

English Language Proficiency Assessment at Grade 9 (ELPA) Assessment Results 2019-2020

Background

This assessment was administered to Grade 9 students in January 2020 to assess reading proficiency based on end of Grade 8 provincial reading standards. Writing, speaking and listening are assessed at the classroom level. Successful completion of the *ELPA* is a graduation requirement unless an exemption is granted. Students who are unsuccessful in Grade 9 have opportunities to re-write the *ELPA* in Grade 11, after receiving support, and again in Grade 12, if necessary.

In 2017-18, EECD's Anglophone sector began transitioning its methodology for analyzing provincial assessment results from Classical Test Theory (CTT) to Item Response Theory (IRT). This was part of an EECD commitment to a shared methodological approach between the two linguistic sectors.

The *ELPA* was the only remaining provincial assessment still being analyzed using the CTT methodology. This year the transition to IRT methodology was completed.

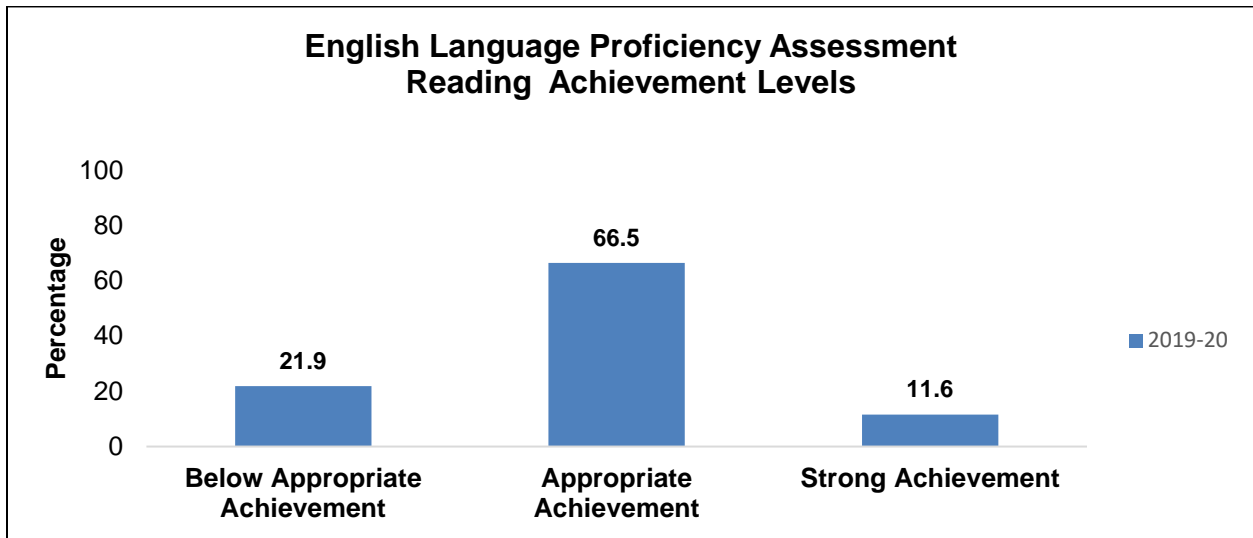
Application of IRT:

- permits more precise equating of results from year to year ensuring changes in results are attributable to the ability level of the student cohort, not changes in the assessment
- factors the difficulty level of each assessment item into the calculation of results
- provides assessment item developers with information from seven specific statistical parameters to improve precision of assessment items
- provides greater precision for calculating student scores and ability levels

Although establishment of a new baseline means loss of comparability with historical data, increased fairness for students due to the precision of IRT is a compelling reason to switch.

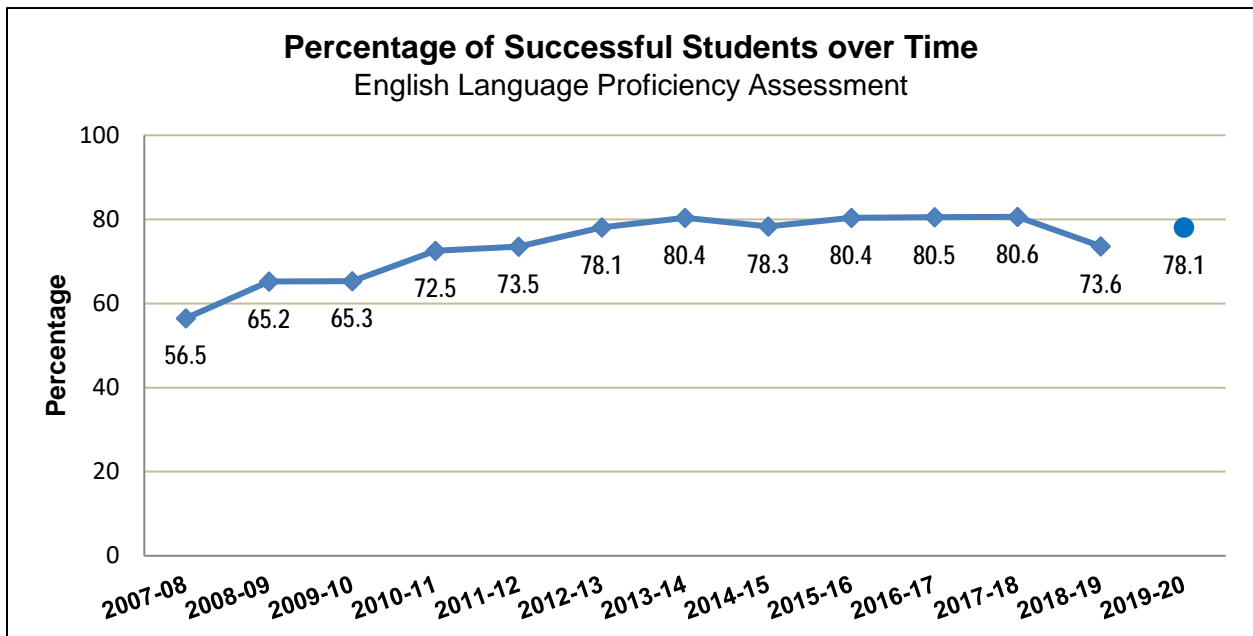
Results

Of the 4957 registered Grade 9 students, 78.1% were successful. As illustrated in the graph below, of these students, 21.9% were not successful, 66.5% attained *Appropriate Achievement* and 11.6% attained *Strong Achievement*.

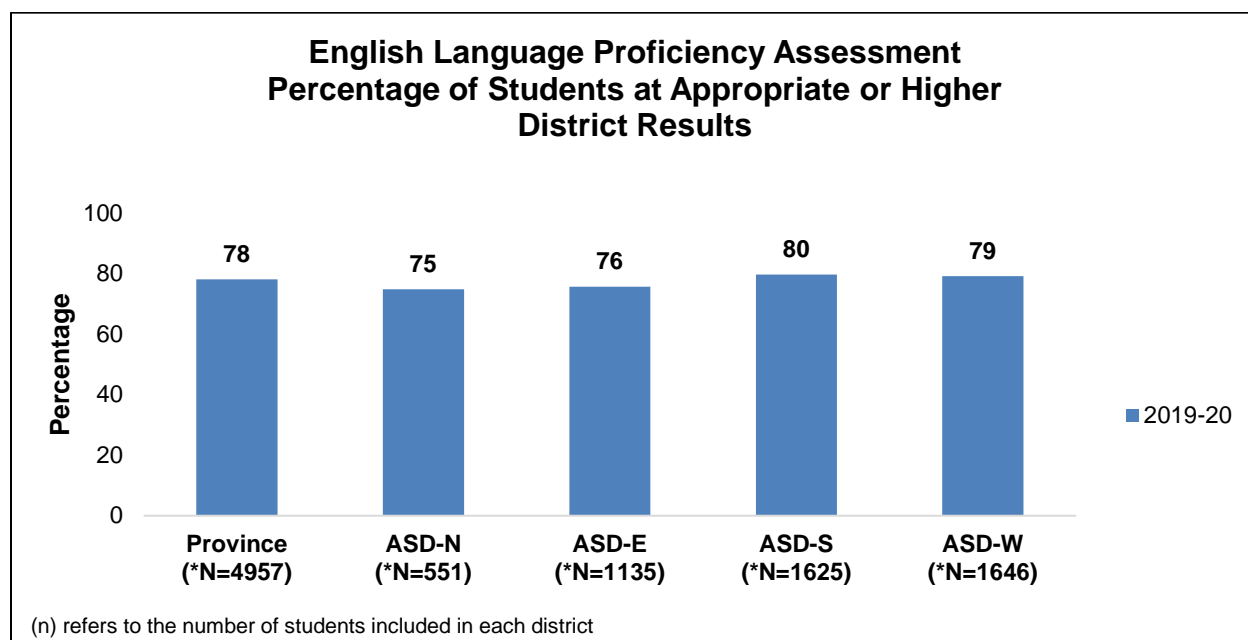


Note: results do not include exempted students.

The following graph includes historical data and the new baseline. Because of the change of methodology, the results of this year's *ELPA* cannot be directly compared with those of previous years, however, it is confirmed that performance of the 2018-19 and 2019-20 cohorts was weaker than that of the 2017-18 cohort.



The graph below indicates the percentage of successful students provincially and for each school district.



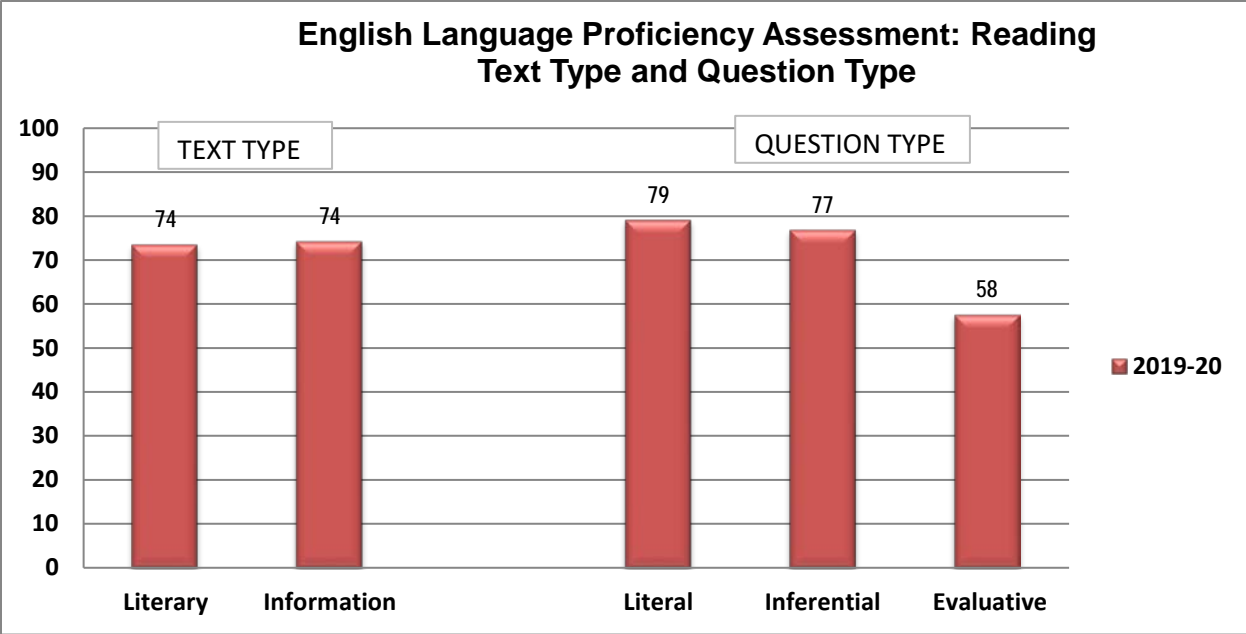
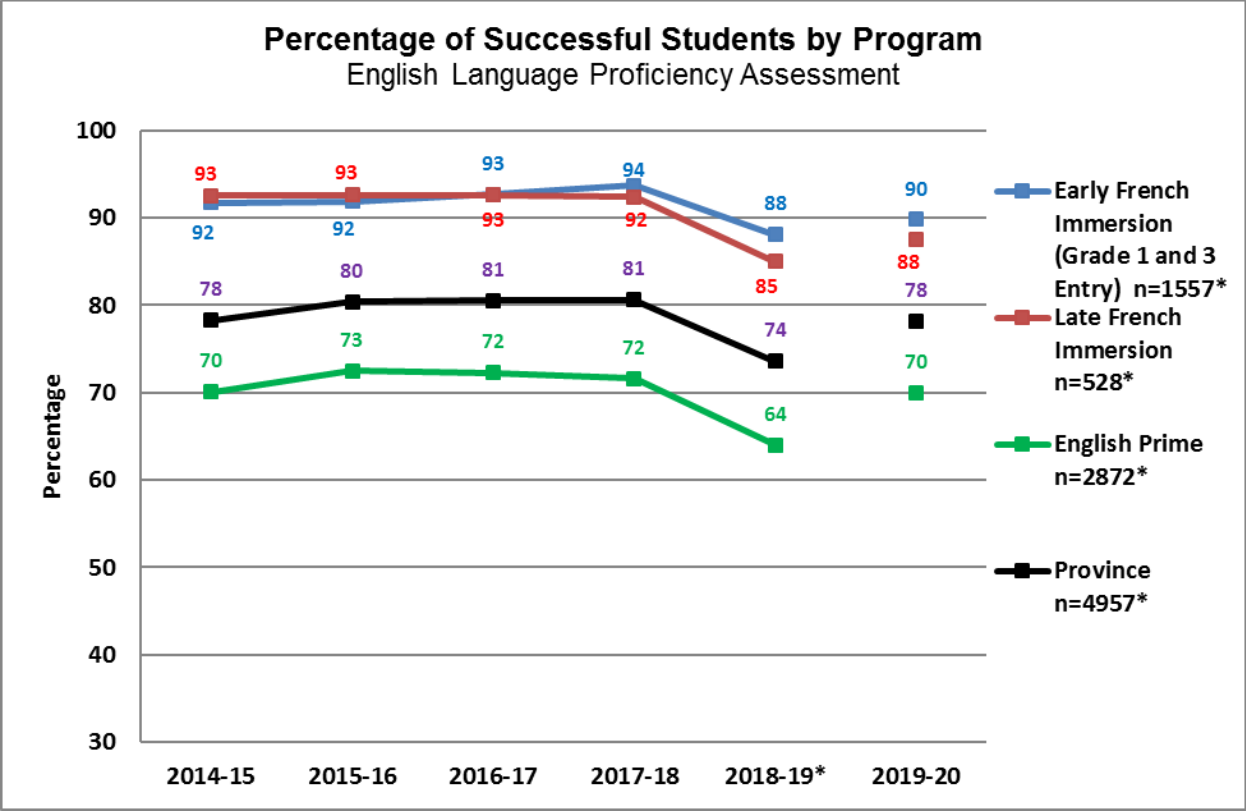
Exemption rates for the *ELPA* are displayed in the table below. The provincial exemption rate has ranged between 4.4% and 3.8% during the past three years.

2019-20 ELPA Exemptions

District	Number of Grade 9 Students	Number of Students Exempted	Percent Exempt
ASD North	578	27	4.7%
ASD East	1170	35	3.0%
ASD South	1686	61	3.6%
ASD West	1719	73	4.2%
Province	5153	196	3.8%

The graph on the next page indicates the percentage of successful students by language program.

The assessment includes two text types, literary and informational, and three question types, literal, inferential, and evaluative. Overall, students achievement is similar for literary and informational texts, and they perform best on literal questions.



Description of *Appropriate Achievement* for Reading at the End of Grade 8

Text Type

Literary Texts

- *Continuous Prose*: short stories, myths, legends, drama, etc.
- *Non-continuous Prose and Poetry*: poems, song lyrics, comics, excerpts from graphic novels, etc.

Information Texts

- *Continuous Information Text*: articles, descriptive reports, short biographies, etc.
- *Non-continuous Information Text*: charts, graphs, maps, recipes, schedules, advertisements, graphic hybrid texts, etc.

Question Type

Literal Response: Reading “the lines”

- Respond accurately to most literal questions; skim large amount of text in search of information, locate literal information from a variety of texts
- Identify key story elements (setting, characters, events, problem/resolution, theme/lesson) of a narrative text; explain how events are related to the theme
- Distinguish between main ideas and supporting details; concisely summarize key information

Inferential Response: Reading “between the lines”

- Make logical inferences about multiple complex characters (motivations, traits, feelings or personality), and story events; describe relationships among characters and effect on the plot or overall theme
- Interpret relationships among ideas to draw conclusions (e.g., plot, sequence, cause/effect, problem/solution) or make comparisons
- Use context clues and prior knowledge to explain the meaning of new vocabulary/technical terms; interpret subtle shades of meaning, and figurative and descriptive language; interpret symbols (objects, events, motifs) used by the author to convey meaning
- Interpret/use text features to understand the text (headings and subheadings, cutaways, legends, diagrams, maps, graphs, glossaries, captions, charts, feature boxes, sidebars); make general inferences using this information

Personal/Critical/Evaluative Response: Reading “beyond the lines”

- Make personal connections: compare/contrast with relevant prior knowledge and make logical text-to-text, text-to-world comparisons; connect characters within and across texts/genres by circumstances, traits, or actions
- Explain how the different elements of an author’s style/techniques (e.g., dialect, descriptions, figurative language, flashbacks, foreshadowing, symbolism) create meaning and reaction
- Respond critically to texts: recognize language used to manipulate, persuade, or control; detect prejudice, stereotyping and bias
- Evaluate purpose, structure, and characteristics of a variety of text forms (e.g., short story, ballad, report, explanation, persuasive, autobiography, science fiction, fantasy)