

English Language Proficiency Assessment: Assessment Administration for Newly Arrived Students Under ESSA

School and district officials responsible for assessing the English Language Proficiency (ELP) of newcomer students (those who are new to formal schooling in the United States) face a dilemma with regards to timing and multiple assessments when those newcomers arrive later in the school year. To determine what states are providing in their ESSA State Plans regarding newly arrived students that come later in the year (beyond the first 30 days of instruction), but need to be assessed for English Language Proficiency, the Center on Standards and Assessment Implementation conducted a scan of fifteen approved ESSA state plans.

The issue of timing with regards to ELP assessment was rarely addressed in the plans reviewed except in general terms. All states note that students are initially assessed within 30 days as required, and that a summative assessment is given annually. However, the timing of that annual assessment is only mentioned by a few states as being “in the spring.” One state, Connecticut, gives specific dates for the testing window (Jan 3–March 10).

There are slight differences in how each state defines proficiency, but most require a composite score demonstrating proficiency. In some states, additional minimum sub scores are required.

CSAI inquired from the U.S. Department of Education (ED) about potential options. An ED official noted that, “using the summative assessment instead of the initial assessment may be possible if the annual summative assessment is valid for identification purposes. All students present during the testing window must be assessed with the annual summative assessment [ESEA Section 1111 (b) (2) (G)], regardless of the number of days since their initial assessment (not including them is not allowed under the law). Procedures need to be consistent across the state [ESEA section 3113 (b) (2)].”

(continued)

Below is the guiding statutory language regarding annual assessments and the 30-day initial assessment.

ESEA Section 1111 (b) (2) (G). ASSESSMENTS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY.

(i) IN GENERAL—Each State plan shall demonstrate that local educational agencies in the State will provide for an annual assessment of English proficiency of all English learners in the schools served by the State educational agency.

ESEA Section 3113 (b) (2). STATE AND SPECIALLY QUALIFIED AGENCY PLANS.

(b) CONTENTS—Each plan submitted under subsection (a) shall—

(2) describe how the agency will establish and implement, with timely and meaningful consultation with local educational agencies representing the geographic diversity of the State, standardized, statewide entrance and exit procedures, including an assurance that all students who may be English learners are assessed for such status within 30 days of enrollment in a school in the State.

Table 1 below provides the summary information derived from the approved ESSA State Plans submitted to the U.S. Department of Education.

Table 1: State ELP Assessment Info

STATE	MEASURES	INDICATOR DESCRIPTION	ELP ASSESSMENT TIMING
Arizona	AZELLA (AZ English Language Learner Assessment)	<p>AZELLA is used for both placement and reassessment purposes (www.azed.gov/assessment/azella). AZELLA proficiency and AZELLA growth scores are used in calculating school performance levels (p. 27). Five percent of a school's score is ELL Proficiency, based on their percentage of students' proficient compared to the state average; an additional 5 percent is based on students' growth (change in performance levels) aggregated to the school level compared to the state's average change in performance levels the prior year.</p> <p>The following students count: current ELL status, including recent arrivals, with AZELLA scores; with two AZELLA scores to measure growth. Schools with fewer than 20 full academic year (FAY) ELLs do not get these points; their score is calculated out of a maximum of 90 instead of 100.</p>	The AZELLA Placement test is given within 30 days of enrollment. All students scoring below Proficient participate in AZELLA testing every spring until they achieve proficiency (p. 57).
Connecticut	LAS Links Forms C and D	Students must score 4 or 5 in overall Reading, and Writing to exit (p. 83). Growth is measured on both oral and literacy dimensions. The oral score is a composite of listening and speaking components, while the literary score is a composite of reading and writing components. Points (out of 50) are awarded to schools based on the average percentage of target achieved (p. 12–13).	An ELP assessment is administered within 30 days of enrollment. LAS Links Form D is administered annually and proficiency must be achieved (p. 83–84). Testing window is from Jan 3–March 10 (p. 289).
Delaware	<p>ACCESS for ELs 2.0 (new for 2016–2017; neither scale scores nor proficiency levels are comparable from past administrations¹. 2017 scores will form a new baseline.)</p> <p>Delaware is a member of the WIDA² Consortium (p. 16).</p>	Proficiency is defined as 5.0 composite proficiency level (p. 12–13). The state considers a student's proficiency level on the first annual ACCESS for ELs 2.0 to determine the number of years that a student must reach proficiency, then sets targets for interim progress based on entering grade-level scale scores accordingly.	<p>Within 25 days of enrollment, administer various WIDA-approved assessments to confirm EL classification (oral proficiency below 5.5 on WIDA MODEL in first semester of kindergarten, or composite proficiency below 5.0 on W-APT, WIDA Screener, or WIDA MODEL). Prekindergarten students are also given WIDA speaking and listening diagnostic screeners in spring semester prior to transition to a kindergarten program (p. 123–124).</p> <p>ACCESS for ELs 2.0 is administered annually. Score reports are received during the summer months (p. 125).</p>

¹ Applies to all Consortium states except D.C.

² Formerly standing for World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment, WIDA stopped using its acronym definition as its mission expanded.

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District of Columbia	<p>ACCESS for ELs 2.0</p> <p>D.C. began giving this test in the 2015–16 school year (p. 17) and will recalculate their baseline after the 2016–17 test administration.</p> <p>D.C. is a member of the WIDA Consortium (p. 15).</p>	<p>Students are deemed proficient when they achieve a composite score of 5.0 on the summative assessment. Using a modified version of the WIDA growth-to-target model, students will have up to five years to reach level 5, based on the starting level achieved on their initial baseline exam.</p>	<p>Students are screened within 30 days: Pre-K takes Preschool IDEA Oral Language Proficiency Test (Pre-IPT), Kindergarten takes WIDA ACCESS Placement Test (K W-APT) or MODEL, grades 1–12 use W-APT or WIDA Screener.</p> <p>ACCESS for ELs 2.0 is administered annually. All ELs must participate (p. 59).</p> <p>ELs identified in pre-K remain in EL status during all of pre-K. Students are then assessed in spring of their kindergarten or first grade year (p. 59).</p>
Illinois	<p>ACCESS for ELs 2.0</p> <p>Illinois administered this test for the first time in 2017 (p. 28)</p> <p>Illinois is a member of the WIDA Consortium.</p>	<p>Students are deemed proficient when they have reached a composite score of 4.8 or above. There is a proposed maximum of five years, but students will not be exited until attaining a proficient score (p. 27).</p> <p>Illinois is currently revising their definition of proficiency; it was last updated in 2013 (p. 123).</p>	<p>All students enrolling for the first time are screened within 30 days, including preschool. ACCESS for ELs 2.0 is administered annually to all ELs K–12 to determine continued need and eligibility (p. 27).</p>

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Louisiana	Louisiana Educational Assessment Program (LEAP) English Language Proficiency (ELP) Connect Begins in 2017–2018.	<p>LEAP ELP Connect measures listening, speaking, reading, and writing, and is used for two sets of outcomes—reporting scores (used to determine eligibility, instructional planning, and resource allocation) and growth indicators (used for evaluating program outcomes, calculating growth) (p. 15).</p> <p>Students have a maximum of seven years to achieve proficiency. Progress toward proficiency is currently defined as improving at least one level in a particular year. Proficiency is described in qualitative terms as requiring “meeting a combination of expectations across all four domains” (p. 15); for example, in the listening domain, “an EL can listen and comprehend spoken English at a level sufficient to fully participate in and learn from grade-level instruction, communication, and activities” (p. 16), and in quantitative terms as achieving scores of 4 or 5 on all four domains (p. 52).</p> <p>Schools will be measured in the accountability system based on whether students meet annual targets and exit criteria. Results will be publicly reported for any school serving at least ten ELs (p. 39). Schools will earn up to 150 points in the accountability indices for each EL who meets exit criteria or meets/exceeds his level performance target (p. 52).</p> <p>Exit criteria have not yet been established (p. 112).</p>	<p>English Language Proficiency Screener administered within first 30 days of school.</p> <p>LEAP ELP Connect will be administered as a summative assessment every spring beginning in 2017–18.</p> <p>Recently-arrived ELs will participate in subject area assessments, but their results will be excluded from accountability in their first year in the U.S. (p. 18).</p>
Maine	ACCESS for ELs 2.0 Maine is a member of the WIDA Consortium.	<p>Students are deemed proficient when they achieve a composite score of 5.0 on the summative assessment (p. 17).</p> <p>A school’s score on the progress in ELP indicator is calculated by aggregating the growth index scores of all ELs who took ACCESS in the current year divided by the total number of ELs.</p>	<p>Students are screened within 30 days of enrollment using W-APT.</p> <p>ACCESS for ELs 2.0 is administered annually to all ELs in K–12 to determine continued need and eligibility (p. 16).</p>

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Massachusetts	Massachusetts is a member of the WIDA Consortium.	<p>Students are deemed proficient with a 5.0 composite score plus a 4.5 literacy score (p. 112).</p> <p>ELs are differentiated according to proficiency level, grade enrolled, and prior schooling. Students who grow up in the United States and enroll in an MA school in kindergarten are expected to achieve proficiency by the end of grade two. For students entering in the upper grades, time to proficiency is a function of their entering proficiency level, with full proficiency expected in three years. For students with little initial proficiency and/or interrupted schooling, a specialized program to accelerate English acquisition may be required (p. 29–30).</p> <p>Current growth-to-proficiency targets are based on the amount of growth needed for a student to reach ACCESS level 5 within six years in an MA school. Once the transition from paper and pencil to online is complete, long-term goals will be revised (p. 31).</p>	<p>Students are screened within 30 days of enrollment using W-APT or MODEL. Preschool students are identified using LAS Links or Pre-IPT (p. 112). Students transferring from another district in MA or another WIDA Consortium state do not need to be retested (p. 30).</p> <p>ACCESS is administered annually.</p>
Nevada	Nevada is a member of the WIDA Consortium.	<p>Students are deemed proficient with a 5.0 composite score plus a 5.0 literacy score. “The state will establish protocols to consider individual circumstances in eligibility determination for which an exception may be warranted” (p. 97).</p> <p>Time to proficiency is based on entering level and time spent in language instruction programs, with a maximum of six years (p. 28).</p>	<p>Students are given the WIDA Screener (grade 1–12) or W-APT (preschool and kindergarten) within 30 days of enrollment (p. 97).</p> <p>ACCESS 2.0 is administered annually (p. 29).</p>
New Jersey	New Jersey is a member of the WIDA Consortium.	<p>New Jersey has the fourth highest number of recent immigrant students in the United States (p. 22).</p> <p>Students have up to five years to reach proficiency, based on their entry level (p. 20–21). Proficiency is defined as a 4.5 composite score on ACCESS 2.0 or WIDA MODEL, OR A3 Engaging or higher on the Alternate ACCESS test; AND successful completion of the English Language Observation Form. This form requires schools to consider classroom performance, the student’s reading level in English, the judgment of the teaching staff, and the student’s performance on achievement tests in English (p. 150–151).</p>	<p>In addition to the home language survey, New Jersey screens students for English proficiency before administering W-APT, WIDA Screener, or WIDA MODEL. A student is classified as ELL if they receive a score below 4.5 on these assessments AND they meet at least one additional indicator (assessed reading level by teacher, academic performance including performance on standardized tests in English, assessment by EL teacher) (p. 149–150). Students are assessed within 30 days of enrollment (p. 151).</p> <p>WIDA MODEL may be used for mid-year exit determinations. ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 is administered yearly.</p>

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New Mexico	New Mexico is a member of the WIDA Consortium.	<p>Students are considered proficient with a 5.0 or higher on the ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 (p. 12).</p> <p>Students who achieve this score are monitored for academic success for two subsequent years. Districts that are Title III subgrantees must monitor these students for four years (p. 164).</p> <p>Growth targets are based on students' entering proficiency level and grade, with a maximum of five years. Growth targets will be revised after the 2017 administration (p. 12–15).</p>	<p>For 2017–2018, students are screened with WIDA Screener (grades 1–12) or W-APT (kindergarten).</p> <p>ACCESS 2.0 is administered annually (p. 164).</p> <p>The home language survey was recently standardized statewide (p. 164–166).</p>
North Dakota	North Dakota is a member of the WIDA Consortium.	<p>Time to proficiency is based on entry level, with a maximum of six years. Year one growth is determined after the second annual assessment. Districts may use scores from other WIDA states (p. 18).</p> <p>Proficiency is defined as a 5.0 composite score AND 3.5 scores in the four subdomains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing (p. 19).</p> <p>Districts may exit students with disabilities in consultation with the EL team, IEP team, and parents/guardians if it is determined that the student has plateaued in their growth and would not benefit from additional EL instruction (p. 126).</p>	<p>ACCESS 2.0 is administered annually (p. 18).</p> <p>Students are screened within 30 days of enrollment with WIDA Screener or WIDA MODEL (p. 126).</p> <p>Students who are never in attendance during the annual ELP testing window may be exited using the full screener (MODEL) (p. 126).</p>
Oregon	English Language Proficiency Assessment for the 21st Century (ELPA21)	<p>Most students that receive a Proficiency determination based on their ELPA results will be exited from the EL program (p. 124).</p> <p>The ELPA21 has only been operational since 2015–16; growth targets and baseline data have not been established (p. 39).</p> <p>Proficiency is defined as achievement of levels 4 and 5 on all four domains (reading, writing, listening, speaking).</p>	<p>Oregon is transitioning to a statewide screener this year, with full implementation in 2018–19. Districts still using their original screener must use a proficiency score equivalency table so that fluency is defined the same way across the state (p. 124).</p> <p>Students are assessed within 30 days of enrollment (p. 124).</p>

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Tennessee	Tennessee is a member of the WIDA Consortium.	<p>Tennessee’s EL population has more than doubled in the last ten years (p. 25). There are ELs throughout the state, but they are heavily concentrated in five districts, with two of those serving about half of all ELs in the state (p. 197).</p> <p>Students beginning a seventh year of ESL instruction are highlighted as long-term English learners (p. 200).</p> <p>Proficiency is defined as a minimum 5.0 composite score AND a 5.0 literacy score. Additional exit criteria “are being researched,” including final course grades and/or results on district or local assessments. Performance on an academic content assessment is not used (p. 201).</p>	<p>Upon enrollment, students take the WIDA Screener or W-APT (p. 200).</p> <p>ACCESS for ELs or Alternate ACCESS for ELs administered annually in the spring.</p> <p>The English learner “should not be assessed during the initial ‘silent’ period (generally up to six months, but may be longer for beginners) when the student is working on receptive skills (listening and reading) rather than more productive skills (speaking and writing) (p. 203).</p> <p>Difficulty with English should not be confused with other learning difficulties or disabilities (p. 203).</p>
Vermont	Vermont is a member of the WIDA Consortium.	<p>Time to proficiency is based on entry level, with a maximum of six years (p. 47).</p> <p>Proficiency is defined as a minimum 5.0 composite score AND a minimum 4.0 reading score AND a minimum 4.0 writing score.</p> <p>Kindergarten students are required to be assessed again in Grade 1 before they can exit.</p> <p>Performance on an academic content assessment is not an exit criterion (p. 107).</p>	<p>ACCESS 2.0 is administered annually.</p> <p>Students are assessed within 30 days of enrollment using the WIDA Screener (p. 107).</p>



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