

## **Appendix A: English Language Proficiency Levels**

A Cross-Reference of Proficiency Level Descriptions within Communicative Domains

### **BEGINNING**

#### **Listening**

Associate familiar and unfamiliar sounds, rhythms, and patterns of English to create limited meaning. Develop limited receptive academic and social vocabulary for listening comprehension in high context-embedded settings with heavy support (visuals, realia, manipulatives, modeling, gestures, etc.).

#### **Speaking**

Initially may not produce speech (known as the “silent period” – a natural phase of second language acquisition) or are just beginning to formulate words. May communicate non-verbally through gestures, pointing, nodding, drawing, etc., or may communicate in their first language (L1). May repeat or recite isolated words or simple routine expressions (i.e. Good morning!) in English in social and academic settings.

#### **Reading**

Rely on heavy visual, non-print support in high context-embedded text to create limited comprehension. Begin to associate written language patterns with oral language.

#### **Writing**

Communicate ideas and feelings through drawings and isolated words in English or in L1. Can copy words or simple phrases from a picture dictionary, word wall, etc. Write for self—little or no sense of audience, purpose, or personality. May use invented spelling. Do not yet apply conventions of grammar, spelling, or word order.

### **HIGH BEGINNING**

#### **Listening**

Listen with greater understanding in both social and academic settings that include slightly extended discourse. Further develop receptive vocabulary for listening comprehension in high context-embedded settings with continued support. Recognize key vocabulary and some details to create comprehension of academic concepts.

#### **Speaking**

Experiment with the English language to communicate, using phrases and short sentences with some hesitation, grammatical inaccuracy, and pronunciation errors. Limited fluency and lack of full development of ideas and thoughts are present and may inhibit comprehension. Basic general vocabulary (nouns, verbs, and some adjectives), routine expressions, and familiar, patterned phrases are used to ask/answer questions and to make statements. May use some academic vocabulary from content areas. May repeat/recite or generate simple phrases (I like...)/kernel sentences (Dogs bark.) in academic and social settings.

## Kansas Curricular Standards for English for Speakers of Other Languages

### **Reading**

Begin to interpret written text that is context-embedded, with strong visual support. Read grade-appropriate sight words and high frequency words while recognizing key vocabulary with limited comprehension.

### **Writing**

Use a loose collection of sentences that reveal limited mastery of English syntax and fluency. Write for self, but begin to express their personality and personal thoughts. Approximate spelling of words. Errors often obscure meaning. Grammatical forms may include present tense, present progressive, and the imperative.

## **INTERMEDIATE**

### **Listening**

Able to comprehend most social and some academic conversations that are context-embedded and supported. Able to engage in longer discourse.

### **Speaking**

Exhibit a command of conversational English and engage in conversations that produce strings of simple to basic complex sentences and narratives. Increasingly use English related to academic tasks. Express more complex thoughts, although may rely heavily on familiar phrases or vocabulary. Grammatical errors may still be common but rarely obscure meaning. Possess sufficient vocabulary to demonstrate critical thinking.

### **Reading**

Increased ability to comprehend heavily contextualized print, using prior knowledge.

### **Writing**

Writing conveys complex meaning and detail using simple forms. Sentences are mostly simple but usually complete, with some variation in structure and usually in the past or present tense. Writing may include loosely connected sentences, but there is evidence of emerging fluency. Writing demonstrates an audience beyond self but may lack clarity and lack sufficient elaboration. Usually spell commonly used words correctly and exhibit increasing command of basic writing conventions.

## **HIGH INTERMEDIATE**

### **Listening**

Listen effectively in most formal and informal settings. Develop listening strategies for context-reduced settings that are more cognitively demanding.

### **Speaking**

Initiate and participate in social conversations with ease. Express self with more complexity and with greater detail. Grammatical errors may still occur but rarely interfere with communication.

## Kansas Curricular Standards for English for Speakers of Other Languages

### **Reading**

Approach grade-level standards. Rely on context and prior knowledge to obtain meaning from print but apply with increasing consistency appropriate English usage to a wide variety of literacy needs. Complex sentence structures and abstract vocabulary may impede comprehension.

### **Writing**

Approach grade-level standards with minimal support. Vocabulary use and writing usually demonstrate understanding of audience and purpose. Writing demonstrates evidence of purposeful organization and elaboration of central idea, incident, or problem. Generally fluent but still acquiring irregular verbs, additional tenses and mood, and more complex vocabulary and sentence structures.

## **ADVANCED**

### **Listening**

Comprehend general and implied meaning, including figurative and idiomatic language. Able to function effectively in an environment with native-English-speaking peers with minimal language support or guidance.

### **Speaking**

Have full command of conversational English and utilize language related to academic tasks approximating that of native English-speakers. Initiate and negotiate conversations using appropriate discourse, varied grammatical structures, and vocabulary effectively. Pronunciation, intonation, grammar, and syntax are near native. Students can express themselves fluently and spontaneously on a wide range of topics, in a variety of contexts.

### **Reading**

Comprehend general and implied meaning, including figurative and idiomatic language on a wide range of topics and in a variety of contexts. Comprehend complex and varied genres of text.

### **Writing**

Use grade-level vocabulary, structures, conventions, and organization in independent writing to produce a variety of text for personal and academic purposes.

Adapted from *Teaching English language learners: The how-to handbook*, Walter, T., White Plains, NY: Pearson Education, 2004.