17 instruction for ELs at different ELP levels.
18 That was called out in the questions and I
19 think it's crucial. And, again, both my
20 colleagues have said this. I think we talk so
21 much that we're kind of having a group think
22 at some point, so we'll have to be careful
23 here. You'll call us on it, I'm sure.

1 So let's just be clear which ELs
2 we're talking about. As we've heard already,
3 ELs are not a monolithic group. There is
4 clearly more variation, there's more
5 heterogeneity within the EL group than
6 compared to the non-ELs, and then we have kids
7 are US-born versus recent immigrants, how long
8 they're in US schools varies quite a bit,
9 whether they come with L1 literacy or not and
10 prior formal schooling from the home country,
11 what their attendance patterns are like, do we
12 have kids that are there four months and then
13 leave for four months versus consistent
14 attenders.

15 And then of course this monolithic
16 label really breaks down when we're talking
17 about kids' levels of English language
18 proficiency. Not only do we have the broad
19 categories of beginning, intermediate and
20 high, but we have to remember that these are
21 composite results. When we talk about an
22 intermediate EL, they may doing early advanced
23 or advanced level performance in listening and

1 speaking, but be very low in reading and
2 writing. So we really need to be very clear
3 on what the strengths and weaknesses are the
4 kids bring linguistically.

5 And then also it of course bears
6 emphasis that we should never see English
7 learners -- in fact, there's discussion about
8 changing the term entirely to just to second
9 language learners. Kids come with primary
10 language ability and that is an asset that
11 should and needs to be built on. We cannot
12 see that as a deficit that needs to be
13 remediated. It's just absurd. There's plenty
14 of cognitive research that supports the
15 cognitive benefits of bilingualism.

16 Finally, social, cultural and
17 dialectical differences. When we talk about
18 Spanish speakers, we have a broad variety of
19 what kind of Spanish language is spoken in
20 Ecuador versus Mexico and that has
21 implications for our primary language
22 assessments.

23 So that's something we're going to

1 need to think about as we go through this.
2 Also, just a notion, again, building on what
3 Charlene had said earlier, on this notion of a
4 cohort, we tend to -- we forget, or many folks
5 that are not in this field all the time forget
6 that the highest performing ELs typically exit
7 the EL cohort. And the lower performing kids,
8 the kids who have not met the criteria that
9 states and locality specify for exit are still
10 in the category, as well as newly arrived
11 kids.

12 So we have this phenomenon of folks
13 saying, Look, this EL category, these EL kids
14 just don't do well. But these reclassified
15 kids do extraordinarily well. What we need to
16 do is just reclassify more of these kids, and
17 forgetting that part of what gets them
18 reclassified are these specific criteria.

19 And so we really need to look at,
20 for those remaining and not meeting the
21 criteria for exit, which criteria are they.
22 Are they linguistic, are they academic, are
23 they non-cognitive. Do we have kids staying

1 EL because of lack of homework handed in and
2 attendance that's related to grades which are
3 sometimes used.

4 Although better performing by the
5 definition, and I think Jamal really hit on
6 this well, are exited ELs that still have
7 linguistic -- may still have linguistic and
8 academic needs. And so we really do need, as
9 Charlene mentioned, to look at this as a
10 continuum, that kids are on a continuum of
11 progress, and they'll continue to have needs.

12 Reclassification is not the whole
13 story, nor is it the end of the story. It's a
14 marker, it's a milestone. But because we have
15 sort of this binary category of EL/not EL and
16 the funding stream attaches that way, we tend
17 to think of them as separate groups. They're
18 not. They're a single cohort. Over time we
19 need to look at the patterns of performance,
20 and I'll get to that in terms of reporting and
21 data analysis in a little bit.

22 The next thing I want to emphasize,
23 which -- to bring -- to call out explicitly,

1 since it has been really sort of circling
2 around the room implicitly, is the notion of
3 academic language proficiency. We tend to
4 think of ESL or ELD as carrying the load for
5 developing kids' language proficiency. And
6 then we'll give them access to grade level
7 content when they have sufficient English.

8 First of all, it's a flawed notion.

9 We need not to think of this as sequential,
10 but actual simultaneous. We need to ensure
11 the kids are getting meaningful access to
12 grade level content via appropriate
13 instructional means all throughout -- at the
14 lowest levels of English language proficiency
15 and all the way through past reclassification.

16 But, again, we need to reflect then
17 that if that is the case, then ESL or ELD is
18 necessary, but it's definitely not going to be
19 sufficient for kids to be academically
20 successful, these kids. Why is that? Because
21 so many of the academic tests that we have,
22 and particularly the kinds of more complex
23 cognitively challenging tasks that we want our

1 kids to engage in, not just in assessment, but
2 in instruction, are mediated by language. So
3 the necessary academic language skills are
4 central to performing sophisticated content
5 area tasks.

6 And we need to remember that, that
7 academic language absolutely needs to be
8 developed across the curriculum, and that has
9 a very large implication for both professional
10 development and instruction, and that is that
11 every teacher must model and teach using the
12 language of their discipline in a very
13 explicit way and make sure the kids have
14 opportunities to use language in extended
15 instances for the completion of grade level --
16 complex grade level tasks.

17 We have a real absence there, and
18 that is really a very strong issue and it
19 leads to the next slide, which is if an
20 English learner is performing poorly on
21 academic content assessments, is it due to
22 insufficient academic language proficiency to
23 demonstrate content knowledge, is it because

1 they simply lack the content knowledge, and we
2 know that many of our ELs are also identified
3 as low socio-economic status and are also
4 concentrated in schools therefore with much
5 fewer instructional and curricular resources.

6 So is this an opportunity to learn issue. We
7 really don't know, although we have plenty of
8 evidence that it contributes to this issue.

9 Certainly construct irrelevant
10 interference, that Jamal and Charlene have
11 talked about, unnecessarily complex language,
12 and other sources of bias or error, whether
13 it's cultural distance, dialectical variation,
14 even rater misinterpretation, and that's a key
15 when we think about assessments that are going
16 to be open-ended and more complex performance
17 tasks. Who's doing the rating of these kids,
18 and is their lack of knowledge of second
19 language acquisition issues and first language
20 interference issues affecting or biasing their
21 understanding and rating of what the student
22 actually knows in terms of their academic
23 content knowledge. So we're going to need to

1 be careful about that.

2 So, again, we do have challenges in
3 assessing ELs' academic content knowledge and
4 skills, but that does not mean that they
5 cannot learn that content. Let me repeat.
6 Even though English learners may have low
7 levels of English language proficiency, it
8 doesn't mean -- and we have problems assessing
9 them because of that, it does not mean that
10 they can't learn that content. It also
11 doesn't mean that we don't teach them grade
12 level content. And finally it doesn't mean
13 that until they have sufficient English it's
14 all noise.

15 So when we move forward with this
16 whole RFP and the whole effort in terms of
17 renovating or developing new assessments and
18 standards, we really need to ensure that we're
19 overcoming these myths and these
20 conceptions -- misconceptions.

21 So what are the implications of
22 these things for the assessment program. And
23 so I see a number of opportunities, which I'm

1 going to elaborate on. First, revisiting the
2 content standards with ELs in mind. Secondly,
3 re-envisioning a whole range of content
4 assessments that could support teacher
5 practices and strengthen learning,
6 particularly for ELs, that would require
7 students and teachers to engage and reflect,
8 and especially using more sophisticated
9 language, that is using language to accomplish
10 grade level tasks at higher and higher levels
11 of sophistication. But that won't happen
12 unless it's structured to happen, and it's
13 taught explicitly.

14 And then, of course, providing
15 richer and clearer signals on what ELs know,
16 and I also see it as an opportunity to advance
17 new understandings of validity and utility in
18 terms of our assessments and our instructional
19 practices, and our curricular objectives.

20 So let me start first, whether
21 you're thinking of the common core or your
22 consortium content standards, clearly, I
23 think, we're going to need a more explicit

1 delineation of academic language forms,
2 functions and communicative competence
3 features. What do I mean by that? If you
4 look at a lot of the content standards
5 currently, even in English language arts, but
6 also in other areas and I'm speaking about all
7 the areas right now, there is a real dearth of
8 operationalizing how these things would look,
9 particularly using language in more formative
10 tasks or more demonstrative performance level
11 tasks.

12 So we need to ensure that our
13 standards are building in notions of
14 hypothesizing, defining, persuading,
15 comparing, explicitly laying those out so that
16 we have something to build assessments off of
17 and test specifications off of. We need --
18 and let alone the curricular frameworks and
19 curricular progressions.

20 So we also need to attend to the
21 lexical, grammatical/syntactic, pragmatic,
22 discourse types of strategic competencies.
23 This is not just about academic language, per

1 se, within each discipline that's critical.
2 General academic for sure, but also just the
3 kinds of performances and the kinds of
4 knowledge about registering context and how
5 you repair misunderstandings that are
6 important for anyone learning a second
7 language. All of these aspects need to be
8 more integrated into the content standards
9 that we have. That's what I would argue.

10 Now where they sit -- whether they
11 are emphasized more in ELP or more in English
12 language arts, and how they're drawn out, that
13 needs to be discussed and laid out. There's a
14 very kind of messy area between English
15 language arts and English language proficiency
16 standards that we need to really work on.

17 But, clearly, the other thing that
18 I've seen in drafts of the core content
19 standards are more explicit descriptions of
20 performance expectations in listening and
21 speaking, which is good because a lot of times
22 we don't really see how to operationalize
23 those. We have lots on reading and writing

1 perhaps, but as far as how you demonstrate
2 knowledge and how you reflect that in terms of
3 your listening and speaking, I think is also
4 important.

5 The standards are also going to
6 require -- the implications of this, of
7 course, is that we're going to need to revisit
8 our English language proficiency standards and
9 assessments. We have some key people in the
10 room, colleagues like Edynn Sato and Gary Cook
11 who work a lot on increasing and strengthening
12 the alignment between ELP and ELA standards
13 and other content standards.

14 And I think this is critical
15 because if those standards are going to play a
16 role in terms of how we instruct and assess
17 our students, we better make sure that they
18 are building towards something that's relating
19 to their academic content achievement. And
20 this is one way, one key piece that we need to
21 attend to. So clearly there's also going to
22 be a stronger linkage to the content
23 assessments and -- between the content

1 assessments and ELP assessments.

2 So let's talk for a minute more in
3 depth now about the kinds of things that
4 Charlene was rightly getting to, and Jamal as
5 well. Let's take on the difficult one first
6 because I think we're going to have to have
7 some extended conversation about this. The
8 ELA content standards -- content assessments
9 and ELP level, I agree with Charlene, in fact,
10 these are -- I think it's part of the
11 Zeitgeist. This is something that is really
12 just being spoken about in a number of
13 different contexts.

14 It's just coming up very clearly
15 and it's in reauthorization discussions, but I
16 think it really bears bringing out here as
17 well, is that for those students who are at
18 the lowest levels of English language
19 proficiency where, as Jamal said, the level of
20 reliability and meaning and validity is going
21 to be so weak, I think we do need to think
22 about it. Assuming that we have that strong
23 linkage and strong alignment between the ELP

1 and ELA standards, we do need to think about
2 progress on the ELP assessment as providing
3 some predictive validity for how students will
4 do on the ELA content assessments. We cannot
5 afford to ignore that.

6 That's important information, both
7 instructionally and certainly it has
8 implications for accountability. And this is
9 where things get a little scary. Right. A
10 little difficult. Because once you bring that
11 into accountability, then the question
12 becomes, well, until what level of ELP? And
13 are we talking about an overall score, or do
14 we talk about reading and writing as Charlene
15 sort of also suggested and its link to English
16 language arts. So we're going to need to
17 tickle this apart. What are the things that
18 might be helpful instructionally, for
19 instructional decision making, and then how do
20 we reconcile that with what needs to be in
21 place for accountability so that we're not
22 unintentionally pushing these kids off into
23 the shadows again. I mean we cannot afford to

1 do that.

2 So it'll be a question in part of,
3 until what level of English language
4 proficiency and also for how long. Because
5 there's another piece here. If we tie our
6 accommodations and our judgments about kids'
7 content learning strictly with their ELP level
8 and say, Well, you know, kids below a certain
9 level of English language proficiency, we
10 shouldn't expect that they will be able to
11 engage with this content.

12 It's a very slippery slope for two
13 reasons. One, there's probably more knowledge
14 there than our assessments are picking up, and
15 secondly, because, you know, classroom
16 teachers through formative assessments may be
17 seeing a lot more knowledge when students have
18 the ability to interact and ask questions and
19 so on, which is different from how our
20 assessments are usually set up, which is also
21 part of the problem with the assessments.

22 The second piece though is that it
23 could set up a scenario where folks say, Well,

1 you know, kids below intermediate level of
2 language proficiency, we're just not going to
3 expect that they can do as well. And then
4 that undermines the expectations for what
5 needs to take place instructionally to move
6 them forward. So we really need to be careful
7 about this.

8 That said, I think this is an
9 important strategy to take advantage of. The
10 second thing, which others have said, and, in
11 fact, was talked about extensively yesterday
12 by Gary Phillips and Ed Haertel and others on
13 the panel we sat on, is that computer-adaptive
14 testing may also more reliably estimate
15 content knowledge. Now this is a notion where
16 we can actually, within the same levels of
17 cognitive difficulty but across the range,
18 actually target and get with more reliability
19 what kids' academic content knowledge is, even
20 at lower proficiency levels. It's a strategy
21 we need to take care of.

22 Again, it raises issues about what
23 does it mean for accountability, but our Ed

1 sponsors here wisely said, Don't go near
2 accountability so much today because we don't
3 want to get bogged down in it. But we have to
4 acknowledge it's there and we'll have to deal
5 with it.

6 Now, other promising possibilities
7 for assessing math and science for lower level
8 EL kids, because I think that's where some of
9 the biggest issues occur, when you have kids
10 at lower levels of language proficiency,
11 that's where the risk is, that we'll ignore
12 their needs academically because we assume
13 that language must be developed first.

14 So I think there are emerging
15 technologies that can assess content knowledge
16 of ELs at lower ELP levels, and I'll just
17 mention one because this happens to be the one
18 that I know something about, which is on PAR.

19 And what they're doing -- and this is at
20 Wisconsin-Madison, the folks there are working
21 computer-based dynamic items types and they're
22 actually representing through graphic and
23 representational models the kinds of stimuli

1 to get at what kids know, even at the lowest
2 levels of language proficiency.

3 And Jim Pellegrino actually put a
4 couple of images up, or at least one
5 yesterday, to show that stimulation of context
6 and target stimuli is really like a parallel
7 form. It's expensive, but it actually can get
8 at kids' math and science knowledge, even at
9 low levels of language proficiency because
10 it's really trying to allow other symbiotic
11 approaches to tapping that knowledge.

12 I think these are important
13 technologies, I think we need to take care to
14 build on them and learn from them and scale
15 them up. Why? Because it's crucial that
16 educators continue to have good solid
17 information on kids' academic content learning
18 regardless of where they are in their language
19 proficiency development.

20 So as far as accommodations, I mean
21 I'm sitting here with the two best people in
22 the country on accommodations, so I'm just
23 going to perhaps acknowledge something that

1 I've seen, which is a certain level of
2 contradiction -- contradictory messages in the
3 research literature on accommodations, and I
4 think I have a hypothesis of what's going on,
5 because I get kind of dissidence sometimes
6 when I hear, you know, folks saying that
7 accommodations don't really work that well
8 with ELs, and yet we're also saying, you know,
9 we do see that they work. So I think that the
10 research findings have been mixed.

11 Kiefer and Lusseau and David
12 Francis's more recent synthesis, you know, a
13 synthesis of the literature using meta-
14 analytic techniques show that there is a gap
15 reduction for the use of English language
16 dictionaries and glossaries. Of course, Jamal
17 has had a whole program of research; we're
18 basically reading all of his literature.
19 Plain language approaches may vary -- have
20 varying impact. And so it's kind of hard to
21 disentangle why -- what is it that we're
22 seeing in the literature where it says that
23 accommodations have limited impact or that

1 they have, you know, not as a strong an impact
2 as we want.

3 And it think part of it may be
4 we're moving irrelevant -- construct
5 irrelevant language, which is really critical,
6 and Maria Martiniello has shown some very good
7 work on how if you really adjust and attend to
8 some of those languages which has cultural
9 bias or cultural implications as well as
10 linguistic, you can actually tap at kids'
11 greater knowledge of mathematics for example.

12 But I think what we're seeing is
13 that there's a limit to the strategy and that
14 there is necessary academic language
15 complexity in some of these learning strands.

16 I mean statistics and probability, for
17 example, you look at the types of language
18 used in the curricular frameworks and in the
19 items, and it just requires more complex use
20 of language, and I think that is part of what
21 we need to get at here. This academic
22 language construct is haunting this whole
23 discussion, and I think we need to bring it

1 out and really understand where it intersects
2 with content learning and what are the
3 implications instructionally.

4 The second thing, of course, and I
5 think Rebecca Kopriva's work has really
6 highlighted this, is that we look a lot of
7 times at the accommodations literature
8 findings, and they're aggregated to this
9 monolithic EL group, and so that, I think,
10 masks which accommodations may be working for
11 which ELs.

12 If we were able to disentangle or
13 disaggregate the EL population more carefully,
14 which is why Charlene is saying we need really
15 to have data on which kids, what their profile
16 is, L1 proficiency, English language
17 proficiency, reading levels, prior schooling,
18 and then look at the accommodation's effects.

19 We may see very different effects of certain
20 accommodations for certain types of ELs, and
21 that is important to know. We need to get
22 more refined in our strategies for applying
23 accommodations.

1 So the more promising thing that
2 I've seen -- the most promising thing that
3 I've seen is a method that uses student
4 profiles to assign configurations of
5 accommodations that are tailored to the
6 specific kids' needs. And there is emerging
7 evidence that this actually has increase
8 effectiveness. So when you see the
9 contradictions in the accommodations
10 literature, realize that I think these issues
11 are what's going on here, and we shouldn't say
12 it's the panacea, as you folks have warned
13 against, nor should we say, Ah, it's all
14 noise, you know, we can't figure it out, it's
15 just the researchers, you know, arguing among
16 themselves. I think there's more that we can
17 squeeze out of this and more that we need to
18 squeeze out of it.

19 Let's talk now about the potential
20 roles of primary language in content
21 assessments. Now it's important -- the first
22 thing I want to mention about this is here for
23 now I'm not talking about L1 language

1 proficiency -- L1 is primary language for
2 those in the -- not in the lingo -- but for --
3 I'm not talking here about L1 language
4 proficiency assessments, which are important
5 and have a place, particularly for more recent
6 arrivals as Jamal pointed out, where you want
7 to get a sense of what their language
8 proficiency is, what their literacy levels
9 are, or for kids coming from homes where they
10 may be Spanish dominant, as an example, to get
11 a sense of that, why that's instructionally
12 important to know what resources and assets
13 teachers can build on. It also has
14 implications for instructional program
15 planning.

16 So, but that said, when we come
17 back to L1 and content assessments we have to
18 remember that ELs vary greatly in their L1
19 proficiency for academic uses, and that not
20 all ELs can better demonstrate knowledge on L1
21 content assessments. Kids may be -- have
22 learned -- they be learning -- even kids in
23 bilingual situations may be learning certain

1 content and storing it in different languages.

2 So the bilingual brain doesn't exactly fit
3 very neatly with all of our assessment
4 policies. Right. So we need to recognize
5 that level of complexity.

6 So I think what we need is really
7 info on schooling background -- information on
8 schooling background, exposure to L1 academic
9 language, and that this will help us know
10 whether the L1 content assessments are really
11 going to be meaningful looking at those
12 results.

13 The second thing is this issue
14 about testing in the language of instruction.

15 You know, there's some debate about this, but
16 I think it's pretty clear, if you have a
17 program where kids are being instructed in
18 content, we need to look at what the program
19 goals are in that. So does the program -- is
20 the point of the instructional program aiming
21 for bilingualism and biliteracy, is it aiming
22 for academic core content achievement in two
23 languages.

1 If it is, then it makes real sense
2 to be assessing those students in that
3 content, in that language, because that's part
4 of the instructional goals, the educational
5 goals for them. And we need to keep that in
6 mind. I mean there are native English
7 speakers in dual emerging programs who are
8 second language learners, they're Spanish
9 language learners. Right. Should those kids
10 be taking academic content assessments in L1?

11 If the goal of the program is that they will
12 be academically proficient in two languages, I
13 would say yes. But it raises complex issues
14 in terms of test development so we'll need to
15 think about that. Clearly it can also help us
16 with content knowledge of more recent
17 immigrants.

18 So, but the final thing is, if
19 there are bilingual programs that are
20 transitioning to all English instruction, we
21 need to think about what the utility and
22 meaning will be of L1 content assessments. Is
23 the goal of the program really focusing on

1 bilingualism and biliteracy, and if it's not,
2 then when will that assessment be of
3 questionable reliability. So I think these
4 are issue that we need to take up and think
5 more about.

6 But clearly it is absurd and there
7 are states doing this right now, they are
8 using content assessments in New York is the
9 first one that comes to mind, that are giving
10 regents exams in Haitian, Korean, Spanish, and
11 so they must have some very interesting data
12 and research to build on.

13 MS. WEISS: I just want to make
14 sure, you know, this is into the 10 minutes.

15 MR. LINGUANTI: Okay. All right.
16 I'm sticking -- yes. All right. So I'll end
17 on this point then, I think. The roles for
18 primary language, the technical requirements,
19 I think, and Willie Solano-Flores has done
20 very important work on this, as well as
21 Charlene's husband actually, that simultaneous
22 test development is going to be absolutely
23 important. We cannot have second language

1 content test developed as an afterthought
2 translating English language tests. That
3 creates a number of construct validity threats
4 in terms of word choice. I mean these items
5 don't function the same way. There's very
6 different context. Obviously English to
7 Spanish, Spanish content assessments are the
8 most feasible because 80 percent of our ELs
9 are Spanish speakers.

10 So to finish up in my remaining 39
11 seconds, there's clearly huge professional
12 development implications here -- and all of
13 this will be on the website, these
14 PowerPoints -- we're going to need to think
15 about teachers need, what school
16 administrators need, what LEA folks need
17 because they're going to have to be involved
18 in this process.

19 Clearly we need to integrate
20 expertise up front, we're going to need to
21 have EL assessment and instructional experts,
22 educational linguists involved at every phase
23 of every part of this, content standards

1 development, curricular framework and
2 materials development, assessment development,
3 professional development. It will be much
4 less effective if we keep thinking of those
5 folks and trying to include them at the back
6 end or at later stages. Big mistake.

7 Careful analysis in reporting,
8 which we'll get to probably in discussion, and
9 the bottom line is let's adopt a probabilistic
10 rather than a deterministic view of assessing
11 ELs, and navigate this boat forward. It's
12 going to be complex, but I think we've made a
13 lot of gains in the last several years, and I
14 think we can keep doing that if we move
15 forward. Thank you.

16 MS. WEISS: Thanks. Terrific.

17 (General applause.)

18 MS. WEISS: So we are going to take
19 a really fast five minute stretch, rush-to-
20 the-restroom break and be back here to start
21 our round table discussion. Thank you.

22 (Whereupon, a short recess was
23 taken.)

1 MS. WEISS: Great. Thanks.

2 So let's start the questions by
3 taking a question that we got from -- a great
4 question we got from the great state of Iowa
5 that seems like a good way to sort of begin
6 what I perceived in everybody's discussions to
7 be one of the key issues that we have to
8 wrestle with.

9 So we got the question, Will there
10 still be a need for separate ELP assessments
11 if new common standards actually do a good job
12 of assessing speaking, listening, reading, and
13 writing skills individually, or can this whole
14 problem of how we are linking the two skills
15 and the two sets of assessments to one another
16 go away by putting everything -- all the
17 burden for all of this onto the ELA
18 assessment.

19 Go for it.

20 MR. LINQUANTI: I'm happy to
21 have -- oh.

22 MS. WEISS: I'm sorry. Are we all
23 turned on? Oh, now we are.

1 MR. LINQUANTI: I'm happy to have
2 Charlene answer that question first. No.

3 (General laughter.)

4 MR. LINQUANTI: No, it's a good
5 question, it's a difficult question --

6 MR. ABEDI: Yes.

7 MR. LINQUANTI: -- I think,
8 because -- and what I see occurring, I'll be
9 real interested to hear what my colleagues
10 here think. I may have overstated the case
11 actually by saying we need to incorporate more
12 of these academic language functions into our
13 content standards. I still think, and there
14 is disagreement about this, but I still think
15 that there is value to having English language
16 proficiency standards for ELs.

17 And the reason why is there are
18 unique issues with respect to second language
19 learners acquiring the language. I think we
20 can do better with ELP standards that we have.

21 As Jamal said, you know, we've come a long
22 way and we still have ways to go. So if there
23 comes a point where ELP standards are no

1 longer needed, that is a developmental phase
2 much farther down the horizon than I can
3 foresee.

4 But I do think we need to make sure
5 that there is good alignment between the ELP
6 standards that we have and all the content
7 area standards, and that is tricky business
8 because you don't want to lean over into
9 academic content, per se, but really look at
10 the language demands that are specified in
11 that content.

12 And I think that we're going to
13 need to make sure that this concept, which is
14 in development, of academic language permeates
15 through the content areas. This is a
16 sensitive issue because a lot of content area
17 teachers feel, you know, that's the purview of
18 ESL teachers or that's the purview of reading
19 language arts teachers; I don't teach
20 language, I teach biology, I teach calculus,
21 you know, I teach social studies.

22 And what I think we need to
23 emphasize and build into our teacher

1 professional development programs across the
2 board and in our curricular frameworks is
3 that, if you love your discipline, you need to
4 teach the language of your discipline as well,
5 you need to get kids engaged linguistically in
6 hypothesizing, arguing, persuading, comparing
7 like historians do, like scientist do, like
8 mathematicians do. And many times our
9 teachers don't have an explicit awareness of
10 what the language demands are of the content
11 that they're conveying.

12 So I think ELP standards are not
13 going to go away any time soon. I don't
14 foresee that, I don't think they need to. I
15 think we'll still need to have ELP
16 assessments. But I do think that we need to
17 think much more carefully about instruction
18 and assessment with respect to this aspect.

19 MS. WEISS: To the others, do you
20 agree with that?

21 MS. RIVERA: I would agree. I
22 think that ELP is, in a sense, its own
23 content, its own discipline, and acquiring a

1 second language is something -- the teaching
2 of a second language is something separate
3 from English language arts. And so it should
4 be viewed from that perspective.

5 What is important though is that
6 there be some kind of bridge built, and that
7 it not happen as it has had happened currently
8 that there's such a -- you know, there's
9 either all emphasis on ELP versus no emphasis
10 on content assessments for English Language
11 Learners. I think there has to be -- you
12 know, the focus -- really our challenge is
13 really to bring English Language Learners into
14 the content assessment piece and to make sure
15 we're addressing it because that's what's
16 driving instruction, that's what's going to
17 drive -- make the system better, and make --
18 and help the kids to move forward and to
19 achieve.

20 MS. WEISS: So if you take away the
21 easy answer, then I guess we have to go to the
22 hard question, which is, so then, you know,
23 Jamal had a recommendation that it was at

1 level 4 proficiency that kids are put into the
2 main -- what recommendations do you have -- do
3 you have thoughts on how we integrate those
4 two?

5 MR. ABEDI: Yes, I just wanted to,
6 first of all, to say that absolutely I agree
7 with, too, my colleagues Charlene and Robert
8 that the ELP assessment is very important,
9 particularly with the fact that we have come
10 such a long way as a result of No Child Left
11 Behind, and the consortia has done such a
12 great job. You know, prior to --

13 MS. WEISS: The WIDA consortium
14 you're talking about?

15 MR. ABEDI: The consortia, WIDA --

16 MR. LINQUANTI: The others, ELDA as
17 well --

18 MR. ABEDI: ELDA as well.

19 MS. WEISS: ELDA as well. Okay.

20 MR. ABEDI: But they have done such
21 a great job. Prior to No Child Left Behind
22 the issue, or assessment of ELP was all over.
23 I mean there were 65, at least 65 measures or

1 tests for English language proficiency and I
2 can say they were testing very, very different
3 content, different areas. Some of them did
4 not even have a comprehensive measure of all
5 these four modalities. The concept of English
6 language, academic English was introduced in
7 this.

8 So we have come such a long way and
9 we have such a good measure. And beside that,
10 as both Charlene and Robert mentioned, the
11 content standards for ELA, English language
12 arts and with the ELP is different. We are
13 thinking about two different things. I think
14 this is very important to have, but think
15 about, very carefully, how to connect these
16 two together.

17 I mentioned that level 4 with the
18 understanding that different assessments have
19 different levels. So that's not -- basically
20 what I tried to say, at some level that we
21 have to make sure that the students have
22 enough language proficiency or facility,
23 language facility to participate. But that

1 doesn't mean that -- but those who are not
2 participating, I'm not saying that exclude
3 them from assessment, I'm saying that
4 assessment --

5 MS. WEISS: Accommodations.

6 MR. ABEDI: -- be the same but
7 think about incorporating accommodations,
8 think about assessing in their native language
9 if they are proficient in academic language
10 performance. So assess them but make sure
11 that the language is not a factor, that causes
12 low performing --

13 MS. RIVERA: I'd really add to that
14 that, you know, we need to make ELP meaningful
15 so it isn't just a score, but if -- you know,
16 so if we study and we try to make this link to
17 what -- you know, how students are doing in
18 the content assessments, that's a critical
19 area. So it shouldn't just be a score for the
20 sake of a score.

21 Obviously ELP assessments can be
22 used for identification and placement and for
23 other purposes, but if we're going to try to

1 build them into this system of new
2 assessments, or at least to consider their
3 role in this new system of assessments, it's
4 important to think about the relationship
5 between English language proficiency
6 development and content development.

7 MS. MELENDEZ: I know that --

8 MS. WEISS: Go ahead.

9 MS. MELENDEZ: I know that
10 there's -- I know that, as you've described,
11 Jamal, there's been much growth in terms of
12 ELP assessments. But where is the rigor now,
13 if we're going to link them to ELA
14 assessments, do you think the rigor is there
15 sufficiently to do that, or I think Charlene
16 is sort of alluding to we may want to revisit.

17 MR. LINQUANTI: I think the first
18 thing we need to do, which is why I led with
19 content standards, is we have to go back to
20 the standards because right now we have let's
21 say less than ideal linkages, or alignment
22 between our ELP standards and our ELA
23 standards. And also we have the issue of our

1 ELA standards not explicitly defining what
2 kinds of language functions, forms are going
3 to be needed to demonstrate the knowledge.

4 And this is important when we think
5 about the kinds of complex performance tasks
6 that we want to get to, that we want to be
7 able to use. Those require language, they're
8 mediated by language, they require, you know,
9 significant use of academic language
10 performance. And so I think we need to start,
11 sort of delineating that, whether it's in the
12 ELP or ELA, but we need to kind of get that
13 mapped out so that then we can enhance our ELP
14 assessments so that the progress that we see
15 in the ELP assessment really gives us more
16 confidence that kids are moving toward the
17 kinds of performances and knowledge in the
18 content areas, at least as far as language,
19 the academic language that will be needed.

20 There still needs to be content
21 area instruction, and that is a weak link and
22 it's because we need to get better about what
23 it looks like to scaffold content instruction

1 for ELs. So there's that aspect, and, you
2 know, it ties to the resources at the schools
3 where many of our ELs attend. I mean there's
4 a lot of issues that entangle here.

5 The other thing, just to go back to
6 the question before. So I think we all agree
7 on the need to continue with --

8 MR. ABEDI: Right.

9 MR. LINQUANTI: -- ELP
10 assessments --

11 MR. ABEDI: Right.

12 MR. LINQUANTI: -- which is good.

13 The question about what level, I think, at
14 least in my mind, what I see happening, you
15 know, if it's level 4 or level 3, is that we
16 get -- it's hard to keep separate the
17 instructional decision making aspect of that
18 question from the accountability aspect of the
19 question, and I think we really need to try
20 and see which lens we're looking through when
21 we're answer the question.

22 Because there is a real
23 accountability issue here. I mean EL

1 advocates are concerned that kids will be
2 excluded or not required to take content
3 assessments for too long and that this sends a
4 signal, because we're so assessment driven in
5 our educational culture, I mean it's been one
6 of the negative unintended consequences, I
7 think, of NCLB, and it was discussed
8 yesterday, is that, you know, people think if
9 they're not going to assess in it, then it's,
10 you know, maybe it's not as important where I
11 can afford to let that go because I've got a
12 gun to my head on three other things.

13 So I think we're going to need to
14 be very clear about what would be the purpose
15 of linking those, and I think the key purpose
16 would be for important educational and
17 instructional information that can help guide
18 instruction. And that's the spirit of the
19 assessments we want to move to.

20 MS. WHALEN: So can I ask kind of a
21 follow-up question to that?

22 MR. LINQUANTI: Sure.

23 MS. WHALEN: I think all of you

1 kind of mentioned looking at the scale of the
2 content standards and the assessments that we
3 use, and a lot of you pointed to technology as
4 a potential solution to get better information
5 about groups of students. Would that entail
6 potentially using technology and adaptive
7 testing to test out of grade level on content
8 for ELLs?

9 MS. RIVERA: For English language
10 arts, it would be --

11 MS. WHALEN: English language
12 arts --

13 MS. RIVERA: -- changing --

14 MS. WHALEN: -- or math or
15 science --

16 MS. RIVERA: -- you know, lowering
17 the -- if you lower the scale, I mean you're
18 testing at a different level. But you're
19 trying to understand -- you want to know what
20 the student really knows.

21 MS. WHALEN: Right. Do all of
22 you --

23 MS. RIVERA: Now in terms of

1 mathematics or other content areas, I guess
2 I'm not as supportive of just simply, you
3 know, of waiting to have the students be part
4 of the entire system. I think they should be
5 part of the system as soon as possible. I
6 think ELA is a problem though.

7 MR. ABEDI: Yes, one thing I wanted
8 to make sure that I expressed my opinion and
9 be as clear as I can be in my opinion, is that
10 we don't -- we should not expect ELL students
11 to do less or out-of-grade or off-grade or
12 anything like that. We want them to
13 participate in level -- grade level
14 assessment, we don't want to provide them with
15 alternate assessment, or be providing for one
16 person, two persons. We don't want to do any
17 of these things.

18 But we want to see exactly what are
19 the issues with the current assessment for
20 ELLs, what are the accessibility things that
21 prevent them to actually say or present what
22 they know and can do, and target those
23 accessibility, language, culture and things

1 like that might be one of those.

2 One thing I wanted to add regarding
3 the ELP, English language proficiency
4 assessment, one for the most important events
5 that happened in the recent assessment, ELP
6 assessment, is the introduction of the concept
7 of academic language. This is so important.
8 The reason I believe that ELP -- level of ELP
9 or proficiency is so important because we
10 believe that the current ELP assessment
11 actually measures the language that is needed
12 to understand the content, not the content
13 language, but the language that facilitates
14 understanding and learning the content, not
15 only for assessments, but instruction as well.

16 Because if ELL students do not have
17 the understanding of the content, they may not
18 understand the teacher's instruction as well.

19 So it's very important to be at level that
20 they have the proficiency to understand both
21 assessment and instructions.

22 MR. LINQUANTI: Let me just -- I'd
23 like to answer that question, Ann, because I

1 think you asked a version of it yesterday, and
2 I'm not sure about out-of-level testing. I'm
3 trying to remember Gary Phillips said, but I
4 can't remember, quite honestly.

5 But the -- I think we need to be
6 careful about what is construct irrelevant
7 language that's -- construct irrelevant
8 impediments versus construct relevant
9 impediments, meaning the language -- there may
10 be language that is, you know, tied -- an
11 important part of the construct that is
12 impediment, meaning it needs to be taught.

13 And teachers need to be aware that
14 they need to teach it versus the construct
15 irrelevant which could be just unnecessary
16 vocabulary that doesn't really get at the
17 construct, you know, like nickel meaning five
18 cents or, you know, talking about -- I mean
19 folks here have done analysis of NAEP items
20 and Massachusetts items just to name a couple
21 of things, to really show that some of the
22 things are culture-bound, or not really
23 necessary to get at the construct. Those are

1 the kinds of things we can explore.

2 But I think what you're asking is
3 clearly a technical psychometric issue, and I
4 think there are people that can work on doing
5 that. I'm not a psychometrician, so I can't
6 answer that question, but I think it's a
7 question that we would need to have folks
8 answer as part of the competition, I think.

9 MS. WEISS: Mike, did you --

10 MR. SMITH: An observation and a
11 question. The observation is simply that the
12 academic language is a problem across the
13 board.

14 MS. WEISS: Everybody.

15 MR. SMITH: And until we get it at
16 the forefront and particularly in elementary
17 school, for all poor kids and all English
18 Language Learners and so on, we're going to be
19 in deep trouble on our learning.

20 The question is a naive question.
21 Imagine it on the principle of an elementary
22 school, and I get to design whatever system I
23 have, and my intake has a large percentage of

1 kids who'd be primarily a second language, and
2 let's just hold it to one second language.
3 I'm actually imagining my wife's situation
4 over the last three years when she's been a
5 principal of a charter school in East Palo
6 Alto, and 75 percent of the kids were Hispanic
7 and most of them spoke only Spanish when they
8 entered the school in kindergarten.

9 What would be the -- imagine you
10 can design the system that you think now is
11 the best system, what would that system be,
12 what would its components be and how would you
13 put them together?

14 MR. LINQUANTI: I'm happy to start
15 because if their real population is 75 percent
16 Spanish speaking, the first thing that comes
17 to my mind is, what an asset, what a resource.

18 You've got -- you know, you don't have 20
19 different languages, you've got 75 percent of
20 your population coming in speaking Spanish.
21 That's something we can build on.

22 And so the question comes, what
23 would be the instructional program goals that

1 the school would be allowed to work with, and
2 start from there. You know, what will be the
3 strategies that we use, what would be the
4 progress expectations that we have for kids.
5 And if we build on the primary language and
6 there's enough support and resources, meaning
7 instructional and community resources to offer
8 a bilingual or, you know, a dual language
9 approach, that that would be an important
10 starting point, because then you have -- you
11 know, you can use primary language for access
12 to core content while the kids learn English.

13 But I think whatever the situation
14 is, I think you're looking at what the kids
15 come with, what are the program goals, and so
16 explicitly or implicitly you're going to need
17 to define what your expectations are for kids'
18 progress linguistically and academically.

19 And I think clarifying that helps
20 you to look at, you know, your formative
21 assessments, your benchmark assessments. So
22 I'd like to start with what are the
23 instructional program goals, and then work

1 from there to think about what kind of
2 curriculum, what kind of teachers do we have.

3 MR. SMITH: Okay. So let's be
4 explicit --

5 MS. WEISS: No, hang on, Mike,
6 because this is getting us pretty far from
7 assessment.

8 MR. LINQUANTI: All right. Yes.

9 MR. SMITH: No, I wanted to get
10 back to assessment.

11 MS. WEISS: So, good.

12 MR. LINQUANTI: Maybe I took it --

13 MR. SMITH: So what do you do when
14 the kids walk in the door? Do you assess
15 them? They're kindergarten kids now. Do you
16 assess them, do you follow them --

17 MS. RIVERA: Sure.

18 MR. SMITH: -- over time with
19 different kinds of assessments? I mean what
20 is the best practice at this point?

21 MS. RIVERA: You start really -- I
22 mean you really want to know what the kid
23 knows, so --

1 MR. ABEDI: Right.

2 MS. RIVERA: -- even at
3 kindergarten you do an informal kind of an
4 assessment of -- hopefully the teacher is
5 bilingual, or the person that's working with
6 the student.

7 MR. SMITH: Well, let's assume they
8 are.

9 MS. RIVERA: Pardon me?

10 MR. SMITH: Assume they are.
11 Just --

12 MS. RIVERA: So there are ways to
13 begin to understand. I mean you want to
14 understand whether the child, you know, has
15 had any instruction, you want to know --

16 MR. SMITH: Are there assessment
17 instruments for this?

18 MS. RIVERA: There aren't that
19 many. There -- I haven't been -- I guess, you
20 know, for kindergarten children very few.

21 MR. SMITH: So just a naive
22 principal, I do, I want to know what to do.
23 What do I -- do I not assess the early kids,

1 do I not follow them over time?

2 MR. LINQUANTI: You mean the young
3 kids, the kindergartners?

4 MR. SMITH: Yes, I mean the six
5 year olds, five year olds.

6 MS. RIVERA: I mean what's been
7 done over the years, I mean, you know, I was a
8 bilingual teacher years ago. I mean the
9 whole -- teachers create their own
10 assessments, they create a system and they
11 take the kids through the system and they
12 evaluate --

13 MR. SMITH: So where --

14 MS. RIVERA: -- where the students
15 are --

16 MR. SMITH: -- are we -- you know,
17 I'm going to really push.

18 MS. RIVERA: Yes.

19 MR. SMITH: Are we at the point
20 where we don't have a system, we don't know
21 what to tell that principal, except, well,
22 that your teachers try out a few things?

23 MR. LINQUANTI: No, we do.

1 MR. ABEDI: You know, for many of
2 those consortia, including WIDA and ELDA,
3 there is a component K through 1 or K through
4 2 assessment, kindergarten through -- but all
5 of us know then how challenging is the task of
6 measuring kindergarten, early grade
7 proficiency.

8 But there are measures right now.
9 We cannot say so even though maybe reading and
10 writing might be difficult to measure, but
11 there are ways to measure that, and listening
12 and speaking as well. So there are ways but
13 they are not -- they may not be as reliable as
14 the higher grades. But there are -- all
15 components, from K through 1 or 2 we have
16 measurements.

17 MR. SMITH: Should I do that?

18 MS. RIVERA: Sure.

19 MR. SMITH: I should do that.

20 MS. RIVERA: The ELP assessment --

21 MR. ABEDI: Yes, absolutely.

22 MS. RIVERA: -- should be used.

23 MR. SMITH: So you should --

1 MR. ABEDI: It should be used.

2 MR. LINQUANTI: You should assess
3 their primary --

4 MR. SMITH: Best practice says --

5 MR. ABEDI: Absolutely.

6 MR. SMITH: -- assess early --

7 MR. ABEDI: Assess early.

8 MR. SMITH: -- with the best
9 instruments you can find, or --

10 MR. ABEDI: Assess early with the
11 best instrument you can find. Again, as I
12 mentioned in my --

13 MR. SMITH: But how do we know
14 that?

15 MR. ABEDI: -- in my presentation,
16 for ELL assessment comes even before
17 instruction. For everyone else --

18 MR. SMITH: That's fine. Yes, I
19 understand. But so --

20 MR. ABEDI: -- so therefore, yes,
21 find --

22 MR. SMITH: And then you --

23 MR. ABEDI: -- and we do have some

1 good assessments right now for --

2 MR. SMITH: And they didn't -- they
3 get a regular assessment of their growth in
4 English and --

5 MR. ABEDI: Right.

6 MR. SMITH: -- in the academic
7 areas?

8 MS. RIVERA: That would be a
9 suggestion. That would be --

10 MR. ABEDI: Absolutely.

11 MS. RIVERA: -- that should be
12 done.

13 MR. SMITH: Is that a good
14 practice?

15 MR. ABEDI: It is.

16 MS. RIVERA: Sure.

17 MS. WEISS: Okay. I'm going to
18 take moderator's prerogative to move us to a
19 totally different place that we haven't talked
20 about at all and need some good thinking and
21 advice on.

22 If consortia are coming together
23 around developing these assessments, it

1 strikes me that in -- this question's probably
2 generically true, but in ELL it might have
3 some specific issues that we need to think
4 about. What values or philosophies would
5 members of a consortium have to have in common
6 in order to successfully navigate these
7 waters, and what questions might we ask in our
8 RFP that would force the right conversations
9 to happen to make sure that we didn't end up
10 with problems at the back end where consortia
11 actually didn't agree on standards,
12 accommodations, approaches, whatever?

13 MR. ABEDI: May I start with this?

14 I think the first step, the most important
15 step is common understanding of ELP -- ELL,
16 who are ELLs, how do we define them, because
17 right now, if you look at the ELL definition
18 across different states, even within same
19 states, there are different definitions and
20 different level of identifying that.

21 So a common understanding of what
22 are -- who are ELLs, what are their needs,
23 what needs to be done with them. That's the

1 first and the most important step. We have to
2 start with that first. And then common
3 understanding of their needs, what type of
4 assessment would help them, what we expect
5 from them to learn as, of course, we expect
6 them to learn the same thing that everyone --
7 we expect everyone else to learn. So common
8 understanding of identification, assessment
9 and instruction first.

10 MS. RIVERA: That's why I said that
11 I thought that if this -- one thing that if a
12 consortia of states were coming together, they
13 should review what assessment they're using
14 for ELP, and if -- and maybe agree on a common
15 proficiency -- on a common set of proficiency
16 standards for students. Even if they're using
17 different assessments, they can place them on
18 some kind of a common scale --

19 MR. LINQUANTI: Charlene, you're
20 talking about ELP?

21 MS. RIVERA: ELP, and that would be
22 one thing --

23 MS. WEISS: Right.

1 MS. RIVERA: -- that consortia
2 states should probably be required to do.

3 MS. WEISS: So common ELP standards
4 and assessments, or at least linked
5 assessments so that --

6 MS. RIVERA: Well, I mean it would
7 be -- it's really in the proforma. I mean
8 this -- ELP assessments, I mean, there usually
9 is a scale, it's 1 to 5, 1 to 6, 1 to 4,
10 whatever it would be.

11 MS. WEISS: Right. So you need to
12 just link them across.

13 MS. RIVERA: And they need to be
14 able to have some kind of common way of
15 talking about when a student is a beginner,
16 when a student is an intermediate student,
17 when a student is an advanced student, and to
18 have some kind of a common scale where they
19 will all agree these students belong in this
20 category, these belong here, these belong
21 here, and they can monitor that progress. So
22 I would say at least that much in terms of the
23 consortia.

1 I mean I think that they have to
2 take into consideration the needs of all
3 students, and I think also they need to know
4 who their students are. So they take -- have
5 to take some kind of a census of what across
6 the consortia, what representation they have
7 of different -- of students from different
8 language backgrounds with different kinds of
9 characteristics.

10 So the profiles need to be
11 established in some way so that they really
12 are addressing the needs of the students that
13 are represented in that consortia and it isn't
14 overpowered by one state that has, you know, a
15 certain number -- a certain profile of
16 students.

17 MR. LINQUANTI: Yes, I would add to
18 that. I agree that it's probably easier and
19 wiser to begin with looking at the linkage to
20 the ELP assessments, although I suspect it's
21 not very easy to do, I mean that there's some
22 challenges just in terms of what
23 constitutes -- for example, an overall score

1 may weight the domains differently, and so
2 there's different dynamics going on across
3 these ELP assessments.

4 But what Charlene's saying, which
5 is at the level of sort of the performance
6 level descriptor kind of thinking, can we
7 agree roughly and look at how we would link.
8 And, again, this is -- I think some technical
9 issues that can be worked on. So getting that
10 agreement of are we all talking about the
11 same, you know, more or less ballpark level of
12 language proficiency for these kids.

13 I think it's going to be a lot
14 harder when we get to the content assessment,
15 and that's because even within a consortium
16 like WIDA, I'll just call that out and I'm
17 sure it's true of CCS and so is ELDA
18 consortium, is that even if you have a common
19 assessment based on common agreed upon
20 standards, states are going to pick different
21 cut scores for what constitutes this sort of
22 exit criteria, or, you know, the English
23 proficient level, and that -- or indeed if we

1 just use AMOAl as an example --

2 MS. WEISS: But that's what I hear
3 Charlene saying should not happen in a
4 consortium in order to make the system work
5 properly.

6 MS. RIVERA: Well, I'm --

7 MS. WEISS: I'm talking about
8 ideal, not --

9 MR. LINQUANTI: Yes. Yes.

10 MS. WEISS: -- the reality. I'm
11 just saying --

12 MR. LINQUANTI: Okay.

13 MS. WEISS: -- what's the right
14 answer, not all the political problems. Just
15 what's --

16 MR. LINQUANTI: All right. Well --

17 MS. WEISS: I mean start with
18 what's right, then we can move to the reality.

19 MR. LINQUANTI: Yes.

20 MS. MELENDEZ: Wouldn't you also
21 consider instructional program --

22 MR. LINQUANTI: Yes.

23 MS. MELENDEZ: -- and

1 flexibility --

2 MR. LINQUANTI: That's my next
3 point.

4 MS. MELENDEZ: -- for --

5 MR. LINQUANTI: Yes.

6 MS. MELENDEZ: -- LEAs too and
7 classrooms in schools to be able to have that
8 flexibility in terms of assessing the students
9 depending on your program goals as you
10 mentioned earlier?

11 MR. LINQUANTI: Yes.

12 MS. RIVERA: Oh, sure.

13 MR. LINQUANTI: Yes.

14 MS. MELENDEZ: So that would be --

15 MR. LINQUANTI: That gets into the
16 issue of L1 assessment. For ELP assessment,
17 again, we need to distinguish between what
18 would be the assessment, what would be the
19 sort of common definitions of what we would
20 consider low, middle and high. When it comes
21 to exit levels or progress expectations --

22 MS. RIVERA: Right.

23 MR. LINQUANTI: -- that can --

1 MS. WEISS: That's a different
2 thing.

3 MR. LINGUANTI: -- vary widely.

4 MS. WEISS: Yes. Right.

5 MR. LINGUANTI: When it gets to the
6 content assessment though, that's, again, the
7 issue we're just going to bump up against
8 because we have wide variation in content
9 standards and performance --

10 MS. RIVERA: But I would think that
11 a consortia would need to agree on certain --

12 MS. WEISS: Yes.

13 MR. LINGUANTI: Yes.

14 MS. RIVERA: -- I mean they'll
15 agree on a content area that they're going
16 to -- content areas they're going to work on
17 and agree on some principals about how they're
18 going to develop those assessments and
19 hopefully agree that they are going to
20 consider the needs of English Language
21 Learners in that initial development and it
22 won't be an after-the-fact process, but they
23 will actually, from the beginning, consider

1 what it is that they are doing and how they're
2 developing that assessment so that it's
3 inclusive of English Language Learners.

4 MS. WHALEN: Do you think all of
5 the members of the states need to have a
6 common approved list of accommodations that go
7 along with that common assessment?

8 MS. RIVERA: Well, I mean that's
9 part of the development process. I mean they
10 will identify ideally what kinds of
11 accommodations. I mean they probably should
12 start with examining -- every state has a
13 policy and every state lists accommodations.
14 I mean you could go to our website and you
15 could look those up.

16 But basically they need to probably
17 lay them out on the table, they need to get
18 into a work group and they need to say, Okay,
19 how is it, what are the commonalities that
20 we've got, and which of the things they're
21 going to focus -- what's most important, which
22 accommodations do we want to develop or -- I
23 mean they have to start from the assessment.

1 MS. WEISS: Right.

2 MS. RIVERA: If it's a CAT
3 assessment and they decide they're going to
4 use certain kinds of accommodations, they
5 should use those. I mean they should also
6 look at the literature, there's very limited
7 literature, I think, so I mean it's -- they
8 have to use, you know, good judgment and best
9 knowledge.

10 Are they trying to -- you know,
11 what kinds of programs do they have in place,
12 do they have dual language programs in place,
13 are they going to use native language
14 accommodations, or are they -- is it an
15 only -- English only state, you know, and --
16 but nonetheless, could they still use maybe
17 even a dictionary, is that considered -- you
18 know, that -- perhaps they could still use an
19 English native language accommodation there.

20 So there's a lot of considerations.
21 It isn't something that -- they probably
22 won't be able to put that into their proposal
23 and say, These are the accommodations we're

1 going to use. They probably need to say
2 they're going to create -- they have a certain
3 baseline of an assessment and then they're
4 going to evaluate which accommodations for
5 these students they're going to put in, and
6 they can give examples, and they probably
7 should.

8 MS. WHALEN: But I guess -- when
9 we're asking them to say we're signing up
10 together as a state, should one of the
11 preconditions to signing up together is states
12 saying, We're going to share a set of approved
13 accommodations, or --

14 MS. RIVERA: That would be ideal.

15 MS. WHALEN: Okay.

16 MS. RIVERA: That would ideal,
17 because otherwise, I mean if they're -- they
18 can't develop -- I mean if they have a common
19 assessment they have to have one set of
20 accommodations that they share, that they
21 agree on are the accommodations that are going
22 to be used.

23 MR. ABEDI: But I wanted to add

1 something regarding accommodation. The issues
2 concerning accommodation is something above
3 and beyond the consortia agreement. It's
4 something we have a problem nationwide, the
5 accommodations. Again, accommodations are
6 confusing, extremely confusing right now
7 because many of those accommodations that are
8 used for ELL students even currently are
9 used -- or created for students with
10 disabilities.

11 And, you know, the concept of
12 accommodation is relatively new for ELL
13 students. For instance, provide physical
14 assistance. This is one of the accommodations
15 that is used even currently for English
16 Language Learners. What type of physical
17 assistance? Or font size, or --

18 MR. LINGUANTI: Brighter lights.

19 MS. WEISS: Braille.

20 MR. ABEDI: -- brighter lights, or
21 things like that. So this is something that
22 we need to address nationwide above and beyond
23 consortia --

1 MS. WEISS: But this is the place
2 to do it, so how do we address it, what are
3 the questions we should ask in the RFP that
4 would properly set us up for success here?

5 MS. RIVERA: You know, we've been
6 working with some states on that process
7 because we've been examining the policies and
8 then we've developed some self-evaluations so
9 states can assess their -- where they are with
10 accommodations, whether they're addressing
11 English Language Learners, and we've been
12 doing some coaching. I think you really have
13 to work individually with states to get them
14 to a certain point and they make changes --
15 they decide how they're going to make their
16 accommodations more responsive to English
17 Language Learners.

18 I don't know that this competition
19 can address that specifically. I think that
20 the states and the consortia could say, We
21 agree that we are going to make our
22 accommodations ELL responsive, and toward that
23 end we are going to invite whatever, so-and-

1 so, or, you know, we can invite some support
2 in helping us to design appropriate
3 accommodations, and we will reach out to, you
4 know, to experts to do this. So that would --

5 MR. LINQUANTI: I think that's --

6 MS. RIVERA: -- be one way of
7 approaching it, and having the evidence --
8 that is their evidence that they are actually
9 knowledgeable about the fact that they need to
10 get their accommodations aligned to some
11 extent and that they need to really be
12 addressing ELLs when they're designing
13 accommodations.

14 MR. LINQUANTI: And I would add to
15 that, Charlene, and it's something I think
16 that you made a point of earlier, which is I
17 would require states to collect data on, you
18 know, which combinations of accommodations --
19 first of all, to consult the literature and
20 experts, and, again, I think experts need to
21 be involved in every stage of assessment
22 development, psychometricians who understand
23 second language acquisition issues,

1 educational linguists, that sort of thing.

2 But I think in terms of
3 understanding and collecting data on what are
4 the profiles of the students, and there are
5 certain key characteristics, what are the
6 configurations or combinations of
7 accommodations that are ELL responsive and
8 that perhaps -- you know, at least clarifying
9 which accommodations are currently used that
10 are not ELL responsive, at the very least
11 specifying that would help. And -- because I
12 think it's a research question too --

13 MR. ABEDI: It is.

14 MR. LINQUANTI: -- and I think we
15 need to get smarter about this. If we're
16 going to have folks doing this anyway, we
17 ought to at least collect the data, the
18 empirical data to allow us to --

19 MR. ABEDI: Right.

20 MR. LINQUANTI: -- learn and move
21 the field forward. I mean we have to think of
22 this as it is experimental and it is -- has to
23 move the field forward. So I think we can

1 build that in to the RFP so that we can get
2 better at doing this.

3 MS. RIVERA: And the commitment, I
4 mean maybe one other thing you could request
5 of a consortia would be the commitment to
6 collect data --

7 MR. LINQUANTI: Yes.

8 MS. RIVERA: -- on the
9 effectiveness and usefulness of
10 accommodations, because -- and I say -- and
11 actually the implementation. We really ought
12 to know what is being --

13 MR. ABEDI: Yes.

14 MS. RIVERA: -- implemented,
15 whether students are using these
16 accommodations and the extent to which they're
17 effective. So that has -- I mean that should
18 be -- I mean they should offer that. I mean
19 it's a lot to ask states to do, but I think
20 that -- or this consortia to do --

21 MS. WEISS: It's a lot of money.

22 MS. RIVERA: -- but it's a lot of
23 money.

1 MR. ABEDI: One more thing I wanted
2 to add. I know we have just one more minute
3 to go, but one of the major concerns and major
4 issues with accommodations is validity of
5 accommodated assessments. Even though we want
6 to help ELL students, but we don't want to
7 provide unfair advantage to them, we don't
8 want to give them something that others can
9 benefit as well. If that's the case, then we
10 have to provide it for everyone. So that's
11 the validity.

12 If you provide accommodation that
13 effects the construct, that is not a valid
14 thing to do. And only research can do that
15 and say for sure. So what I'm trying to say,
16 for the states, they don't have to use a
17 couple of thousand accommodations, if they
18 have only a few accommodations that they think
19 we have enough evidence for them that they
20 provide valid assessment outcomes, just say we
21 only use a couple of -- two or three
22 accommodations, so they don't need to provide
23 an endless list of accommodations in order to

1 impress someone that, See, we are using a lot
2 of accommodations.

3 MS. RIVERA: One other thing that
4 hasn't come up and that is whether you're
5 going to require an evaluation, whether -- you
6 know, some kind of an evaluation of what's
7 going on, and I really think that's critical,
8 I think --

9 MS. WEISS: Yes.

10 MS. RIVERA: -- it's important --

11 MR. LINQUANTI: Yes.

12 MS. RIVERA: -- you know, to build
13 into that RFP some kind of a process that
14 people are going to use to assess, to make,
15 you know, to make changes to their process as
16 it goes along if it's not working the way they
17 expected it to work, and that there are those
18 opportunities to do that along the way.

19 But there's some critical --
20 somehow they get outside input into this
21 process, it should not just be only insider
22 ideas that get put out there, but rather that
23 there's some kind of external bodies or

1 whatever, but not -- that doesn't cost a
2 million dollars but that, you know, costs --
3 you know, but there is a cost to it, an
4 evaluation is really important in this
5 process.

6 MS. WEISS: Great. Final word,
7 Robert.

8 MR. LINQUANTI: Last point. I
9 think we should, obviously before the RFP goes
10 out, learn from existing consortia, and
11 consortia that have had succeeded and
12 consortia that have not succeeded and try and,
13 you know, learn from that. And then also have
14 some sort of -- require in the RFP some sort
15 of explanation, theory of action of how, you
16 know, how -- what the logic model will be of
17 how the consortium is going to operationalize
18 and get into place these things, because it'll
19 force them to think, and then, you know,
20 technical assistance perhaps can be provided
21 to help them think through this.

22 MS. WEISS: Great. Well, thank you
23 so much. I think we could probably go on for

1 another couple of hours, but we don't have it.

2 So let me just thank you so much on behalf of
3 the Department, and I think also on behalf of
4 the states for sharing your wisdom and your
5 knowledge with us. I personally have taken a
6 ton of notes and really appreciate the input
7 that you've given us today, and I hope that
8 all of you have learned something today that
9 you didn't know yesterday. So thank you very
10 much for coming.

11 Let me just make a quick
12 housekeeping note. We're going to take a
13 break until 11:30. We'll start again at 11:30
14 sharp with our public speakers. If you are
15 signed up as a public speaker, please don't
16 take a break, instead come up here to this
17 part of the room and we will tell you what the
18 public speaking session looks like and give
19 you your instructions.

20 So thanks again. Please join me in
21 thanking Robert, Jamal and Charlene.

22 (General applause.)

23 (Whereupon, a short recess was

1 taken.)

2 MS. WEISS: -- your seats and we
3 will begin.

4 Thanks, everybody. Our public
5 speakers I think are lined up and ready to go
6 and I think all of you know that there's a
7 handy timer -- that we haven't been doing so
8 well with today; maybe you'll do a better job
9 than we've been doing -- sitting on the
10 podium. It'll go from green to yellow and you
11 have two minutes left, and when it starts
12 blinking red, your time's up.

13 So thank you. Please start by
14 introducing yourself.

15 DR. SATO: Good morning. I'm Edynn
16 Sato.

17 MR. LINQUANTI: Mike. Mike.

18 DR. SATO: Wait.

19 MS. WEISS: Talk louder.

20 DR. SATO: Okay. Good morning.
21 I'm Edynn Sato from WestEd and the Assessment
22 and Accountability Comprehensive Center.
23 Thank you very much for this opportunity to

1 provide input.

2 In order to address the
3 Department's questions, I'd like to highlight
4 some information and specific resources that
5 are research supported and informed by the
6 work that we've done in more than half of the
7 states. The information I'm going to provide
8 is organized according to, first, up front
9 considerations; second, considerations for
10 development and implementation; and third,
11 evaluation of consequences.

12 First, there are two up front
13 considerations, defining proficiency and
14 characterizing language needed for achievement
15 in school. Some of my information will
16 underscore, or extend, some of the information
17 that Charlene, Jamal, and Robert have already
18 provided.

19 Proficiency expectations should be
20 aligned in terms of the level and range of
21 language skills and knowledge necessary to be
22 college and career ready. This issue will
23 only grow more difficult to address as states

1 begin to implement the expected rigor of the
2 common core standards. I've provided
3 information in my written submission related
4 to a process for defining proficiency across
5 English language, academic, and career
6 readiness content in a manner that would
7 support English learners. And Robert also has
8 been involved in some of this work.

9 The second up front consideration
10 is what I refer to as language for
11 achievement. This is language that is needed
12 by all students for long term academic success
13 and opportunities for professional growth. I
14 provide a language taxonomy in my written
15 submission that I'd like to refer you to. The
16 taxonomy specifies elements of language in a
17 manner that supports the generation of
18 instructional and assessment tasks and lends
19 itself to establishing patterns of student
20 development of English language proficiency,
21 or what I'll refer to as language
22 progressions.

23 You've heard of learning

1 progressions. The taxonomy that I provide is
2 a way to structure language progressions that
3 will support achievement in the pre-K20
4 context. The taxonomy and the progressions
5 function similarly to what we've been applying
6 in terms of cognitive development through
7 Bloom's and Webb's Depth of Knowledge, and
8 could compliment the work done by GWEU as well
9 as WIDA and other researchers in the field and
10 could inform not only our assessment tasks,
11 the development of assessments, our thinking
12 about instruction, but also professional
13 development for both educators and test
14 developers.

15 The up front considerations that
16 I've highlighted here, and related resources
17 I've provided, can help guide the design and
18 development of assessments in each content
19 area, as well as to help purposefully count
20 for the variations in English language
21 proficiency of students in a manner that
22 enables them to demonstrate their knowledge
23 and skills related to academic content and

1 career readiness. I would welcome the
2 opportunity for more detailed discussion with
3 the Department about this work and its
4 implications for the Race to the Top
5 assessment program.

6 Two considerations for development
7 and implementation are, the first being
8 linguistic modification. That's been
9 discussed already. I'd just like to refer you
10 to my written submission which provides
11 guidelines and specific strategies that are
12 research supported and show that they do
13 actually not change the construct, but make,
14 as Jamal mentioned, the assessments for
15 content more accessible to students and
16 therefore more valid and reliable.

17 The second consideration for
18 implementation and development is computer-
19 based assessments. We have an opportunity
20 with computer-based tests to purposefully
21 select and available supports to English
22 learner students that are based on research in
23 a manner that allows flexibility, allows us to

1 balance flexibility of implementation with the
2 standardization we require to ensure reliable
3 and valid outcomes.

4 Finally, I'd like to present a
5 resource related to evaluation of
6 consequences, both intended and unintended,
7 and that's the framework for high quality
8 English language proficiency standards and
9 assessments. Although the framework focuses
10 on English language proficiency, it was
11 developed -- or it was conceived and developed
12 in order to lend itself to broader evaluation
13 of how we can build efficiencies across the
14 assessment systems for English learners, for
15 both language and content in a manner that
16 integrates that information up front and can
17 be used in conjunction with our definitions of
18 proficiency language progressions and other
19 accommodations of research.

20 Thank you again for this
21 opportunity. Again, in my allotted time I
22 hope I've been able to highlight some
23 information and resources, specific resources

1 available to inform the Race to the Top
2 assessment program as it can serve our English
3 learner student.

4 MS. WEISS: Thank you so much.

5 DR. HAUCK: Should I start? Good
6 morning, and thank you for the opportunity to
7 speak with you today. My name is Maurice
8 Hauck and I am a group Executive Director in
9 the Assessment Division of the Educational
10 Testing Service.

11 At ETS I manage two assessment
12 development units, one is the English Language
13 Learning group, which has developed several
14 Title III assessments and international K to
15 12 English language proficiency assessments,
16 the other is the Language Skills Assessment
17 unit, which develops tests of reading and
18 writing and literature for general
19 populations. And before coming to ETS I was a
20 classroom ESL teacher for 10 years.

21 In recent years, my colleagues and
22 I at ETS have given considerable thought to
23 the challenge of ensuring that assessments

1 designed for all students are fair, valid and
2 reliable for students who are ELLs. We have a
3 lot more to say than I can fit into five
4 minutes, so I'm submitting two documents to
5 support my comments. One is -- one contains
6 written responses to the two ELL related
7 questions in the RFI, the other is a 2009
8 publication entitled *Guidelines for the*
9 *Assessment of English Language Learners.*

10 I would like to say something
11 obvious, and I think that has been covered
12 today, actually a lot of what I have to say
13 will have been covered today. But the obvious
14 thing I'll start with is that given the size
15 and continuing growth of the ELL population in
16 US schools, any new assessment system must, in
17 order to be successful, provide fair, valid
18 and reliable information about the skills and
19 abilities of ELLs.

20 This morning I'll make six general
21 recommendations towards doing that, and,
22 again, for more details, I please -- I invite
23 you to please take a look at my written

1 submissions.

2 One is to recognize the complexity
3 and diversity of the ELL population. In
4 addition to language background, ELLs are
5 diverse in both level and profile of English
6 language proficiency, profile meaning things
7 like academic versus oral proficiency, degrees
8 of formal schooling, native language literacy
9 levels, experiences with standardized testing,
10 and degree of acculturation to the US
11 mainstream. And it's just important to
12 remember that all of these factors will
13 influence how ELLs interact with assessments
14 and how well the assessments provide fair and
15 valid knowledge about the ELLs.

16 Two is to set the same standards
17 for ELLs as for all other students, to not in
18 any way lower the expectation level of ELLs.
19 And then three is to recognize that because
20 ELLs will take more time to meet those
21 standards, we need to ensure that the
22 assessment system provides meaningful
23 information about students at all skill levels

1 and tracks that progress over time, and things
2 like vertical scales and adaptive testing can
3 really help here.

4 Four is to consider ELLs throughout
5 the entire process of test design, test
6 development, scoring and reporting, and to
7 clearly define the role of English language
8 proficiency in the construct being assessed,
9 and to ensure that educators experienced in
10 working with ELLs play a meaningful role in
11 all stages of design and development.

12 Five is to consider the needs of
13 ELLs in all research and validity efforts, to
14 gather information on the performance of ELLs
15 as a subgroup, and consider these data in
16 evaluating the performance and suitability of
17 items and items types.

18 And the last one, six, is to
19 compliment the general assessment system, the
20 content system with an English language
21 proficiency assessment that has a principal
22 connection to the content area assessments.

23 Question one of the RFI also asks

1 for input about the potential of innovative
2 assessment designs and uses of technology.
3 Here I'd like to start with a caveat, which is
4 that ELLs vary in their exposure to technology
5 and we may not be able to assume the same
6 skills from things as basic as using a mouse
7 as we do with mainstream populations. But
8 that said, I'd like to mention a couple of
9 areas where technology-enabled assessments
10 really could help.

11 One is in making the delivery of
12 accommodations more efficient and more user-
13 friendly by, for example, providing direct
14 access to an online glossary, some other
15 things were mentioned this morning. Another
16 one is that computer-adaptive testing has the
17 potential to broaden the range of skills
18 covered in a single assessment, and that could
19 be a means of allowing accurate measurement of
20 those ELLs who are currently some distance
21 below grade level expectations.

22 Question two of the RFI also
23 solicited input on native language assessments

1 which represent one type for testing
2 accommodation used with ELLs. Here I'd like
3 to say the appeal of native language
4 assessments is very clear. They offer a way
5 to assess English Language Learners without
6 requiring them to take a test in English.
7 However, research to date, and again something
8 mentioned by the panel, has indicated that
9 native language assessments are effective only
10 if the language of assessment matches the
11 language of instruction.

12 Additionally, there are several
13 challenging technical and policy questions
14 that persist. These relate to the validity
15 and comparability of translated or trans-
16 adapted assessments, to the choice of which
17 native languages to include or exclude, and to
18 choosing which language of assessment is
19 appropriate for each ELL student.

20 I'll end by saying that states
21 currently provide several other testing
22 accommodations, including dual language
23 assessments, dictionaries or glossaries either

1 in English or bilingual, and simplified
2 language and to encourage consideration of
3 those as well as native language assessments.

4 Thank you very much for your time today.

5 MS. WEISS: Thank you.

6 Next person?

7 DR. SHAW: Good morning. My name
8 is Jerome Shaw. I'm faculty, science
9 education at the University of California
10 Santa Cruz campus. Previously I taught
11 science to students in California public
12 schools, many of whom were English learners,
13 so my comments to you this morning come from
14 those two perspectives, my background as a
15 classroom teacher and as an educational
16 researcher, and I thank you for the
17 opportunity to share my thoughts.

18 I'm just going to cut to the chase
19 and make one recommendation, and that is that
20 when all is said and done with the RFP and the
21 assessment program that develops from this
22 process, that included in that program are
23 performance assessments. I firmly believe

1 that performance assessments have a lot to
2 contribute to fair and accurate assessment for
3 English Language Learners in science and other
4 content areas as well.

5 Just to say a little bit about why
6 I believe this is so important, and with the
7 time I have I'll just talk about some work I
8 did here in the state of Colorado looking at
9 performance assessments in fifth grade
10 classrooms. It was a trio of assessments that
11 I observed students, and this slide just shows
12 a test for starch and assessment related to --
13 on food chemistry.

14 But the assessments that we used in
15 this district and several other neighboring
16 districts fit what I call -- I'm calling
17 carefully crafted criteria. A lot of these
18 points have been mentioned already by other
19 folks yesterday and today, so I won't spend
20 too much time on it. But one point that
21 wasn't mentioned, I don't think, was the last
22 bullet there, of self-assessment, and that a
23 carefully crafted assessment, performance

1 assessment in this case, includes rubrics that
2 are provided to students and beforehand guide
3 their actions, and also that the students
4 assess their performance with those rubrics.

5 Now, as part of this study, and I
6 only got to observe the assessments in action
7 in classrooms, I analyzed the data, student
8 scores from one district, 14 elementary
9 schools, this is at the fifth grade level, but
10 as you can see in this slide what the results
11 were, that breaking out the English Language
12 Learners from the mainstream population, also
13 from the non-English Language Learners, they
14 performed on par with their non-English
15 learner peers.

16 Now this was just one study,
17 limited data. As many folks have been saying,
18 a lot more research needs to be done. But I
19 think this indicates the promise of
20 performance assessments to help level the
21 playing field for English Language Learners in
22 content area assessments.

23 The last point I want to make here

1 is something else that's come up with the
2 discussion, and sometimes people think, Oh,
3 performance assessment in science, hands-on,
4 easy access, ELLs will do great, fine. That's
5 not necessarily the case. Language demands,
6 particularly if you're having students work in
7 pairs, in groups, and the instructions for the
8 investigations, all those kinds of things,
9 there are very serious language demands that
10 pose challenges to English learners for them
11 to be able to show what they know and are able
12 to do with performance assessments.

13 That said, some colleagues and I
14 back at UC Santa Cruz have a perspective that
15 these challenges also represent opportunities
16 for language development, for English learners
17 to interact with peers and so on and so forth
18 and develop the language, academic language as
19 been mentioned, as well as the knowledge and
20 skills for science, if you will.

21 And finally, we have recently
22 developed an analytical framework for looking
23 at the language demands in performance

1 assessments from a more functional and
2 interactional use of language approach. And
3 we feel that this kind of approach can add to
4 the knowledge base. Sure, things that have
5 been mentioned like the linguistic complexity,
6 sentence length, and vocabulary difficulty,
7 and that kind of thing are important, but
8 together with our approach, and these
9 approaches, we can provide a more
10 comprehensive view of the language demands and
11 really help the whole movement with
12 performance assessment reach its potential and
13 provide fair and accurate assessment for
14 English learners. Thank you.

15 MS. WEISS: Thanks very much.

16 DR. CONDE: Good morning. Forgive
17 my bifocals.

18 Thank you for -- my name is Julie
19 Conde, and I'm from Responsive Ed. Thank you
20 so much for the invitation to fly to the Mile
21 High city from warm Texas, and to share with
22 you our passion for students and for their
23 success. I'm here to discuss our ELL student

1 population, their challenges, their successes,
2 and their assessments.

3 I represent Responsive Education
4 Solutions, a public charter school system that
5 serves over 5,000 students, from kindergarten
6 through twelfth grade on 36 campuses
7 throughout the state of Texas. Our Vista
8 Academy serves students in elementary grades,
9 Quest Academy is middle school students, iQ
10 Academies, iSchool High, Premier High Schools,
11 and more importantly, especially today, our
12 Premier High Schools are serving middle and
13 high school students. And currently over 90
14 percent of our Premier High School population
15 is classified as at-risk. In addition, 43
16 percent of our population is classified as
17 ELL.

18 Official data from 2009 reports
19 that 90 percent of our students passed or
20 projected to pass their TAKS, their state
21 assessment, and 89 percent of the Premier High
22 School total student population passed. In
23 addition, 89 percent of the ELL population

1 passed. So that's 89 percent of the total
2 population and 89 percent of the ELL
3 population. Again, we were very fortunate to
4 see that we were able to close the gap between
5 the all student and the LEP student
6 population.

7 How did we do this? We utilize
8 individualized, self-paced teacher assisted
9 methodology. Individualized is the term.
10 Upon enrollment, each student is individually
11 assessed to determine his or her academic
12 strengths and weaknesses. English knowledge
13 abilities are clarified. The Responsive Ed
14 student learns to set his own goals. That's
15 every ELL, every student.

16 He begins with the end in mind, his
17 high school diploma and his understanding of
18 what his higher education and career goals
19 will be. That's from the very beginning. And
20 for our ELL student population, we shelter
21 instruction through strategy teaching and by
22 appropriately scaffolding the content. We --
23 and by thoughtfully asking questions, good

1 questions. We make sure that there's going to
2 be a good likelihood that our students are
3 going to be able to have excellent critical
4 thinking skills.

5 All right. Texas, I'm from Texas,
6 there's data in here I'm not going to mention,
7 just the last part, because we all know
8 there's a differential, and in Texas there is
9 a differential between the all student
10 population and the ELL student population in
11 their performance. But I'll mention one
12 particular figure, and that is science, the
13 all important science.

14 And we know it's the terminology,
15 we know it's the vocabulary. But in Texas 74
16 percent of the total student population passed
17 or projected to pass their state assessment
18 last year. Forty-two percent of the ELL --
19 hurts, doesn't it -- 42 percent in general of
20 the ELL population of Texas passed their
21 science assessment.

22 Okay. So what am I here to
23 suggest? I, too, offer one thing. Five

1 minutes you don't offer 10 things. I offer
2 one thing, and that is LEP students need more
3 time. They need time to be recognized when
4 they show growth, to be appreciated when they
5 show progress. Cognitive language acquisition
6 takes time. ELL students will fulfill our
7 high expectations if they're given time.
8 Responsive ELL students did just that, they
9 stayed the course, they progressed, and they
10 grew in their academic language.

11 And, you know, ELL students will
12 not necessarily do it all at the time, in the
13 same way, and on the same designated time
14 line. When older ELL students were recognized
15 only for pass or fail, and they fail, and this
16 happens repeatedly, they invariably become
17 discouraged. They consider themselves
18 failures, they want to give up, they want to
19 stop making the academic effort. They may
20 eventually choose to drop out. Many times
21 this is the result of ELL students being
22 required to march to the beat of one and only
23 one drum.

1 You know, an ELL student may need
2 to remain in high school five years. He may
3 need to attend summer school. He may need to
4 attend tutoring, extra work. This may need to
5 happen in order to continue in his growth, and
6 he will need continual encouragement to see
7 growth and to see progress. And success.
8 Progress and growth is success. And growth
9 and progress lead to successful completion of
10 his high school diploma. We need teacher,
11 administrators, assessment developers who see
12 growth and progress as success, not as
13 failure.

14 According to the Texas
15 Intercultural Developmental Research
16 Association, over one out of every three
17 students, black and Hispanic, dropped out of
18 school last year. Improving school holding
19 power is critical. Let's implement assessment
20 systems that reward an ELL student for growth
21 and for progress, and encourage him to
22 complete his high school education. Thank
23 you.

1 MS. WEISS: Thanks so much.

2 MS. FORTINO: Good morning. My
3 name is Catalina Fortino. I have been a
4 teacher of English Language Learners for more
5 than 20 years in New York City public schools.

6 As a practitioner, I'm heartened that the US
7 Department of Education is paying close
8 attention to the needs of our students, and
9 the educators who work with them every day at
10 the beginning of this process. Thank you for
11 this opportunity.

12 Improving instruction and closing
13 the achievement gap for ELLs will largely
14 depend on the development and proper
15 implementation of high quality assessments.
16 These high quality assessments must align to
17 standards, to curriculum and instruction, and
18 crucially align to the standards for English
19 language proficiency. We need to have the
20 ability to measure both English language
21 proficiency and academic content knowledge.
22 Only in this way can educators have accessible
23 data to use for effective planning and for

1 students to receive sound instruction.

2 I cannot emphasize enough how much
3 we need ELL-focused reforms in schools around
4 the country, in schools where ELL students are
5 in the majority and in schools where only one
6 or two ELLs attend. The Race to the Top
7 program will be critical to those school
8 reform efforts that include the development of
9 improved assessments for ELLs.

10 Currently, testing practices that
11 assess ELL's content knowledge in English are
12 often not fair, not valid, and neither
13 reliable nor appropriate. Further, these
14 testing practices make it very difficult, if
15 not impossible, to distinguish between lack of
16 linguistic abilities in English and
17 educational progress. Therefore, improvements
18 are greatly needed.

19 Research shows that it takes
20 students two to three years to become
21 proficient in basic interpersonal
22 communication skills, while it takes seven to
23 ten years to acquire cognitive academic

1 language proficiency. I know all too well the
2 toll that a rigorous exam can take on ELLs who
3 have not had enough time to learn the
4 language, the academic language for content
5 areas.

6 In the early stages of language
7 acquisition, research indicates that ELLs
8 encode and decode text in English at a slower
9 pace than they do in their native language.
10 Furthermore, second language processing
11 demands very complex memory recall processes,
12 which makes -- very be compromised when an
13 assessment is not matched to the student's
14 level of English language proficiency.

15 So while there are many factors to
16 be taken into consideration, I'd like the
17 following to be considered and it supports
18 what the research have indicated this morning.

19 Statewide implementation of English language
20 proficiency assessments that are aligned to
21 English language proficiency standards;
22 implementation of uniform, valid and reliable
23 standardized tests of English language

1 proficiency; ensuring that English language
2 arts assessments are not used to measure
3 English language proficiency; ensuring that
4 content assessments are matched to a student's
5 level of English language proficiency.

6 Evaluating the current process
7 involved in developing and implementing the
8 two types of assessments that ELLs take,
9 English language proficiency and content
10 assessments, and making sure that the staff
11 whose responsible for administering these
12 exams has the preparation and resources to do
13 it effectively.

14 I would like to add that if content
15 tests that are not matched to a student's
16 level of English proficiency are used in high
17 stakes decisions, the results of ELLs who have
18 not reached full proficiency will not be
19 valid. Their scores would be at least as much
20 a product of their language level as of their
21 content knowledge.

22 So the Race to the Top assessment
23 program has the potential for schools to

1 examine their current practices in educating
2 English Language Learners and to implement
3 assessments that are responsive and fair,
4 making it possible for our students to
5 succeed, not only to achieve academically, but
6 more important, to become responsible citizens
7 in our democratic society. Thank you very
8 much.

9 MS. WEISS: Thanks.

10 MS. ROBERTSON: Hi. I'm Kristina
11 Robertson from Burnsville, Minnesota. I have
12 been an ESL teacher for about 20 years, and
13 I'm very passionate about this work, and very
14 happy to be here today to share my thoughts
15 with you. Thank you.

16 Some of my students have had an
17 opportunity to learn in their first language
18 before coming to my school, and many of them
19 are holding a pen for the first time. Many of
20 these students enter our educational system at
21 higher grades and yet they are -- they need to
22 meet the same academic standards as their
23 English speaking peers.

1 As a nation, we are trying to do
2 something that has never been done before, to
3 educate first generation immigrants to the
4 level of college ready, even if they arrive in
5 ninth grade with no English skills. This is a
6 tremendous challenge for my students and the
7 educators responsible for their learning. I
8 am very appreciative of this opportunity to
9 share my thoughts with you in order to provide
10 equity in assessment for English Language
11 Learners.

12 President Obama ran his campaign on
13 a message of hope. Sixty-nine percent of
14 eligible Latino voters voted for him. I feel
15 this hope on behalf of my ELL students that
16 new assessments will be developed that will
17 enable them to be successful. To this I say,
18 Yes, we can.

19 This population is important to us
20 in this country. From 1990 to the present, K-
21 12 enrollment has increased by approximately
22 12 to 14 percent. During that same time
23 period, English Language Learner enrollment in

1 our K-12 system has increased by approximately
2 100 percent. Right now we have approximately
3 five million students, English Language
4 Learners, in our system.

5 The achievement gap between English
6 Language Learners and other populations has
7 not narrowed in decades. There has been
8 inadequate assessment, lack of instructional
9 resources, and high dropout rates. Current
10 assessments are not fair or reliable for
11 English Language Learners. They don't measure
12 content, they measure language ability. A
13 test given in a language you don't understand
14 is not a valid test.

15 We need four things. One,
16 alignment of standards, instruction and
17 assessment; two, appropriate accommodations
18 for English Language Learners; three,
19 research-based guidance for English language
20 assessment development; and four, hope.

21 We need to measure English language
22 proficiency and content assessment. We need
23 to promote quality instruction and reliable

1 data for English Language Learners. Alignment
2 is especially important for students with
3 interrupted education. They're way below
4 grade level and educators need accurate
5 information to inform instruction and
6 accelerate their learning.

7 We need English language
8 proficiency standards that align to English
9 language proficiency and content assessments,
10 implementation of uniform standardized tests
11 of English language proficiency, such as the
12 WIDA consortium; evaluation current English
13 language proficiency assessments and increase
14 training and resources, timely reporting of
15 results to assist teachers.

16 If language level is not accounted
17 for in high stakes testing, then results are
18 not valid and it will lead to negative
19 consequences, in addition to preventing ELLs
20 from meeting their educational goals. ELLs
21 continue to take and retake tests only to fail
22 over and over because of language barriers.
23 They internalize the shame of failure and

1 become discouraged. I have seen my students
2 spend six hours in a single day trying to pass
3 a content test that was too difficult for them
4 language-wise. They didn't want to give up,
5 they wanted to be successful. It was
6 heartbreaking and unfair.

7 We need to change test procedures,
8 test materials, and testing environments.
9 Currently testing accommodations were
10 developed for special education students. We
11 need to find the best accommodations for
12 English Language Learners and there are many
13 promising research-based accommodations, as
14 described here today.

15 A note on content assessment
16 accommodations in native language, I agree
17 that they should only be given if it matches
18 the goals for the program, and if the student
19 has had an opportunity to learn academically
20 in that language.

21 We need to use research developed
22 assessments and appropriate training, evaluate
23 the validity of the current ELP and content

1 exams used for accountability, examine ELL
2 access according to their language level,
3 train and support staff in involving making
4 state and district level assessments, ensure
5 ongoing job embedded professional development
6 on language development and assessments so
7 teachers are better able to create formative
8 assessments and improve instruction, begin to
9 phase out paper and pencil tests and implement
10 computerized assessments and evaluate the
11 capacity of sites to handle such computerized
12 assessments, examine the amount of time spent
13 testing and losing instructional time for
14 English Language Learners, secure the long
15 term commitment and resources to carry out
16 this work.

17 We need to rely on the guidance of
18 researchers who are highly qualified in
19 language development and quality assessments,
20 and I'm very happy to see that many of them
21 are here today. Jamal Abedi, Diane August,
22 David Francis, Margo Gottlieb, Charlene Rivera
23 and Robert Linqianti.

1 Let's give hope to my students. I
2 came her with great hope and a quest for
3 educational equity for my ELL students. I
4 leave this meeting confident in the expertise
5 and dedication of the assessment developers
6 and the US Department of Education. I know
7 when it comes to developing quality valid
8 assessment for English Language Learners, I
9 say, Yes, we can. Thank you.

10 MS. WEISS: Thanks so much.

11 Next?

12 (General applause.)

13 DR. SOLANO-FLORES: I have a --

14 MS. WEISS: Does somebody -- do one
15 of you guys have the clicker? Oh, you got it.

16 FEMALE VOICE: There's the clicker.

17 MS. WEISS: Oh, no, it's right
18 there in my hand.

19 DR. SOLANO-FLORES: Is that what
20 you're looking for?

21 MALE VOICE: You got it.

22 (General laughter.)

23 DR. SOLANO-FLORES: All right. My

1 name is Guillermo Solano-Flores. I am a
2 professor of bilingual education at the
3 University of Colorado at Boulder. My formal
4 training is as psychometrician, and I have
5 been doing research for quite a few years on
6 the intersection of psychometrics and socio-
7 linguistics. So a lot of the work that I'm
8 going to share with you today has to do with a
9 conceptual framework that I have been
10 developing on how we can address all these
11 issues of ELL testing, and also I'm going to
12 share some empirical data. Obviously,
13 whatever I can in five minutes.

14 So here's what I see as major
15 threats to the validity of EL testing.
16 Essentially we have three major problems,
17 population misspecification, which is we are
18 never clear about whether we are making
19 appropriate classifications of ELL testing of
20 ELL students. There's a lot of measurement
21 error, the language development tests have
22 been criticized, and also in practice there's
23 a lot of chaos in terms of how students are

1 assigned to course or whether -- or the kinds
2 of decisions that are made regarding when they
3 are ready to be tested.

4 The second major problem is
5 measurement error that is due to the
6 assessment systems. This is something that
7 you don't see very much in publications and
8 policy, but the truth of the matter is that
9 when we try to use accommodations with ELLs,
10 when we make decisions about whether or not
11 should -- they should be tested in one
12 language or in another and that kind of thing,
13 essentially we are making -- are introducing
14 also measurement error. Why? Because we may
15 be making wrong classifications or we may be
16 doing very poor implementation of the
17 accommodations. So that's something that
18 needs to be evaluated too.

19 Then we have overgeneralization.
20 There's an interesting tendency of the public
21 and they want to see, people want to see
22 results that can be easily generalizable to
23 all the ELL students. And in doing so,

1 certainly breakout data are overgeneralized on
2 the assumption that what works for one student
3 is going to work for the others.

4 So as part of research I have
5 investigated language variation and score
6 variation and essentially what we know is that
7 each item poses a unique set of linguistic
8 challenges in each language, but also each ELL
9 is unique as to the strength of weaknesses and
10 strengths in each language. So deciding
11 whether we should test using one or the other
12 language is not as easy to answer because it's
13 going to depend on the student and on the
14 community.

15 Something that I have been
16 insisting lately is that we should look at a
17 process of testing as a communication process.

18 We ask questions to the students, the
19 students answer those questions and we
20 interpret those answers. So what the relation
21 from -- or consequence from this kind of
22 reasoning is that something that we have not
23 done very carefully so far is to really think

1 about the linguistic resources that the
2 assessment systems have. We should evaluate
3 how able are we as assessment systems to
4 really understand what the students are trying
5 to tell us and what kind of skills our
6 educators and test developers have.

7 So let me -- I have only 35
8 seconds, so what I'm going to say is that the
9 sampling -- this is an important issue --
10 language can be viewed as a probabilistic
11 phenomenon, and a sampling then takes a very
12 critical role here. Something that we --
13 that -- it is not regulated and I think that
14 it should be used as a condition for
15 contractors is that representative samples of
16 ELLs participate at all stages in the process
17 of test development and that the linguist,
18 bilingual educators and cultural
19 anthropologists should be part of test
20 development teams.

21 Everybody's going to tell you, Oh,
22 of course we have linguists, and we have
23 anthropologists that we use in our staff. No,

1 we're -- I'm not talking about consultants,
2 I'm not talking about people who come the last
3 day of the meeting, the last day of the
4 project to review superficially the items.
5 I'm talking about part of the stuff. I think
6 that that is something that should be done
7 systematically, that should be regulated. And
8 I guess that that is now for -- that is all
9 for now. Thank you.

10 MS. WEISS: Thanks. We do have
11 your paper here, so we'll look at it. Thank
12 you.

13 DR. COOK: Good morning. My name
14 is Gary Cook. I work at the Wisconsin Center
15 for Education Research as an associate
16 research scientist. At the Center I serve as
17 the Research Director for the WIDA consortium
18 where I work on applied research and policy
19 related issues associated with WIDA and non-
20 WIDA states. And I'd like you to know that my
21 comments here are my own, and I represent my
22 own thoughts and my own opinions.

23 I would like to thank the

1 Department for providing the opportunity to
2 allow the public to comment on the Race to the
3 Top assessment grant program. I'm encouraged
4 by the Department's willingness to engage
5 national experts and the public at large in
6 guiding the development of this grant. And I
7 believe the framework created as a result of
8 these public hearings and the grants awarded
9 as a consequence can have positive and lasting
10 effects on how we assess students in the
11 future.

12 It is the students, and
13 particularly students whose native language is
14 not English that I focus my comments. And I
15 have three short points to make that are
16 really broad and general, and my sense is, to
17 quote Yogi Berra, my comments are going to
18 sound like deja vu all over again.

19 (General laughter.)

20 DR. COOK: First, under the current
21 federal accountability requirements, English
22 Language Learners are treated as a homogenous
23 group. For example, for AYP purposes ELLs are

1 identified as a single subgroup. These
2 students are, in fact, extremely diverse, as
3 we've heard over and over again, and my
4 comments essentially, I hope, put an
5 exclamation point on what's been said.

6 They come from a wonderful array of
7 languages and cultures and educational
8 experiences, and they bring a rich heritage
9 to our schools. We must acknowledge and
10 account for their distinctiveness in the
11 instructions we provide -- in the instruction
12 we provide and the assessments we administer.

13 Specifically, our assessments must
14 be designed in such a way to meaningfully
15 ascertain these students' proficiency in the
16 academic content in which they are assessed.
17 Be that in their native language, on an
18 accommodated assessment form, or with an
19 accommodated assessment procedure.

20 We must acknowledge that the
21 world's -- the majority of the world's people
22 speak more than one language. Isn't it time
23 that we highlight bilingualism and

1 biculturalism as an educational asset? We can
2 do better at assessing these students, and
3 it's my hope and expectation that the awarded
4 Race to the Top assessment grants will promote
5 and enhance the valid and reliable assessment
6 of these diverse students.

7 My second point, current federally
8 funded research projects right now, for
9 example the ONPAR project, are beginning to
10 show us that we can meaningfully assess ELLs
11 in the content areas, especially students at
12 the lowest proficiency levels. Using multi-
13 symbiotic approaches, for example that
14 provided by the ONPAR project, that is
15 approaches using a variety of symbols systems
16 or modalities and advances in computer
17 technology, we can begin getting clearer views
18 of these students' achievement in mathematics
19 and science at the lowest proficiency levels.

20 I believe that the innovative
21 assessment approaches like this could equally
22 be applied to the instruction of academic
23 content. As such, we must not only focus on

1 the appropriate assessment of ELLs in the
2 summative form, but also enhancing content
3 teachers' capacity to educate and to assess
4 these students in the classroom.

5 My third and final point. We must
6 begin to address the current conundrum of when
7 English language proficiency transitions to
8 English language arts. I heartily encourage
9 the Department to address this issue in its
10 proposal language. As mentioned earlier,
11 innovative approaches to assessing mathematics
12 and science have begun to emerge. However,
13 little has been done to clearly understand the
14 language proficiency, the language arts
15 continuum.

16 When we think of the assessment and
17 accountability, we must regard a students'
18 progress in language proficiency as a path
19 toward proficiency in language arts. At some
20 point we must make the distinction between
21 these two concepts. The new and innovative
22 assessment solicited by the assessment program
23 must address this issue.

1 I urge the Department to consider
2 at a minimum encouraging the development of
3 assessment systems that help bridge this gap
4 between language proficiency and language
5 arts. As we move toward a common set of
6 content expectations currently manifested in
7 the common core standards project, we have an
8 unprecedented opportunity to address this
9 point.

10 I'm going to diverge just a little
11 bit from my script. I also think we need to
12 deal with this issue of academic language, and
13 the assessments that we develop, both in
14 science and mathematics, need to deal with
15 this issue. How we get the academic discourse
16 in the assessments that we provide to support
17 students' achievement.

18 I look forward to seeing how this
19 program unfolds, and I'm hoping that the
20 systems developed as a result of this grant
21 will greatly aid the instruction of English
22 Language Learners and the achievement of those
23 students. Thank you for the time and for my

1 opportunity to share my thoughts.

2 MS. WEISS: Thanks, Gary.

3 DR. FORTE: Good afternoon. I'm
4 Ellen Forte, president of edCount, LLC. We're
5 a small company based in Washington and get
6 involved in things like working AIR in the
7 national evaluation of Title III. We are the
8 lead contractor on an enhanced assessment
9 grant that was just awarded to the state of
10 Washington, where we're working in partnership
11 with Washington, Idaho, Montana, Indiana and
12 Oregon to apply the argument-based validity
13 evaluation approach to English language
14 proficiency assessments. We're commissioned
15 by Thompson to write a book on Title III
16 policy and we do a lot of work in Puerto Rico.

17 So every time I hear English language
18 proficiency, I'm thinking Spanish language
19 proficiency also.

20 I'd like to thank the Department
21 for convening this -- you won't know I'm from
22 Iowa, by the way, by my rate of speech; I'm
23 just trying to get through it -- for convening

1 this meeting, especially when we have a
2 panoramic view from the 38th floor of a hotel
3 in the Mile High City for the Race to the Top
4 conversation. It's really proving the point,
5 and I do hope to make four points in the next
6 few minutes.

7 First, we have an obligation to
8 provide better assessment opportunities for
9 our English learners than those now widely
10 used. Second, we must involve state and local
11 educators in conversations about assessing ELs
12 and not rely solely on advice from
13 researchers. Third, we must not assume that
14 better standards and assessments lead directly
15 to better instruction. And fourth, we must
16 support efforts to integrate Titles I and III
17 in part so that we can apply the same rigors
18 to the assessment of English learners as we
19 have the assessment of other students,
20 including students with disabilities.

21 To the first point, we've an
22 obligation to provide better assessment
23 opportunities for English learners than those

1 now widely used. It's important to note that
2 everyone here is passionate about high quality
3 education for English learners as for all
4 other students. Where we differ is in own
5 life experiences and areas of expertise that
6 contribute to our individual perspectives on
7 how best to support ELs education.

8 I come from the field of student
9 assessment where I give expertise in the
10 development and application of rigorous tools
11 to assess what students know and where I
12 quickly learned that students who did not fit
13 within certain parameters are generally cast
14 aside. As Dr. Abedi noted, the models don't
15 fit, and these students have generally been
16 exempted from testing, or tested improperly,
17 and often exempted from the curriculum that
18 testing is supposed to reflect.

19 I also come from a family of
20 educators who, albeit monolinguals, were
21 specialists in communications in the arts.
22 From that background I acquired belief in the
23 inherent right to express oneself and be

1 heard. As well as a responsibility of
2 educators to find out what their students know
3 and can do and to teach and evaluate based on
4 that.

5 Sometimes this means you need to
6 change what you ask, how you ask it, and what
7 you recognize as a valid response. It means
8 that no student is ever cast aside because you
9 have the tools to connect with her. But that
10 is what we continue to do.

11 As an example, we continue to rely
12 far too heavily on accommodations, even though
13 we lack strong evidence for the effectiveness
14 of a) most accommodations for any student, and
15 b) any accommodations for some students. We
16 know that accommodations are generally not
17 chosen appropriately for individual students,
18 and that they're often not available at the
19 time of testing. We even have evidence that
20 some accommodations and some combinations of
21 accommodations actually hinder students
22 performance.

23 Accommodations are often likened to

1 eyeglasses for those whose eyesight is
2 impaired. For ELs, however, eyeglasses aren't
3 going to work very well, and the assessment is
4 out of focus because the language acquisition
5 experts were themselves exempted from the
6 standards in the assessment development
7 process. We use accommodations because
8 they're cheaper, not because they essentially
9 support score meaning for most users.

10 I want to underscore something that
11 Dr. Liguanti said, the most promising
12 approach so far involves student profiles.
13 Rebecca Kopriva's work around the state of
14 South Carolina is something you want to look
15 into very carefully.

16 Native language assessments are
17 also not necessarily the right option for many
18 ELs because these students often lack academic
19 literacy in their native language. The better
20 answer is to rethink our assessment
21 development processes and include
22 consideration of English learners in the
23 interplay of cognition and language, which you

1 really can never pull apart, text and graphics
2 from the outset.

3 The second point, you must involve
4 state and local educators in conversations
5 about assessing English learners and not rely
6 solely on advice from researchers. It is far
7 too common to exclude those who actually work
8 with ELs on a daily basis from the process by
9 which policy decisions that have major
10 implications for their students are made.
11 Their involvement is especially critical when
12 a teacher is an integral participant in the
13 assessment process, as is the case for at
14 least the speaking components of English
15 language proficiency assessments and the
16 accommodations and alternate assessment
17 decisions for academic content assessments.

18 I must note that we do not have an
19 adequate teaching force in this area,
20 certainly with the exceptions here of our
21 teachers in the speaking panel. We have a
22 huge in-service deficit and that means that we
23 have no place for student teachers to go when

1 they want to be mentored in learning how to
2 address the needs of English learners.

3 Third, we must not assume that
4 better standards and assessments lead to
5 better instruction. There are many layers
6 between standards and classroom practice,
7 including the dissemination of and
8 professional development around the standards,
9 teacher background knowledge and skills,
10 example the teachers know how to develop
11 standards-based curricula and deliver
12 instruction in relation to their standards for
13 the students in their classrooms, and teacher
14 orientation. Do students -- do teachers
15 actually believe in the standards and the
16 relevance of their use to positive student
17 outcomes.

18 Any assumption that a set of
19 national standards, the adoption of a common
20 core will translate into changes at the
21 classroom level is entirely unfounded. The
22 decision to exclude language acquisition
23 experts in the development of the first set of

1 common core standards was shortsighted and
2 insulting. Again, addressing the problem in
3 the first place is far better than applying a
4 band-aid later on.

5 The last sentence, finally we must
6 support efforts to integrate Title I and Title
7 III in part so we can apply the same rigor to
8 the assessment of English learners to the
9 assessment of other students,. Academic
10 language proficiency effects the performance
11 of all students, not just English learners,
12 and I'm sure that low levels of academic
13 language proficiency do effect the performance
14 of native speakers of English who are low
15 achievers. This cuts across our native
16 speakers and our English learner populations.

17 Thank you.

18 MS. WEISS: Thanks so much.

19 DR. WILLHOFT: Good morning. My
20 name is Joe Willhoft, and I am with the Office
21 of Superintendent of Public Instruction in the
22 state of Washington. I'm the Assessment
23 Director there. I want to thank you for

1 hosting these meetings. I want to
2 particularly thank you for staying awake for
3 all of yesterday and most of this morning
4 anyway. The end is close, so we'll get there
5 soon.

6 I'm going to stray a little bit
7 from my prepared remarks to make a particular
8 point that's embedded in them. We've heard a
9 lot today about the variety that English
10 Language Learners bring to our schools and to
11 our states. But one aspect of that variety
12 that I don't think has been addressed
13 sufficiently is the issue of language density.

14 The number of languages that we have across
15 our states and how different our states are in
16 that regard.

17 For local school districts and for
18 states this does present a challenge.
19 Youngsters come to us from small language
20 groups, they may have a larger community that
21 they can draw upon, but if they're relatively
22 isolated, that presents another learning
23 challenge for them. Additionally, the adult

1 supports for youngsters in the schools may not
2 speak the language that the youngster speaks.

3 So these do present unique problems and
4 challenges for those youngsters.

5 But with regard to the Race to the
6 Top, I think it also presents a consortium
7 challenge with regard to how are states going
8 to build consortia and build common
9 assessments across states when the states
10 really differ quite a deal in this particular
11 dynamic.

12 We heard earlier that Spanish
13 speakers represent about 80 percent of the ELL
14 population. In Washington they represent 60
15 percent of the ELL population. That's a very
16 different dynamic. Four out of ten ELLs in
17 Washington speak other languages. The second
18 most popular language in Washington is spoken
19 by only 6 percent of the youngsters, however.

20 So we just have a huge variety of language
21 diversity within the state, and across
22 different states. Consider New York and the
23 Chinese language subgroup, consider New Mexico

1 and the Navajo language subgroup, and so forth
2 and so on.

3 So I would encourage the Department
4 to look carefully at ways to structure the
5 guidelines for the proposals to address this
6 issue and make sure that what assessments come
7 out of a consortium of assessments would be
8 able to meet this various need.

9 My presentation provides an example
10 of the way we've addressed this problem, but
11 I'm sure it's not the only solution, so I
12 won't go into that detail right now. And
13 thank you very much for your time and
14 attention.

15 MS. WEISS: Thanks.

16 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Good morning. My
17 name is EJ Rodriguez. I'm the English
18 Language Acquisition Director for Denver
19 Public Schools. Welcome to my town.

20 (General laughter.)

21 MR. RODRIGUEZ: And I'm going to
22 tell you a little bit about Denver Public
23 Schools and some of the best practices that

1 have been implemented by our teachers in
2 assessment that may be promising.

3 But we wanted to kind of emphasize
4 a little bit more about the great difficulty
5 of defining who is an ELL. In my town we have
6 basically three different type of ELLs. We
7 have ELLs who are recent immigrants, or
8 migrants or recent immigrants. We have about
9 a third of our students who are in first
10 language classes, and Spanish mostly. We have
11 also -- these students might have certain
12 degree of education, they very likely do, but
13 we don't know that because we don't know how
14 to assess it, we don't have the tools to
15 assess their educational levels in L1
16 available.

17 And about 52 percent of our
18 students in Denver are Spanish speakers. I'm
19 talking about 16,000 students in my program,
20 and approximately about 28 students including
21 those that are not in the program.

22 The other type of ELLs we have are
23 those which Kathy Escamilla will call the

1 emerging bilinguals, that are students that
2 are born in the United States but they have
3 been exposed to their home language as well as
4 English. These students, we have about 66
5 percent of our students here in Denver who are
6 ELL who are these type of emerging bilingual
7 students. We also have students of migrant
8 families. This population tends to be very
9 mobile and they have also their challenges
10 related to their mobility.

11 But I want to emphasize that even
12 though these groups are different, by the time
13 to enter the school season, they are very much
14 alike because they find many different of the
15 same challenges. It's not the same for a kid
16 entering in, say, kindergarten that knows
17 English already than a student that is coming
18 to into kindergarten with a different
19 language.

20 But we sometimes tend to treat that
21 part of our clientele as, you know, it is your
22 fault that you don't speak English because
23 we're teaching English. And I think that

1 that's an erroneous way to look at how we
2 serve our clients, and I'll keep referring to
3 them as our clients, because they are the ones
4 that basically pay the bills for us.

5 Also, the current state of
6 assessment is that since we don't have
7 assessment tools that can help our students
8 express what they know in L1, we have a very
9 blind way to approach the baseline. Our
10 assessments mostly are interested in knowing
11 what the students know in English, which by
12 nature will affect the reliability of the
13 assessments we trying to implement.

14 What should an assessment do?
15 There are two great questions, what do a
16 student know in the content, or in literacy in
17 what students can express in English. I'm
18 going to say that I don't think that divorcing
19 these two things is an advantage to us because
20 how many colleges in the United States
21 actually do allow or will have all the classes
22 in Spanish, for example. Our students will
23 need to be required to learn English, academic

1 English through the educational process.

2 We would like to see the
3 characteristics of those exams, those
4 assessments are focused, continuously focused
5 on the state and national standards, but they
6 are differentiated to their linguistic levels
7 of the students. And that can be done. I
8 mean we have assessments already developed
9 through technology or assessments that have
10 been implemented, for example, for gifted and
11 talented and highly gifted and talented that
12 are very much deprived of language. We can
13 use the same approach to create assessment
14 tools that can tell us at all levels what the
15 students know about content and what the
16 students know about the content in English as
17 well.

18 We have also -- we know that
19 technology can assist in assessing and
20 developing literacy for example. We have a
21 lot of this technology that can move into one
22 language and the other. I think that it will
23 be very important that we look at what those

1 technologies can offer.

2 We have examples here in Denver
3 through a couple of companies we have been
4 partnered with. Imagine Learning is one of
5 them, and the other one is Ellis by Pearson
6 that has some of these technologies and we
7 have been seeing some very exciting results in
8 the schools that are implementing these
9 technologies. In the area of math which have
10 Java tools for interactive demonstrations, and
11 things of that nature.

12 So we would like -- we envision
13 assessments that can be administered quickly,
14 that can influence the instructional process
15 rather than informing at the end, and we would
16 like see that the folks implementing these
17 assessments and using the scoring system have
18 a good amount of training on issues of English
19 Language Learners.

20 I thank you for the opportunity,
21 and I hope you take a little moment to enjoy
22 the beautiful city we offer you.

23 MS. WEISS: Thank you.

1 Our last speaker is actually
2 speakers.

3 (General laughter.)

4 MS. FLORES: Hello. Thank you so
5 much for allowing us to do this, and thank you
6 for the opportunity to share our insights.
7 We're both from California. My name is
8 Barbara Flores. I'm currently a teacher,
9 bilingual teacher educator at California State
10 University San Bernardino, and also a director
11 for CAFE, California Association of Bilingual
12 Education. I'm here representing them. And I
13 also am a school board member newly elected,
14 so I see it from multiple perspectives.

15 California has about 25 percent of
16 the nation's English Language Learners, and in
17 some districts it's 40 percent or higher.
18 Double testing in Title I and Title III in
19 California has had devastating effects on
20 labeling English Language Learners as the
21 group responsible for labeling students,
22 schools and districts as program improvement,
23 and I personally have seen that as a school

1 board member.

2 MS. LAVADENZ: Good morning. My
3 name is Magaly Lavadenz. I'm a professor and
4 Director of Bilingual Education at Loyola
5 Marymount University, where I also direct the
6 Center for Equity for English Learners. And I
7 thank you, thank the panel for putting English
8 learners at the forefront of examining testing
9 and assessment policies that coincide with
10 larger federal education policies to inform
11 education for English learners.

12 In addressing your questions, it's
13 important to address that assessments for
14 English learners are based on accurate English
15 learner student profiles through a strength-
16 based theory of action. This theory of action
17 would account for the diversity of the English
18 learner population and mandates a variety of
19 research-based accommodations and assessment
20 practices to specifically address the academic
21 content knowledge and language proficiency
22 levels of English learners through many of the
23 things through which we concur that the panel

1 has stated today.

2 This strength-based approach also
3 fosters the creativity and innovation which
4 are admired, US traits that admired by our
5 international competitors and they're emulated
6 by them. And encounters our competitor's
7 test-driven systems that prohibit innovation
8 and creativity.

9 The English learner student profile
10 should include indicators of strengths, such
11 as proficiency level, educational background
12 in L1, length of stay in US schools, and
13 program of instruction. Student profiles
14 would simultaneously serve to inform
15 instruction and follow students to track
16 developmental, vertical and horizontal
17 progress for ELs throughout their schooling
18 trajectories.

19 It's also important to reiterate
20 that all assessments developed through this
21 consortia should have validity and reliability
22 issues at the forefront and that experts from
23 practitioners to universities to think policy

1 makers be involved in the process.

2 MS. FLORES: For question one we
3 actually have 12 recommendations, but for the
4 sake of time I'll only specify three. We
5 believe that assessments in reading and
6 language arts need to be developed across the
7 four language domains, listening, speaking,
8 reading and writing in L1 and L2, and across
9 genres both narrative and expository text.

10 Secondly, there is a need to expand
11 the types of performance-based assessments,
12 both by domain, by genres and by EL
13 proficiency levels. And thirdly, that for
14 elementary students, grade 3 through 5, and
15 also 6, retellings, both oral and written, L1
16 and L2, be one pathway to assess students
17 comprehension and thus allow students at
18 different proficiency levels to demonstrate
19 what they know and what they can do.

20 The oral retellings provides the
21 opportunity for the teacher and the school to
22 gauge the English learner development
23 proficiency level simultaneously with

1 comprehension, reading comprehension. Scoring
2 through valid and reliable instruments or
3 rubrics such as running records, missed cue
4 analysis demonstrate growth and inform
5 instruction.

6 MS. LAVADENZ: I forgot to say that
7 I'm representing Californians Together, an
8 organization, coalition of 23 statewide
9 professional parent and civil rights
10 organizations focused on the education of
11 English learners.

12 To continue with statement one, we
13 implore the policy makers to look at the
14 recommendations by the technical advisory
15 panel and uniform national rules for NAEP
16 testing of English learners to be implemented
17 to include and implement a temporary waiver of
18 annual yearly progress requirements while
19 consortia engage in assessment reform, and to
20 also take into consideration that assessment
21 systems should be curriculum embedded to
22 include formative assessments as well as those
23 summative assessments.

1 To answer Question 2, I just want
2 to say one point that has not been stated
3 before, and that is that there should be
4 alignment with other national movements around
5 world languages and the preparation of a
6 global citizenry. That is that as Spanish and
7 Chinese are two of the top world languages, L1
8 testing and testing in non-English languages
9 should align and support other initiatives
10 promulgated by the federal government such as
11 the world language initiatives and strategic
12 language initiatives.

13 MS. FLORES: Is that it?

14 MS. WEISS: Yes.

15 MS. FLORES: Okay.

16 (General laughter.)

17 MS. WEISS: Thank you so much.

18 MS. FLORES: So you'll read the
19 other ones.

20 MS. WEISS: Yes, we have them.

21 MS. FLORES: Okay.

22 MS. WEISS: Thanks. So we just
23 wanted to take a last minute, which is all we

1 have, to thank you all once again for coming.

2 Anyone who is flying back home today, we wish
3 you safe travels. For those of you who are
4 coming to our technical assistance workshop,
5 we'll see you there tomorrow.

6 And, again, thank you so, so much
7 for coming and giving us your attention. I
8 hope it was useful and productive for you.
9 And thanks again to our experts.

10 (General applause.)

11 (Whereupon, at 12:30 p.m., the
12 meeting was concluded.)

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