

WIDA ACCESS On-Track Growth to Standard



Overview

ACCESS for ELLs® transitioned from paper-and-pencil to an online assessment referred to as ACCESS for ELLs® 2.0 for spring 2016 testing. Standard setting was completed in summer 2016. This process adjusted ACCESS 2.0 proficiency levels to align with the increased rigor of the academic language requirements in College and Career Ready standards. Scores released in 2017 reflected the results of the standard setting. To establish the Colorado criteria for identifying a student as eligible to be redesignated as Fluent English proficient (FEP) and no longer in need of English language program support, the Colorado Department of Education convened the state’s Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Education (CLDE) stakeholder group (representing Colorado’s regional diversity including school district personnel, institutes of higher education, and advocacy groups) to review results on the ACCESS for ELLs® 2.0 assessment.

Reflecting on the previous English language proficiency criteria, the CLDE stakeholders felt that the skills and concepts demonstrated by students under the previous redesignation criteria were an appropriate “trigger” to start the redesignation process. The students identified for redesignation were generally successful after transitioning out of Multilingual Learner (ML) programming. In reviewing historical data, redesignated MLs tend to show parity in achievement to their majority non-ML peers within a year or two of leaving programming. Based on these considerations, the CLDE stakeholders directed CDE to match as closely as possible the previous counts of elementary and high school students eligible for redesignation. Too few middle schoolers have historically been eligible for redesignation, so the recommendation was made to reset the cuts in alignment with the other grade level outcomes. This resulted in the updated redesignation criteria of 4.0 Overall and 4.0 Literacy on the revised ACCESS 2.0 proficiency levels for all grades. Having determined the criteria for redesignation as FEP, CDE then convened stakeholders in September 2017 to help establish the maximum timeline of 6 years for students to move from non-English proficient newcomer to FEP.

Adopted Growth to Standard Timelines

The adopted 6-year timeline is broken down into interim stepping-stones of 1-2-3-years, meaning that a student initially scoring an overall ACCESS proficiency level of 1 will have 1-year to move to level 2 or higher, 2-years to move from level 2 to level 3 or higher, and then 3-years to move from level 3 to level 4. Upon initial entry to a Colorado school and with their initial ACCESS performance, a student’s projected English-acquisition timeline will be established and used to determine whether they are on or off-track in future years to meet their proficiency targets. Students entering at higher levels of language proficiency will be given a shortened timeline corresponding to their initial language proficiency level.

Table 1. ACCESS for ELLs® 2.0 Proficiency Level Trajectory with Associated Timeline

Proficiency Level Trajectory	Timeline	Relation to Redesignation Eligibility Criteria
Level 1 increasing to Level 2+	1 Year	6-year timeline to achieve redesignation eligibility criteria
Level 2 increasing to Level 3+	2 Years	6-year timeline to achieve redesignation eligibility criteria

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Proficiency Level Trajectory	Timeline	Relation to Redesignation Eligibility Criteria
Level 3 increasing to Level 4+	3 Years	6-year timeline to achieve redesignation eligibility criteria
Level 4 staying at Level 4+	1 Year	If scoring at/above redesignation eligibility criteria, maintain performance level
Level 5 staying at Level 5+	1 Year	If scoring at/above redesignation eligibility criteria, maintain performance level

Progress-Monitoring Metric

The adopted timelines are used to calculate a progress-monitoring metric for reporting whether students are on-track to achieve language proficiency within their allotted timeline. The Colorado growth model calculates projected targets that indicate how much growth would be required for an individual student to achieve a specified level of proficiency within 1, 2, or 3 years. These projected targets can then be compared against the student's observed growth percentile to determine whether the student is on-track to meet their proficiency goal within the allotted timeline. It is straightforward to determine whether students scoring at level 1 in the previous year, who were expected to move into proficiency level 2 within one year, attained this goal in the current year. For students scoring level 2 in the previous year who have 2-years in which to move to level 3, they either need to have moved up a proficiency level or need to be making enough growth to move up in the coming year. Students previously at level 3 need to have moved to level 4 or be making enough growth to move up to level 4 within the next two years.

Since the local body of evidence criteria may factor into local decisions about redesignation and programming, there may be students in program and still testing who are scoring at proficiency levels 4 and 5 (and less likely at level 6). Students previously scoring at or above proficiency level 4 are expected to continue scoring at or above their current proficiency level in the current year. Combining observed proficiency-level changes, student growth percentiles and adequate growth targets ensures each student that is on-track to fluent-English proficiency within their allotted timeframe is counted as a success.

For aggregation at the school level, the count of students successfully on-track is divided by the total number of MLs with valid scores in both the previous and current year to calculate an on-track rate. The on-track rates between schools can then be compared.

If you have questions about the contents of this fact sheet or need further assistance: Contact us at accountability@cde.state.co.us.