



League of United Latin American Citizens

July 24, 2013

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Achieve, Inc.
1400 16th Street NW, Suite 510
Washington, DC 20036

Re: Spanish Language Assessment as an Accommodation for ELLs

Dear Achieve, Inc., PARCC Executive Committee, and PARCC Governing Board:

The League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), the nation's oldest and largest Latino civil rights organization, is committed to advancing the educational attainment of Hispanics across the country. Of great importance to our organization, is closing the achievement gap between Latino students and their peers, and of particular concern are our country's English language learners (ELLs). With the move nationally towards adopting and implementing Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), we write in support of the development of a Spanish language version of the PARCC assessment aligned with the teaching of new Common Core State Standards.

As states across the country move to implement the CCSS, our organization believes it is critically important to ensure that ELLs have the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of academic standards through objective assessment. Federal non-regulatory guidance on standards and assessment (2003) states that "to the extent practicable, states must make every effort to develop and administer native language assessments, if doing is likely to yield the most accurate and reliable information about what those students know and can do." In addition, given the ever-increasing percentage of ELLs in public schools across the country, it is imperative that appropriate assessment accommodations are provided to all students, including ELLs.

It has come to our understanding that some states within the PARCC consortium need Spanish language assessments to continue to provide ELLs in their states the widest range of assessment accommodations possible. For example, New Mexico's state assessment policy and regulation follows the federal guidance and provides eligible ELLs with native language assessment in Spanish. To administer the coming PARCC assessments without offering Spanish language version of the assessment would mean New Mexico would violate its own assessment policy and regulation and would, to the detriment of students, narrow the range of tools used to adequately monitor and assess the content knowledge of ELLs in that state. Given the demographic and state policy on the issue, other states share similar concerns as New Mexico.

Therefore, on behalf of ELL students in PARCC member states, our organization urges you to move forward with the development of Spanish language assessments for tested content areas (i.e. Reading/ Language Arts and Mathematics) as quickly as possible. Accurate student assessment data provides educators with the necessary information to drive informed decision-making about instructional programming for students, including

ELLs. To close the achievement gap, we must know what all students can do and plan for their academic and language learning needs accordingly.

Since 1929 the League of United Latin American Citizens has fought hard to ensure the Latino students have equitable access to the supports and resources necessarily to obtain a good quality education. The CCSS, through proper implementation, monitoring, and assessment, offers our students the opportunity to obtain an internationally benchmarked education. We expect that you will agree with our conclusions regarding the need for a Spanish language version of the coming PARCC CCSS assessment and will honor our request to move forward with its development to support ELLs and Latino students across PARCC member states.

Our organization is glad to discuss this issue further and looks forward to working with you to provide our schools with the adequate tools to ensure that Latino students have equitable access to the supports and resources needed to benefit from the implementation of CCSS. Please do not hesitate to contact Luis Torres, LULAC's Director of Education Policy, at 202-833-6130 or latorres@lulac.org should you have any questions or would like more information.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Margaret Moran". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Margaret" written in a larger, more prominent hand than the last name "Moran".

Margaret Moran
LULAC National President