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BOARD APPROVES NEW TEST FOR LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT STUDENTS

Boise - The State Board of Education has approved a new assessment to gauge how well Idaho students know English.

The test is part of the State Board's commitment to increase the student achievement of limited English proficient (LEP) students and to fully meet the federal requirement.

The new test will be called the "Idaho English Language Proficiency Assessment" (IELPA). Students who are considered limited English proficient or LEP will be required to take the test beginning spring 2006.

To implement the statewide assessment, the Board approved a three-year, \$1.79 million contract with Touchstone Applied Sciences Associates. The company currently contracts with several states, including Arkansas, Rhode Island and Missouri, for language proficiency assessments. As part of the contract the company will write, distribute and score the tests. The test will measure speaking, reading and writing. The tests will be given using paper and pencil, but submission of student information will be collected and scores will be reported using web-based reporting.