

English Language Proficiency Definition

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Introduction

Following the 2015 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) as the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the Minnesota Department of Education convened stakeholder groups to develop ESSA implementation plans to submit to the U. S. Department of Education. Listening sessions were held across the state to gather stakeholder input, and workgroups were formed to propose specific and detailed plans to fulfill the requirements of ESSA in Minnesota. The subject of this report is the processes and outcomes of workgroups focused on elements of ESSA related to English language learners.

ESSA requires that all local education agencies (LEAs) receiving federal funds apply a statewide definition to be used in the identification of an English learner (EL). The EL definition must include a performance standard on an English language proficiency (ELP) assessment that identifies when a student may be reclassified as no longer needing English language support services. The need to define a statewide performance standard to satisfy requirements of ESSA was concurrent with the adoption of new proficiency cut scores on the ACCESS for ELLs 2.0, which is the ELP assessment administered in Minnesota. Thus, the EL stakeholder group needed to set an appropriate performance standard on the ELP assessment and implement its inclusion in a statewide definition of English learners.

The proficiency definition for ELs is also an important element in the revised accountability requirements under ESSA. States must now include an indicator of ELs' progress in attaining proficiency in English in their accountability systems. The Minnesota Department of Education tasked another stakeholder group with designing Minnesota's accountability system under ESSA and their discussions of the EL indicator were informed by the work of the EL stakeholder group as it developed an EL proficiency definition.

Under ESSA, each student identified as an English learner must take an annual assessment of English language proficiency. The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) administers annually the ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 assessment to students in grades K-12. The ACCESS is developed and administered by the WIDA consortium, which consists of 39 states and agencies at the time of this report. For English learners with significant cognitive disabilities, WIDA provides the Alternate ACCESS for ELLs in grades 1-12. The ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS measure language proficiency in the domains of reading, writing, listening and speaking.

In 2016, the ACCESS assessments for grades 1-12 were revised and are now primarily computer delivered and centrally scored. These new tests are referred to as ACCESS 2.0. The kindergarten ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS were not revised and continue to be administered on paper with test administrators scoring the speaking and writing domains. Locally scored paper accommodations are available for the grades 1-12 ACCESS 2.0. Although the English language development standards on which the WIDA assessments are based did not change, the interpretation of proficiency levels from scale scores was revised during WIDA's standard setting process for ACCESS 2.0. The new cut scores for proficiency levels impact ACCESS 2.0 for grades 1-12 only; new cut scores were not set for the kindergarten ACCESS nor the Alternate ACCESS.

Each state in the WIDA consortium sets its own criteria for determining when students are ready to exit English language instruction and support programs. With the change to ACCESS 2.0 and WIDA's reinterpretation of proficiency levels in grades 1-12, the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) and stakeholders reviewed the state's criteria for exiting students from English language services and recommended new proficiency

definitions. To date, a proficiency standard has not been set on the Alternate ACCESS as the test has a ceiling that is equivalent to low levels of performance on the ACCESS/ACCESS 2.0.

As part of an assessment consortium, student data is rated, scored and given scale scores and proficiency levels by the consortia and not by MDE. Because of this, maintaining the same definition of proficiency (i.e., the proficiency levels remain the same, the underlying scoring has just been adjusted) is not possible. WIDA provided student-level data on both the ACCESS 1.0 and ACCESS 2.0 scales for the 2016 administration. The data were provided on all four domains: listening, speaking, reading, and writing and for all four composite scores: overall, literacy, comprehension, and oral. There are six proficiency levels for each domain and composite score (1-6). Each proficiency level is reported to one decimal place. The decimal represents the percentage of the distance the student was between the two proficiency levels. For example, a student with a score of 4.5 had a scale score of at least 50% of the way between the scale score needed for a proficiency level of 4 and 5, but did not have at least 60% of the scale score points. This means that each proficiency level can be interpreted the same way across grades, even though the difference in scale scores between the proficiency levels may not be equivalent. For proficiency setting, the proficiency levels, including decimals, were the focus of discussion.

Reasons for Reassessing Proficiency Definition

There were four reasons to reassess Minnesota’s definition of English language proficiency:

There were important changes to the mode of administration, scoring methods and rigor of the ELP assessment, on which the proficiency definition is based.

The proficiency definition in place had been set considering performance data from content assessments in mathematics and reading that are no longer in use and do not align to Minnesota’s current career and college-ready standards.

The proficiency definition is an important element in the creation of an English language development indicator required for the redesigned accountability system under ESSA.

Applying Minnesota’s rigorous proficiency definition in place for ACCESS, which required a minimum overall score of 5.0 and a minimum score of 4.0 in each of the domains of reading, writing, listening and speaking, would result in only about 3% of ELs achieving proficiency in 2016-2017.

The four reasons above are discussed in more detail below.

Redesigned English Language Proficiency Assessment

Important changes implemented with the adoption of the grades 1-12 ACCESS 2.0 prompted WIDA to conduct standard setting on the new tests although the ELD standards to which they are aligned remained the same. Table 1 lists the most significant differences between the two tests. The differences between the two tests, the potential for paper/computer mode effects to impact student scores, and the new cut scores for proficiency levels set by WIDA made it necessary to examine Minnesota’s 2016 ACCESS 2.0 data to determine if the state’s current proficiency definition was still appropriate.

Table 1. Changes in administration between ACCESS and ACCESS 2.0.

Administration Difference	ACCESS	ACCESS 2.0
Mode	Paper	Online, with paper accommodations
Administration	Fixed forms in three tiers, A, B and C	Adaptive
Tier selection	A, B or C tier selected by teacher based on available information about student's language proficiency	Reading and listening domains adaptive; writing and speaking tiers based on reading and listening scores
Order of administration	No required order, but recommended that reading and listening precede writing and speaking.	Reading and listening must precede writing and speaking because scores in adaptive tests are used to assign writing and speaking tiers.
Response mode: Speaking	One-on-one interaction between test administrator and student; guided scoring by test administrator.	Prompts delivered by computer and student response captured; centrally scored by vendor. New rating scale.
Response mode: Writing	Handwritten; centrally scored	Grades 1-3, handwritten; grades 4-5, handwritten as default but keyboarding may be selected if appropriate; grades 6-12, keyboarding
Academic standards alignment	State academic standards in place at time of initial ACCESS development.	College and career-ready standards adopted by states.

Relationship Between ACCESS 2.0 and Minnesota's Mathematics and Reading Assessments

Following Minnesota's first administration of ACCESS in 2012, WIDA led a process with stakeholders to determine the proficiency levels Minnesota would use to recommend exit from language services for ELs. This process included examining the relationship between proficiency levels on ACCESS and proficiency on the mathematics and reading Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCAs). Minnesota's academic standards are reviewed and revised on a regular schedule, and new assessments aligned to revised standards are administered

two to three years following standards revision. Since setting proficiency definitions on ACCESS in 2012, the grade 11 mathematics and grades 3-8 and 10 reading MCAs have been redesigned to align to revised career and college-ready academic standards. Only the grades 3-8 mathematics MCAs were aligned to the revised academic standards in 2012. With the implementation of ACCESS 2.0, it was necessary for Minnesota to review the relationship between proficiency levels on the redesigned ELP assessment and proficiency on the current MCAs aligned to career and college-ready standards in all assessed grades in mathematics and reading.

ESSA Accountability Requirement

As noted above, Minnesota was working on its state plan for a new accountability system under ESSA at the same time it was determining new performance standards for ACCESS 2.0 and developing statewide criteria for exit from language programs. Because ESSA required a new accountability indicator based on making progress towards English language proficiency for English learners, ensuring that the model recommended and implemented for the state plan was based on an accurate definition of proficiency on the English language assessment was also a priority.

Impact of Proficiency Definition on ELs

Initial impact data on ACCESS 2.0 indicated that if Minnesota were to keep the same definition of proficiency as had been established on ACCESS, only about 3% of English learners would be proficient. Although WIDA reported the 2016 ACCESS 2.0 scores by using an equipercentile linking procedure to the original ACCESS scale, WIDA later additionally provided the 2016 proficiency level scores on the ACCESS 2.0 scale. These data allowed Minnesota to present stakeholders with a comparison of proficiency rates on the old and new scales. The proficiency rate on the prior ACCESS scale was about 19% while the proficiency rate on the ACCESS 2.0 scale would be approximately 3% under the proficiency definition of minimum scores of 5 overall composite and all domains 4 or higher. Stakeholders stated that this low percentage is not an accurate reflection of the progress English learners are making in Minnesota and they elected to reset the proficiency definition.

Overview of Proficiency Setting Approach

The purpose of this report is to describe the process and outcomes of the stakeholder group that determined the English language proficiency definition based on ACCESS 2.0 scores. Two other stakeholder groups met concurrently with the proficiency definition group, however, and the outcomes of each group depended largely upon the work of the other groups. The work of all three groups will figure in the discussion of setting proficiency cuts on ACCESS 2.0 scores. The three groups are described briefly below.

ELP definition workgroup	Additional criteria to support reclassification workgroup	EL identification and reclassification workgroup
Determined the minimum ACCESS 2.0 composite and domain proficiency levels for an EL to be classified as proficient and eligible for exit from English language support services.	Determined additional evidence to support or counter reclassification of ELs who meet the minimum composite and domain proficiency levels on ACCESS 2.0.	Developed standardized “entrance and exit” statewide procedures to determine if a student needs English language support services and if a student will no longer be classified as EL.

Although achieving minimum proficiency levels on ACCESS 2.0 is a necessary condition for reclassification, it may not be a sufficient condition and additional measures may be used to support a decision to reclassify or retain a student in English language services. Such additional measures include observations, teacher judgment, and parent recommendations which are specifically allowed in Minnesota Statute 124D.59.

Stakeholder Meetings

Stakeholder groups included teachers, English learner coordinators, administrators, district assessment coordinators, research and evaluation staff, Regional Center staff, and policy advocates. Appendices to this report include specific information about the groups and meetings:

Appendix A: Agendas with dates, times and topics

Appendix B: Demographics of proficiency stakeholder group members

Appendix C: PowerPoint presentations for Proficiency Definition meetings

Appendix D: PowerPoint presentations for Additional Reclassification Criteria meetings

Appendix E: Participation agreement signed by members

Appendix F: Meeting handouts

Appendix G: Meeting minutes and notes for Proficiency Definition group

Appendix H: Meeting minutes and notes for Additional Reclassification Criteria meetings

Appendix I: Parent and student feedback

In addition to the stakeholder meetings, focus groups and surveys were conducted to include input from EL students and parents of ELs. Their perspectives informed the discussions and decisions of the proficiency definition and additional criteria groups. Results from parent and student feedback can be found in Appendix I.

Measures Used to Inform Proficiency Definition

In discussing Minnesota’s definition of proficiency on ACCESS 2.0, three types of measures were initially explored: (1) a decision consistency matrix; (2) distributions of English learners and non-English learners on the MCAs; (3) impact data. The first two measures were used in 2012 when Minnesota first joined the WIDA Consortium and began using ACCESS assessments. These measures are also recommended in the National Evaluation of Title III Implementation Supplemental Report – Exploring Approaches to Setting English Language Proficiency Performance Criteria and Monitoring English Learner Progress. Based on stakeholder feedback, additional analyses were performed looking at student GPA, enrollment in elective courses, performance on other standardized tests, and the likelihood of reclassification based on students near the composite cut for proficiency prior to the final recommendations presented to the Commissioner.

Decision Consistency Matrix

The decision consistency matrix approach looks at how English learner students are performing on the content area assessments, the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments, in conjunction with the possible proficiency definitions on ACCESS 2.0. Table 1 explains the conceptual thinking of each possible combination of MCA and ACCESS proficiencies.

Table 1. Conceptual framework of the decision consistency matrix.

	ACCESS Not Proficient	ACCESS Proficient
MCA Not Proficient	Agreement – Student is not proficient in English and also not proficient in content area	Student appears to have English language knowledge needed to access academic content, but is not yet displaying proficiency in the content area
MCA Proficient	Student appears to have English needed to show ability to access content area, but is not testing as proficient on ACCESS	Agreement – Student is proficient in English and also proficient in content area

Participants considered the overall agreement, that is, the percentage of students in the two agreement cells in Table 1 as well as which of the two types of non-agreement was more concerning for making their proficiency definition recommendations. Much of the decision consistency data considered during the proficiency definition process can be found in Appendix F.

Distributions of English Learners and Non-English Learners on the MCAs

Descriptive box plots were given to participants to show the distribution of scale scores on the MCAs for students who did not take the ACCESS, students who had not been identified as an English learner in any of the last three years, and by proficiency level on ACCESS 2.0. Because the MCAs are not on a vertical scale, all data relating to scale scores must be examined separately by grade. Participants examined these graphs to see at which proficiency level English learner students tend to perform similarly to their non-English learner peers on the MCAs as well as at which ACCESS 2.0 proficiency level they tend to be proficient on the MCAs. Graphical representations of these distributions which were shared with participants can be found in Appendix F.

Impact Data

An interactive dashboard was set up which allowed participants to see the decision consistency matrices for math and reading, the number of students whose proficiency determination using the ACCESS proficiency definition would remain the same or change using the proposed ACCESS 2.0 proficiency definition, and the estimated percent proficient statewide. The dashboard could present results for any of the four composite scores (overall, literacy, oral, and comprehension) as well as any of the four domain scores (listening, reading, speaking, and writing) in any combination the participants wanted to consider. After examining the decision consistency matrix and the distributions of scores on the MCAs, participants narrowed down the composite score range they felt was acceptable. The dashboard allowed them to see the impact throughout the composite range considered. It also allowed the participants to see how using a conjunctive minimum (i.e., having an overall composite score and minimum domain scores both required to be considered proficient) definition of proficiency would likely impact results.

After inspecting the impact data, participants felt strongly that more information was needed in order to make a final recommendation for the proficiency definitions which were being considered. The group had mostly agreed to a range for the overall composite score of 4.5 to 5.0. There was some disagreement on use of a conjunctive minimum in general, but the lowest the group considered for the domain scores was 3.5. Analyses conducted by Saint Paul Public Schools and the Anoka-Hennepin Public School District, additional MDE analyses, and parent and student feedback data were all completed between the second and third meetings to further examine impact on students. At the conclusion of meeting 3, the impact dashboard was again used to show statewide impact before participants made their final recommendations for the definition of proficiency. Final impact data for the recommended definitions can be found in Appendix K.

Saint Paul Public Schools Analyses

Saint Paul Public Schools looked at students who had been exited from EL services at the end of the 2015-2016 school year. These students took ACCESS 2.0 in 2015-2016, and the proficiency level scores used in this analysis were those reported using the equipercntile links to the original ACCESS scale. Proficiency for these students was based on the definition in place in 2016 (composite ≥ 5 and four domains ≥ 4). The analysis examined student academic performance in the first half of the 2016-2017 school year. The primary student performance indicator explored was average grade point average (GPA). Because students do not start to receive a GPA until grade 6 within the district, the analyses looked only at students currently in grades 6-12.

In order to explore the impact of potential proficiency definitions, two different possible ACCESS 2.0 definitions were selected:

- Overall minimum composite score of 5.0; no domain score minimums.
- Overall composite score of 4.5 and no domain less than 3.5.

On average, students who were previously exited and would also have been exited using the two proficiency definitions examined would have an average GPA around a B using either proficiency definition. Students who previously exited but would not exit using the new criteria, on average, had GPAs around a B- using either proficiency definition.

Additionally, the number of elective courses EL students who had exited EL services took by grade was examined. Typically, students in the middle grades (grades 6-8) took more elective courses than all students. In high school, a slightly different pattern emerged with exited EL students taking the same or fewer elective courses compared to all students. This was hypothesized to be due to requiring core courses for meeting graduation requirements.

In general, because students tended to perform similarly regardless of the two proficiency definitions considered, and students who were exited, at least in the middle grades, appeared to have more opportunity to take elective courses, it was recommended that choosing the proficiency definition that exits more students would be preferable.

Anoka-Hennepin Public School District Analyses

The analyses performed by Anoka-Hennepin Public School District focused on answering the question of how exited EL students perform on the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) reading and math tests three years after they exited EL status and how performance varies based on the proficiency definition used.

To perform these analyses, conversion tables which showed the relationship between the equipercntile linked ACCESS scores to the ACCESS 2.0 scores were used to estimate what student scores would have been on the ACCESS 2.0 scales for students who had previously been reclassified. In order to ensure as much comparability as possible between Anoka-Hennepin analyses and Saint Paul analyses, two very similar definitions of proficiency were examined. The two definitions used were 1) an overall composite score of 5.0 and 2) an overall composite score of 4.5 with listening, reading, and writing used above a 3.5. While it was possible to do a similar conversion in speaking, there were many changes to the speaking test administration in ACCESS 2.0 in addition to the new proficiency level scale, so it was decided to omit that domain in these analyses.

Average RIT growth was examined for students who were participating in EL services in grades 2-7 in the 2012-2013 school year, but exited the following school year. Growth for the students who would have likely exited using both examined ACCESS 2.0 proficiency definitions was similar in both math and reading. However, by using the composite score of 4.5 and conjunctive minimum model, more students would be reclassified. Therefore, because there were not practical differences in how students performed between the two definitions explored, and more students would be reclassified using the conjunctive minimum model, Anoka-Hennepin recommended the conjunctive minimum model of the two potential proficiency definitions explored.

Additional MDE Analyses

During the analysis of the relationship between Minnesota standardized test scores and potential cut scores, participants questioned whether or not students were consistently exited from EL classification too early. There were anecdotal reports that students who were exited struggled in the year immediately following their reclassification. Many participants took the position that if the cut score was set at the higher end of the range suggested by the decision-consistency matrix, then students would be less likely to struggle after being reclassified from EL status. Other participants argued that by keeping students classified as EL, they would be denied the opportunity to take other classes without providing a clear benefit in terms of higher achievement.

In order to take a closer look at this, MDE used a feature of the previously used cut score—the requirement that students had a composite score of at least 5.0—to compare outcomes on the math and reading MCA for students who were on the margins of exiting. MDE restricted its analysis to students who were in 3rd through 7th grade in 2015 and who had a composite score between 4.8 and 5.1. Thirty-four percent of students who had a 5.0 or 5.1 composite score in 2015 were reclassified in 2016, compared to only 6 percent of students who had a composite score of 4.8 or 4.9.

In 2015, students in the treatment group (students with a 5.0 or 5.1 composite score) had statistically indistinguishable scores on the state reading and math tests from students in the comparison group (students with a 4.8 or 4.9 composite score). Students in both groups had equal probabilities of scoring proficient on the tests. MDE used an instrumental variable regression to predict the likelihood that a student was reclassified in 2016 given their treatment status and conditioned all outcomes on students' 2015 MCA scores, individual domain scores on ACCESS, and the students' grade in 2016. The standard errors used for hypothesis testing were corrected after using the instrumental variable regression. No statistically significant difference was found between the two groups' math and reading scores or in the likelihood that students were proficient on the two assessments in 2016.

This evidence suggests that for students on the margin of reclassification, an additional year of being classified as an EL does not provide a discernible benefit in terms of meeting state standards. Therefore, this evidence also suggests that setting the cut score at the lower end of the range suggested by the decision consistency matrix would allow more students to exit EL classification without resulting in any discernible disadvantage for those students.

Parent and Student Feedback

Federal programs staff hosted two listening sessions with English Learner (EL) community members including parents, administrators, teachers, and former students to better understand what a community-driven definition of successful English Learner services might be. The main takeaways from these discussions were:

- Consensus that EL services are appropriate for very low proficiency students.
- Students felt EL classes were a safe space.
- Many suggested being classified as an EL led teachers to have lower expectations for their children.
- There is a perception that ELs are clustered in less rigorous classes when they are ready to be in more rigorous coursework.

- Some parents felt that if their child struggled in any way, teachers assumed it was a language issue as opposed to something else.
- Parents were concerned about their children being separated from English-speaking peers.

Additionally, a survey of English learners showed that many felt that testing was an appropriate way to measure their English language ability. However, other measures such as student portfolios or grades or teacher discretion were also mentioned. These alternative measures were considered in the additional criteria group. More information relating to the focus groups and survey can be found in Appendix I.

Measures Used to Inform Additional Criteria Definition

Along with the meetings related to the proficiency definition and the ACCESS test, MDE also convened a group of stakeholders to discuss the use of additional criteria to inform the decision to exit students from EL status. Minnesota Statute 124D.59 allows for measures such as “observations, teacher judgment, parent recommendations, or developmentally appropriate assessment instruments” to determine whether or not students have a continuing need for EL services.

MDE held an initial set of meetings to discuss standardizing the use of this additional criteria and a follow up meeting to discuss the implementation of the criteria. The stakeholders worked to address two questions regarding this additional criteria:

- The types of measures that should be considered statewide to inform the exiting decision.
- A process that teachers will follow to make the exiting decision.

Initially, participants discussed how educators are currently making exiting decisions and the types of evidence in addition to ACCESS scores used. The measures most common were:

- Standardized content assessments
- Reading assessments
- Teacher intuition.

Throughout the process, the stakeholders also deliberated about whether the additional criteria should be applied to all students who meet the ACCESS proficiency score, or if the criteria should be applied judiciously to students who barely met the proficiency score and could benefit from a confirmation that reclassification was appropriate and the types of data which could be collected in addition to ACCESS scores to help inform the exiting decision.

Based on the feedback from the initial set of meetings, MDE also created a survey and distributed it to all recipients of the state’s EL coordinator newsletter to collect opinions of how to implement the additional criteria. The survey asked participants about how students had been exited in the past, what factors should be considered in the future to inform the exiting decision, and how MDE can support districts in standardizing the procedure (See Appendix J).

The follow up meeting focused on drafting a procedure for using additional criteria in the exiting decision. Stakeholders reviewed their previous notes, considered suggestions from the survey, and results from the parent and student focus groups. It was decided that the procedure for applying additional criteria should follow three primary steps.

- The criteria should only be applied to students who met the proficiency score but their score was relatively close to the proficiency score.
- Two primary factors—success in the content classroom and measures such as classroom observations and domain specific language assessments—should be considered when determining whether or not to retain a student in EL services after that student had tested proficient on ACCESS.
- If a school decides to retain a student in EL services, then the student’s parents must be consulted and any evidence used in determining to retain the student must be documented in the student’s cumulative folder.

A flow chart of this recommended process can be found in Appendix L.

Recommending a Proficiency Definition

Based on the conversations during the proficiency definition meetings, data provided, and the recommendations from the workgroup considering additional criteria for exit from language services, all participants agreed that the Commissioner could be presented with two options for the definition of proficiency.

Prior to making the recommendations, participants considered factors such as whether using only the overall composite score would be appropriate, whether different proficiency definitions should be used at different grades, and which, if any, domains or other composite scores (literacy, oral, comprehension) should be considered in the proficiency definition. By looking at the data and discussing the construct of English language proficiency, it was decided that all grades should have the same proficiency definition. Additionally, using an overall composite score may mean that a child is still having trouble in one or more of the domains. By ensuring that all, or the majority of domains, are also reasonably high, thus providing multiple data points supporting that the child’s English language ability is sufficient, it would be more likely to make correct reclassification decisions for English learners. There was some concern over requiring all domains to be at a certain level for a child given multiple factors which may affect the child’s test score such as measurement error, difficulties with test administration, or the student having a disability which directly affected their performance in a domain, but was not related to his or her English language skills. Although some participants expressed preferences for considering other proficiency definitions, or a strong preference for one of the two definitions recommended, every person participating in the web meetings gave their consent to bring the two definitions to the Commissioner for approval. The two possible definitions were an overall composite score of 4.5 with no domain less than 3.5 or an overall composite score of 4.5 with at least three of four domains at 3.5 or higher.

Evaluation of Proficiency Definition Process

Stakeholders were given the opportunity to provide feedback concerning the procedures, process, and outcomes of the proficiency definition meetings through group discussions, exit feedback forms, and a final evaluation form. The information provided through the group discussions and exit feedback forms helped to

shape the following meetings. The final evaluation form was designed to elicit feedback on all aspects of the proficiency setting process, including clarity of training and tasks, appropriateness of time spent on discussions, and satisfaction with the outcome of the process. Appendix M shows stakeholder's responses to the overall evaluation.

Commissioner Review and Adoption of Final Proficiency Definition

In April of 2016, the two proficiency recommendations approved by the stakeholder group were presented to Minnesota's Commissioner of Education. The Commissioner approved one of the two recommendations for all grades. The approved definition that was selected was an overall composite of 4.5 with at least three of the four domains at 3.5 or higher. Documentation of the Commissioner's approval is presented in Appendix N.

Appendix A

Meeting Information

English Learner Proficiency Definition Working Group Day One

Date/Location: January 25, 2017
 Minnesota Department of Education
 Conference Center A, Room 13

- Purpose of Meeting:
1. Develop a common understanding of what English language proficiency for English Learners (ELs) means and what purpose a proficiency definition should serve.
 2. Create guidelines to evaluate a recommended proficiency definition based on ACCESS scores.

Minutes and Action Items

Topic	Notes and Action Items
Welcome	8:30 a.m.
Broad Themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expectations of a student who is “proficient in English” • Use of a standardized English language proficiency definition • Review of Federal and State definition of an English Learner as well as current HLS for understanding • Rationale behind districts using proficiency definitions different than the state’s • Purposes of Statewide proficiency definition • Development of guidelines to evaluate proficiency
Action Items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholders will attend second session the next day • MDE will compile guidelines in preparation of next day
Adjourn	11:30 a.m.

English Learner Proficiency Definition Working Group Day Two

Date/Location: January 26, 2017
 Minnesota Department of Education
 Conference Center A, Room 13

Purpose of Meeting: 1. Discuss available data to narrow the possible proficiency definitions down.
 2. Discuss the pros and cons of a conjunctive minimum definition versus only using a composite.

Minutes and Action Items

Topic	Notes and Action Items
Welcome	8:30 a.m.
Broad Themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Methods including decision consistency matrices, relationship between proficiency for ELs and non-ELs on MCA, and projected proficiency rates were explored to evaluate the effectiveness of potential cut scores • Data exploration showing various ACCESS composite scores and the corresponding MCA scores • Review of WIDA’s performance definitions • Examination of the projected proficiency and consistency of different cut scores
Action Items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholders will work with their school districts and their own internal data to see how students fare at different cut scores • Stakeholders want to understand the additional criteria for exit before making proficiency decision • MDE will continue to provide information to stakeholders as it becomes available
Adjourn	3:30 p.m.

English Learner Proficiency Definition Working Group Day(s) Three

Date/Location: March 27, 2017 or April 4, 2017
 Online Meeting

Purpose of Meeting: 1. Discuss additional analyses performed by MDE and school districts to help inform proficiency definition decision.
 2. Come to consensus on recommendations on the proficiency definition to provide to the Commissioner for approval.

Minutes and Action Items

Topic	Notes and Action Items
Welcome	8:00 a.m./9:00 a.m.
Broad Themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewed exit tickets and consensus reached at previous meetings • Additional analyses related to student GPA, course selection, MAP growth, and reclassification were explained • Discussed whether the same definition should be used for all grade levels • Discussed use of a conjunctive minimum • Came to consensus of proficiency definitions to recommend to the Commissioner
Action Items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take stakeholder recommendations to the Commissioner for final decision on proficiency definition
Adjourn	10:00 a.m./11:00 a.m.

English Learner Additional Criteria Working Group Day One

Date/Location: January 25, 2017
Minnesota Department of Education
Conference Center A, Room 13

Purpose of Meeting: 1. Compile a list of recommended criteria that could be used in addition to ACCESS scores to inform EL exiting decisions.

Minutes and Action Items

Topic	Notes and Action Items
Welcome	12:30 p.m.
Broad Themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discussed what other information is already looked at in districts when making exiting decisions• Brainstormed on types of information which could be collected and how to standardize the general process
Action Items	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Receive input and feedback with stakeholders from other parts of the state
Adjourn	3:30 p.m.

English Learner Additional Criteria Working Group Day Two

Date/Location: March 20, 2017
Education Minnesota
Mankato, MN

Purpose of Meeting: 1. Discuss recommended guidelines and procedures for teachers to implement additional criteria in EL exiting decisions.

Minutes and Action Items

Topic	Notes and Action Items
Welcome	10:00 a.m.
Broad Themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discussed what other information is already looked at in making exiting decisions• Explored the pros and cons of the additional criteria specifically listed in Minnesota state statute• Brainstormed how the state could help to ensure standardized procedures were used in making exiting decisions
Action Items	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue to receive input and feedback with stakeholders from other parts of the state
Adjourn	1:00 p.m.

English Learner Additional Criteria Working Group Day Three

Date/Location: April 5, 2017
Minnesota Department of Education
Conference Center B, Room 16

- Purpose of Meeting:
1. Discuss feedback received from talking and surveying English learner educators throughout the state regarding additional criteria.
 2. Recommend criteria and a general process which can be standardized statewide for making exiting decisions.

Minutes and Action Items

Topic	Notes and Action Items
Welcome	8:30 a.m.
Broad Themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reviewed discussions and notes from the previous meetings• Themes expressed in the survey sent out to the English learner listserv were discussed• Compiled ideas for gathering additional information about student English language proficiency• Some criteria as well as a general process for making exiting decisions were recommended
Action Items	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Begin to communicate the general process which will be used in making exiting decisions to schools and districts• Have conversations for creating the materials needed for the standardized criteria• Determine what a “very high” score is on ACCESS which would not trigger the additional criteria process
Adjourn	12:30 p.m.

Appendix B

Composition of Proficiency Definition Stakeholder Group

In order to obtain information regarding stakeholder role, race/ethnicity, gender, and fluency in more than one language, participants were asked to complete a survey. Of the 24 individuals participating in at least one of the three days, 16 responded to this survey.

Table B1. Reported roles of stakeholders in the proficiency definition group.

Role	Count (%)
English Learner Coordinator	4 (25.0%)
Research and Evaluation Specialist	4 (25.0%)
Advocate	3 (18.8%)
Other District Level Staff	2 (12.5%)
Teacher	1 (6.3%)
Administrator	1 (6.3%)
Other Support Staff	1 (6.3%)

Table B2. Reported race/ethnicity which best describes stakeholders in the proficiency definition group.

Race/Ethnicity	Count (%)
American Indian or Alaska Native	0 (0.0%)
Asian	4 (26.7%)
Black or African American	0 (0.0%)
Hispanic or Latinx	0 (0.0%)
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0 (0.0%)
White	11 (73.3%)

Note: One respondent abstained from responding to this question.

Table B3. Reported gender of stakeholders in the proficiency definition group.

Gender	Count (%)
Male	3 (18.8%)
Female	13 (81.3%)

Table B4. Participants self-report of being fluent in more than one language.

Fluent in More than One Language	Count (%)
No	8 (50.0%)
Yes	8 (50.0%)

Additional information related to participants was obtained from public information in order to give a more holistic picture of those participating in the process.

Table B5. List of Minnesota licenses participants in the stakeholder group hold. Not all participants currently or previously held an educator license in Minnesota and some participants hold more than one.

License	Count
ESL	14
Principal	4
Reading	3
Communication Arts/Literature	3
Elementary Education	2
Spanish	2
Mathematics	1
Social Studies	1
Learning Disabilities	1
Emotional Behavior Disorders	1
School Psychologist	1

Table B6. Region of the state represented by school district personnel participating in the proficiency stakeholder group. Not all participants currently work in school districts – only 17 of the 24 participants are currently employed by a school district.

Region of the State	Count (%)
Within the Twin Cities	3 (17.6%)
Within the 7 County Metro	12 (70.6%)
Outside the 7 County Metro	2 (11.8%)

Table B7. Type of school and school size represented by the school district personnel participating in the proficiency stakeholder group. Not all participants currently work in school districts – only 17 of the 24 participants are currently employed by a school district.

School Characteristic	Count (%)
Charter School	1 (5.9%)
Traditional School District	16 (94.1%)
Small (<1,000 students) School District	1 (5.9%)
Medium (>=1,000 – 5,000 students) School District	3 (17.6%)
Large (>=5,000 students) School District	13 (76.5%)

Appendix C

Proficiency Definition Meeting Slides



ESSA English Learner Proficiency Definition Working Group

January 25, 2017

- Name
- Organization and role
- What you are hoping to achieve at these meetings

Working Group Norms

1. We will begin and end on time.
2. We will acknowledge individual speakers.
3. We will encourage full, professional, and respectful participation of all members.
4. We will be present in mind and body.
5. We will keep comments and questions relevant and concise.

Today's Goals

- Participants will:
 1. Develop a common understanding of what English language proficiency for English Learners (ELs) means and what purpose a proficiency definition should serve.
 2. Create guidelines to evaluate a recommended proficiency definition based on ACCESS scores.

Agenda for Day 1

- Review the deliverable, scope of project, and ground rules
- Review ESSA requirements and review current state of proficiency in Minnesota
- Table discussions
- Groups develop guidelines to evaluate proficiency definitions
- Overview of measures to evaluate proficiency definitions
- Finish by 11:30

A recommendation to the commissioner for a proficiency definition based on ACCESS scores.

- No requirement for consensus
- The clearer and more unified our recommendation is, the easier it is to present to the commissioner
- The commissioner makes the final call

Why Do this in House?

- Opportunity to include Minnesota stakeholders
- MDE is able to replicate decision consistency matrix and process from September 2012 when Minnesota first joined WIDA (facilitated by Dr. Gary Cook)

Scope of Working Group

In Scope

- Evaluating different proficiency definitions based on ACCESS scores
- Assessing the projected impact on English language proficiency and MCA proficiency in different districts and among different groups
- We are speaking generally about English learners and their abilities

Out of Scope

- Discussing the MARSS Entry
- Discussing additional criteria to determine English language proficiency

ESSA Background (#1)

Must “Establish ambitious State-designed long-term goals, which shall include measurements of interim progress toward meeting such goals...for English learners, for increases in the percentage of such students making progress in achieving English language proficiency, as defined by the State and measured by the assessments described in subsection (b)(2)(G) [ACCESS], within a State-determined timeline”

ESSA Background (#2)

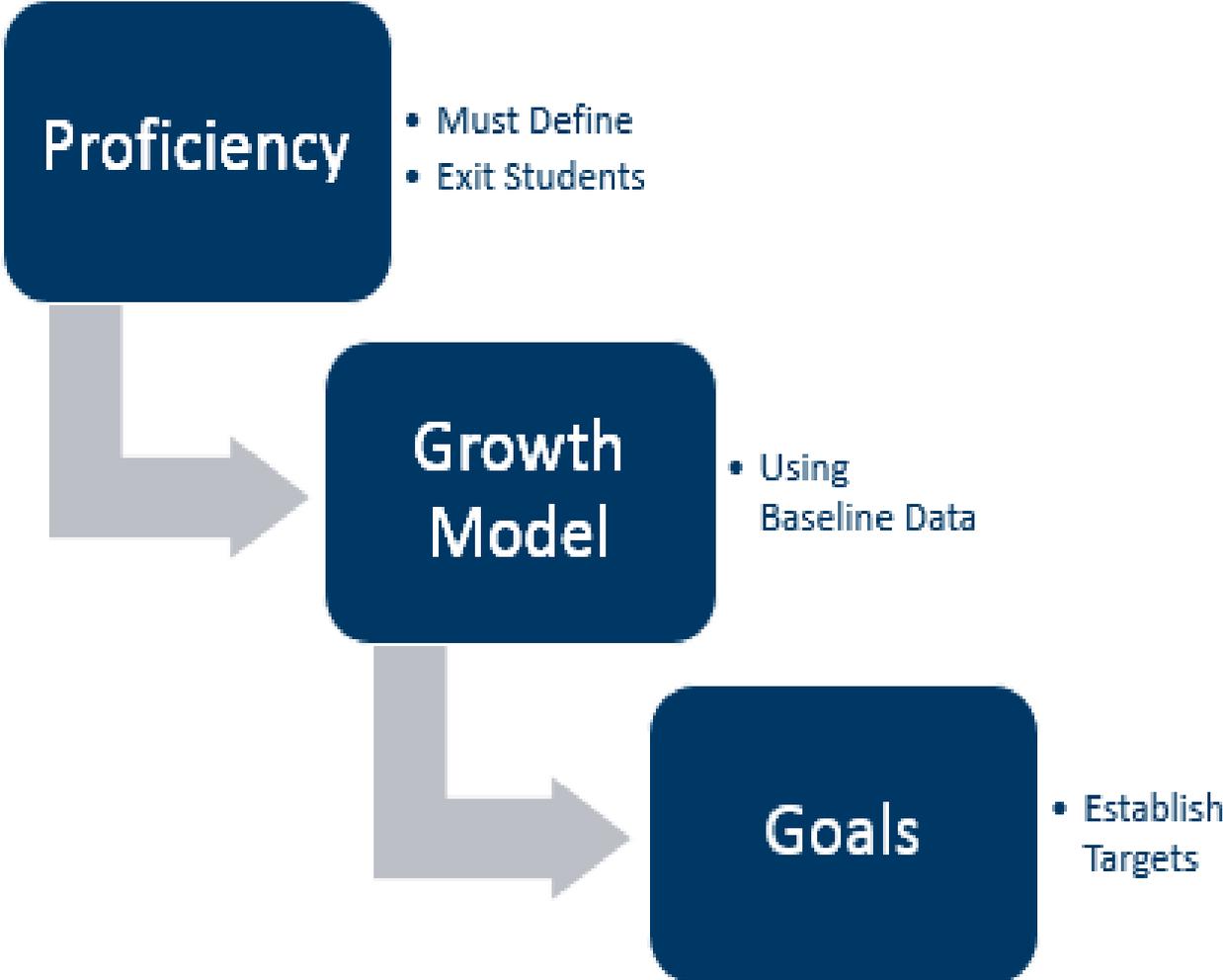
Must “Annually measure...the following indicators:...

For public schools in the State, progress in achieving English language proficiency, as defined by the State and measured by the assessments described in subsection (b)(2)(G) [ACCESS], within a State-determined timeline for all English learners...with such progress being measured against the results of the assessments described in subsection (b)(2)(G) [ACCESS] taken in the previous grade.

ESSA Background (#3)

“Each State report card required under this subsection shall include the following information:...Information on the number and percentage of English learners achieving English language proficiency”

ESSA Background



Current Proficiency Laws and Definitions

- No standardized proficiency definition
- State definition used for funding and reporting is a composite score of 5 with no domain below a 4
- This definition requires revisiting for a variety of reasons

Why Are We Defining Proficiency Now?

- New assessment (ACCESS 2.0)
- New standards assessed on the MCAs since we set proficiency on ACCESS 1.0
- Need to include proficiency definition in conjunction with new EL indicator in ESSA state plan

ACCESS 1.0 VS ACCESS 2.0 Scores

- Based on data directly from WIDA – has not gone through data cleaning processes used before publicly reporting
 - Numbers reported for analyses will not match previously reported data because of this
- Using current proficiency definition:
 - 13,321 students are proficient on 1.0 scale
 - 1,985 students are proficient on 2.0 scale
 - ~15% of students would still be considered proficient on 2.0 scale

ACCESS 1.0 VS ACCESS 2.0 Scores Continued

- Using the current proficiency definition:
 - Math
 - 8.2% of students are not proficient on the ACCESS 1.0 scale but are proficient on MCA-III Math
 - 19.1% of students are not proficient on the ACCESS 2.0 scale but are proficient on MCA-III Math
 - Reading
 - 4.3% of students are not proficient on the ACCESS 1.0 scale but are proficient on MCA-III Reading
 - 12.3% of students are not proficient on the ACCESS 2.0 scale but are proficient on MCA-III Reading

For Discussion Questions

- Designate a note taker and a reporter at your table
- We will check in after each question and record responses from each group
- Your responses and conversations will form the guidelines that we will use to evaluate proficiency definitions tomorrow

Discussion Question 1

What do we expect if a student is “proficient in English”?

Children who are proficient in English generally...

Children who have not yet reached English language proficiency generally...

Discussion Question 2

What is the purpose of a standardized English language proficiency definition?

Discussion Question 3

Has your district used—or do you know of districts who have used—a proficiency definition that was different than the state’s proficiency definition?

Why did they do that?

What were the specifics of the proficiency definition?

Discussion Question 4

How can we know if a statewide proficiency definition is serving its purpose?

- Using today's discussion as a guide, work with your group to create guidelines for evaluating a proficiency definition using ACCESS scores.
- It may help to think it terms of “our proficiency definition should” and “our proficiency definition should not.”
- Do not try to create a definition of proficiency now. You would ruin tomorrow's fun!

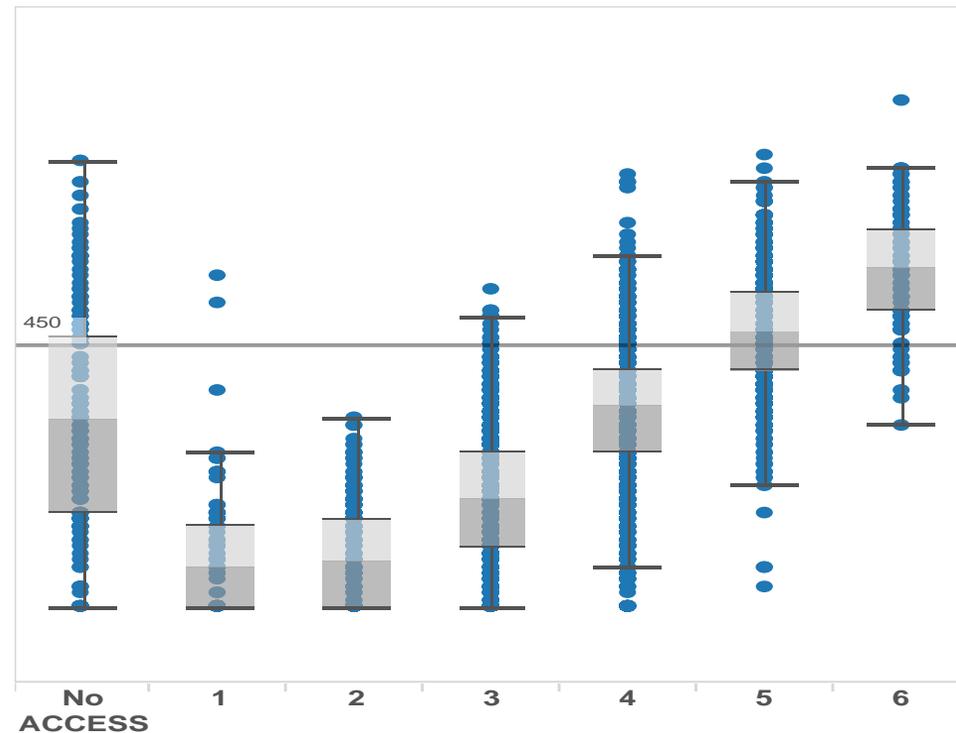
Measures to Evaluate Proficiency Definitions (1)

- Decision consistency matrix

	ACCESS Not Proficient	ACCESS Proficient
MCA Not Proficient	Both Agree Negatively (student is not proficient in English and also not proficient in content area)	Student appears to have English language knowledge needed to access academic content, but is not yet displaying proficiency in the content area
MCA Proficient	Student appears to have English needed to show ability to access content area, but is not testing as proficient on ACCESS	Both Agree Positively (student is proficient in English and proficient in content area)

Measures to Evaluate Proficiency Definitions (2)

- Relationship between proficiency on MCA and proficiency levels on ACCESS for ELs and non-ELs



Measures to Evaluate Proficiency Definitions Data (3)

- Impact Data
 - What percentage of students would be proficient with the recommended proficiency definition(s)?
 - What percentage of students who would be considered proficient with the recommended proficiency definition(s) would also be proficient on the MCA?
 - Is this percentage similar to the percent of non-EL students proficient on the MCA?



ESSA English Learner Proficiency Definition Working Group

January 26, 2017

Working Group Norms

1. We will begin and end on time.
2. We will acknowledge individual speakers.
3. We will encourage full, professional, and respectful participation of all members.
4. We will be present in mind and body.
5. We will keep comments and questions relevant and concise.

A recommendation to the commissioner for a proficiency definition based on ACCESS scores.

- No requirement for consensus
- The clearer and more unified our recommendation is, the easier it is to present to the commissioner
- The commissioner makes the final call

Today's Goals

- Participants will:
 1. Provide recommendation(s) to the commissioner for a proficiency definition based on ACCESS scores

Agenda for Day 2

- Review the deliverable, scope of project, and ground rules
- Review group guidelines to evaluate proficiency definitions
- Review measures to evaluate proficiency definitions
- Explore data related to current proficiency definition and potential future definitions for the composite
- Take lunch break by 11:30
- Evaluate impact data for the potential composites discussed
- Consider additional criteria for proficiency setting beyond composite
- End by 3:30

Scope of Working Group

In Scope

- Evaluating different proficiency definitions based on ACCESS scores
- Assessing the projected impact on English language proficiency and MCA proficiency in different districts and among different groups
- We are speaking generally about English learners and their abilities

Out of Scope

- Debating whether or not linguistic ability can truly be measured by a test
- Discussing the MARSS Entry
- Discussing additional criteria to determine English language proficiency

Group Guidelines for Proficiency Definition

- Review

Measures to Evaluate Proficiency Definitions

- Decision consistency matrix

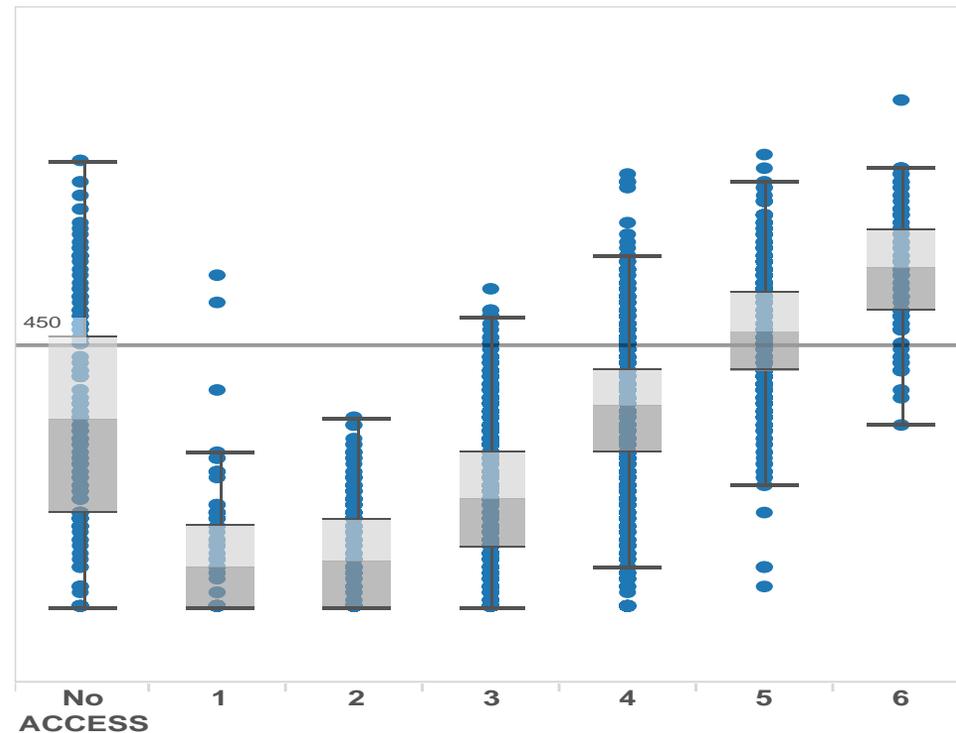
	ACCESS Not Proficient	ACCESS Proficient
MCA Not Proficient	Both Agree Negatively (student is not proficient in English and also not proficient in content area)	Student appears to have English language knowledge needed to access academic content, but is not yet displaying proficiency in the content area
MCA Proficient	Student appears to have English needed to show ability to access content area, but is not testing as proficient on ACCESS	Both Agree Positively (student is proficient in English and proficient in content area)

Decision Consistency Matrix

- Would like to maximize the agreement between MCA and ACCESS proficiency
 - Important to ensure that the high agreement isn't because of just one of the two consistent cells
- Keep in mind which inconsistent decision is more concerning
 - Students who have English language proficiency adequate to access academic content may not be proficient for reasons other than English language limitations

Measures to Evaluate Proficiency Definitions #2

- Relationship between proficiency on MCA and proficiency levels on ACCESS for ELs and non-ELs



Relationship Between Proficiency for ELs and Non-ELs on MCAs

- Many non-ELs are not proficient on the MCAs
- Evidence of validity for a proficiency definition on ACCESS will be provided by seeing that EL students are performing similarly or better than their non-EL counterparts on the MCAs

Measures to Evaluate Proficiency Definitions Data #3

- Impact Data
 - What percentage of students would be proficient with the recommended proficiency definition(s)?
 - What percentage of students who would be considered proficient with the recommended proficiency definition(s) would also be proficient on the MCA?
 - Is this percentage similar to the percent of non-EL students proficient on the MCA?

- Is the percentage of students considered proficient based on recommended proficiency definitions similar to the percentage of students you currently exit from EL services?
- Consider whether this percentage is lower/higher than it should be due to considerations external of individual students' English language proficiency

ACCESS Proficiency Definition

- Currently:
 - Composite proficiency level of 5
 - No domain lower than a proficiency level of 4
- Will be used for:
 - Students cannot exit EL status without receiving a score of proficient on ACCESS
 - Creating growth model included in ESSA Accountability system

Information about the Data

- Based on data directly from WIDA – has not gone through data cleaning processes used before publicly reporting
 - Numbers reported for analyses will **not** match previously reported data because of this
 - Data provided has scale scores and proficiency levels on the old scales (referred to as ACCESS 1.0 scale) and the new proficiency levels and scales (referred to as ACCESS 2.0 scale)

Context for Differences in Data

- Current ACCESS proficiency rate reported on MN Report Card (ACCESS 1.0 Scale): 19.4%
- Current ACCESS proficiency rate based on data obtained from WIDA (ACCESS 1.0 Scale): 18.8%

Decision Consistency Matrix With Current Definition - Reading

ACCESS 1.0

Reading	ACCESS Not Proficient	ACCESS Proficient
MCA Not Proficient	21,483	6,285
MCA Proficient	1,424	3,736

$$\begin{aligned}
 & \textit{Decision Consistency} \\
 & = \frac{21,483 + 3,736}{21,483 + 6,285 + 1,424 + 3,736} = 76.6\%
 \end{aligned}$$

ACCESS 2.0

Reading	ACCESS Not Proficient	ACCESS Proficient
MCA Not Proficient	27,218	550
MCA Proficient	4,050	1,110

$$\begin{aligned}
 & \textit{Decision Consistency} \\
 & = \frac{21,483 + 3,736}{21,483 + 6,285 + 1,424 + 3,736} = 76.6\%
 \end{aligned}$$

Decision Consistency Matrix With Current Definition - Math

ACCESS 1.0

Math	ACCESS Not Proficient	ACCESS Proficient
MCA Not Proficient	20,662	4,973
MCA Proficient	2,725	4,787

$$\begin{aligned} & \textit{Decision Consistency} \\ & = \frac{20,662 + 4,787}{20,662 + 4,973 + 2,725 + 4,787} = 76.8\% \end{aligned}$$

ACCESS 2.0

Math	ACCESS Not Proficient	ACCESS Proficient
MCA Not Proficient	25,166	469
MCA Proficient	6,345	1,167

$$\begin{aligned} & \textit{Decision Consistency} \\ & = \frac{25,166 + 1,167}{25,166 + 469 + 6,345 + 1,167} = 79.4\% \end{aligned}$$

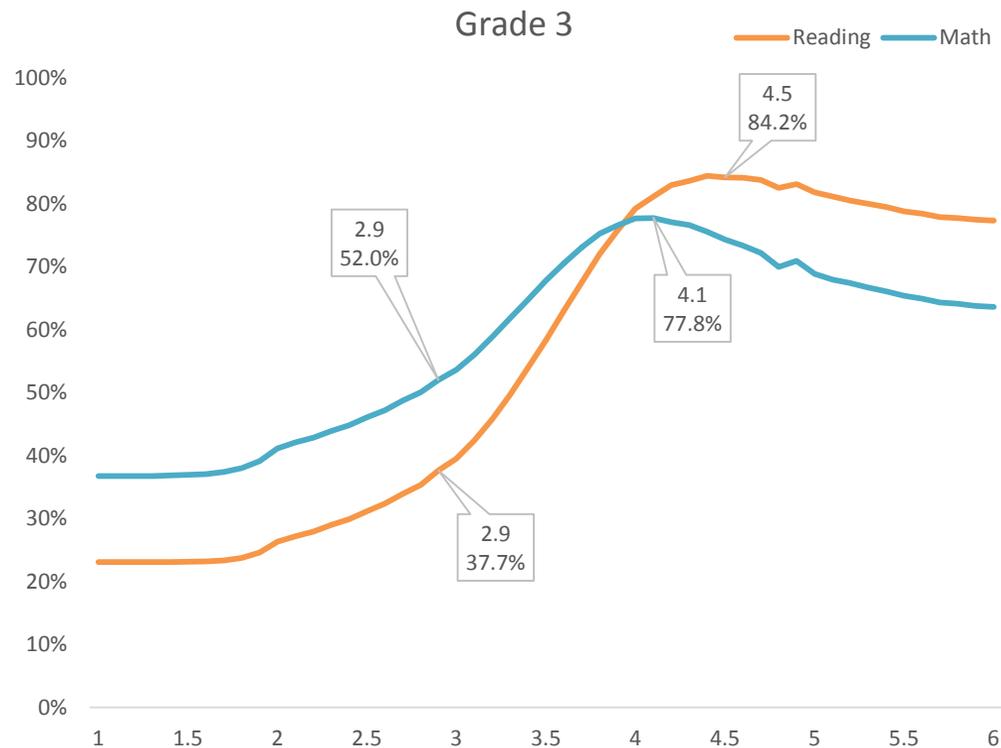
Why Start With Composite Score?

- It is a combination of all domains on which a student is assessed
 - Students should be able to demonstrate sufficient capability in each of the domains to be considered proficient in English
 - Under ESSA, we must include the special education students whose IEPs have determined it is inappropriate to assess an EL student on a domain on ACCESS for accountability calculations

Why Start With Composite Score? (Continued)

- For the progress towards English language proficiency indicator in ESSA, we plan to develop the model based only on the composite score
 - This will help provide clarity around the indicator, its calculations, and its interpretations
- It allows for initial narrowing of potential proficiency definitions to not have to examine an overwhelming amount of data to make a recommendation

Decision Consistency Matrix for ACCESS 2.0 Proficiency Levels

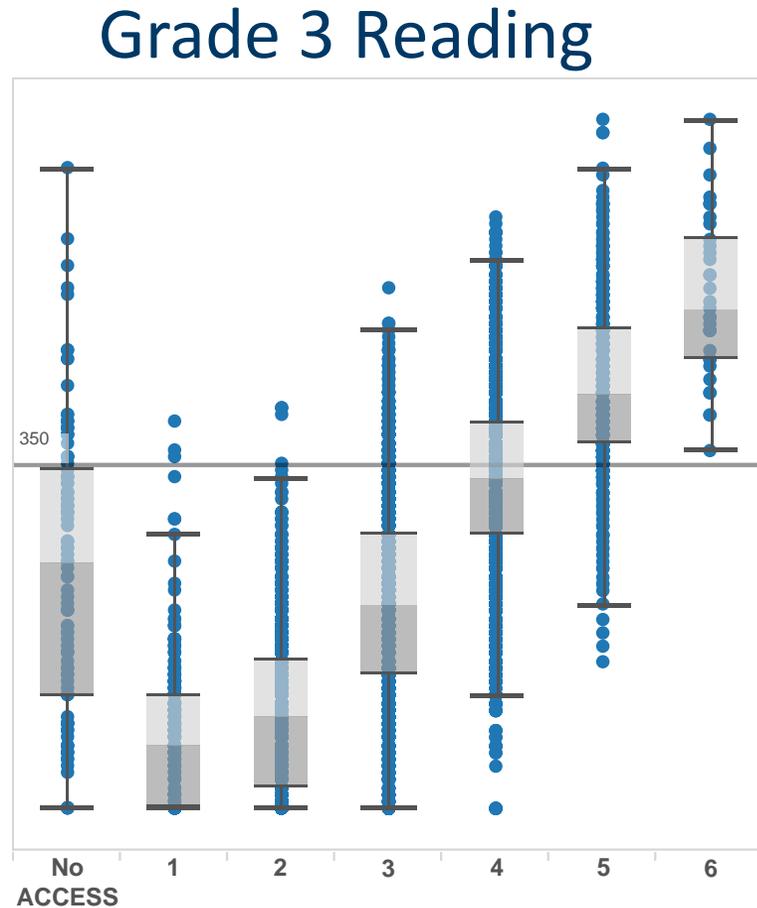


- Points of inflection help identify ideal range for setting proficiency
- Nearest proficiency level as well as decision consistency percentage are reported for each point of inflection

MCA Considerations

- Standards are vertically aligned between grades
 - The improvement needed between grades to remain proficient is not equivalent
 - E.g., the relative difficulty of meeting grade 3 math standards and continuing to meet grade 4 math standards may not be equivalent to the growth required to remain proficient between grade 4 and grade 5
- MCA assessments are not vertically aligned between grades
 - Must consider each grade separately when looking at scale scores

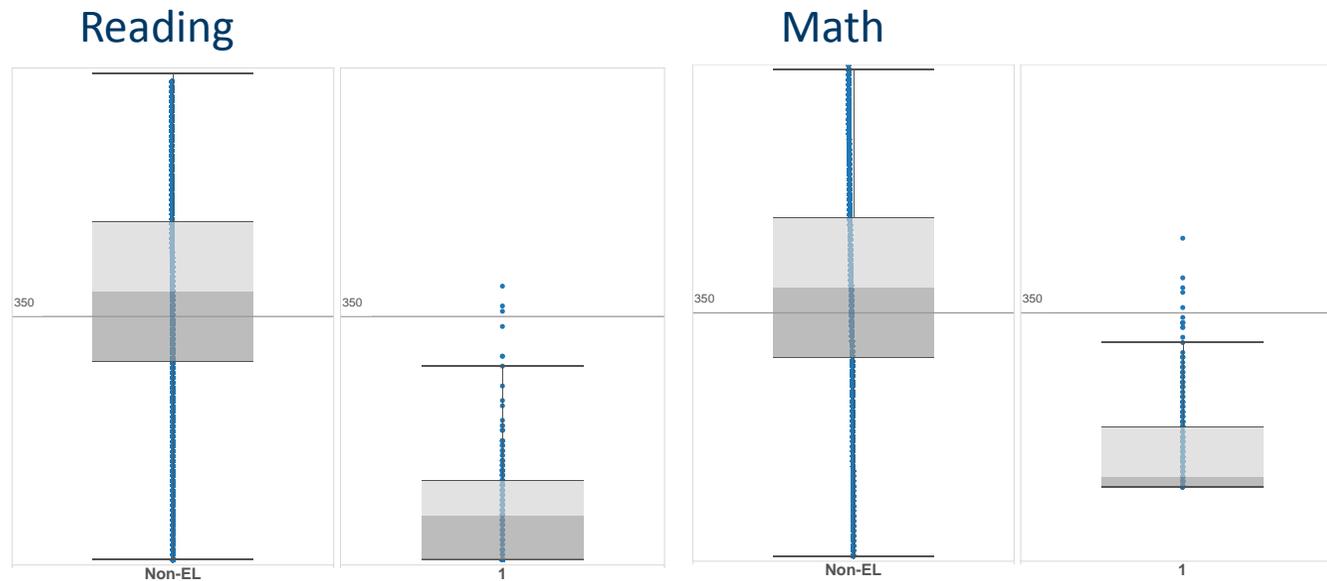
Relationship Between MCA and ACCESS 2.0 Proficiency Levels



- Grey line represents score required to be proficient on MCA
- No ACCESS is those students who did not receive ACCESS composite score in the reported grade
- Compare the EL Proficiency levels to the proficiency bar as well as the distribution of Non-EL students' scores (accompanying graph)

Initial Composite Range to Consider

- Is a 1 appropriate for Grade 3?



Reading consistencies between 1.0 and 1.9 range between 23.1% and 24.6%

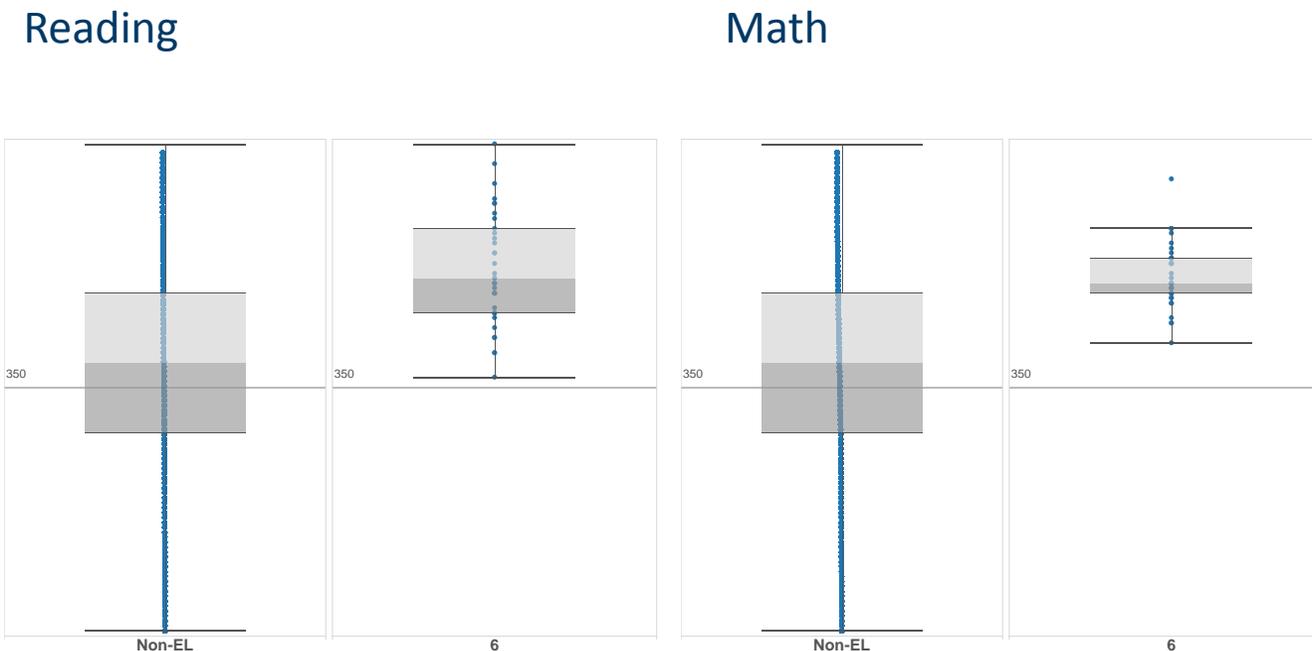
Highest reading consistency is 84.5%

Math consistencies between 1.0 and 1.9 range between 36.8% and 39.1%

Highest math consistency is 77.8%

Initial Composite Range to Consider (Continued)

- Is a 6 appropriate for Grade 3?



Reading
Consistency for 6.0
is 77.3%

Highest reading
consistency is
84.5%

Math Consistency
for 6.0 is 63.7%

Highest math
consistency is
77.8%

Discussion 1

- Look at potential proficiency handout 1
- MDE examined the data provided on these sheets to narrow down the range to consider for the composite proficiency level definitions
- Based on the data, MDE recommends considering a range of 3-5 for the composite proficiency level
 - This range appears appropriate for all grades based on both the decision consistency matrix and relationship between MCA scores and ACCESS proficiency levels
- Does this range seem appropriate to use moving forward when considering recommendations?

- Look at potential proficiency handout 2 in conjunction with the data provided on handout 1
- Can we narrow the range for the composite which represents proficiency more?
 - Note: This does not have to become very narrow in this discussion, as we will examine impact data based on your recommendations

Discussion 3

- Based on the data you have already looked at, should we consider different proficiency levels for different grades?
- Based on your discussions around proficiency yesterday, what other measures on ACCESS should we consider including in our definition of proficiency?
 - Any of the other composite scores?
 - Specific domains?
- What range of levels do you think we should consider starting with for measures other than the composite?

Discussion 4

- Examining impact on the state based on the additional proficiency criteria you have discussed



ESSA English Learner Proficiency Definition Working Group

March 27, 2017

April 4, 2017

Today's Goal

- A recommendation to the commissioner for a proficiency definition based on ACCESS scores

- This working group makes a recommendation for a cut score, but the final cut score is ultimately the commissioner's decision.

- In order to document this process, we will be sending out two surveys
- One survey collects your feedback on the process. The other collects your demographic information used only for reporting of stakeholder input purposes.
- Please respond to these surveys!

Agenda

- Review the group's cut score suggestions from the exit slips from last meeting.
- Review input from parents of English learners regarding changes under ESSA.
- Review updated analysis from MDE, SPPS, and Anoka-Hennepin regarding potential cut scores.
- Group decision regarding a composite score and a concurrent minimum.

Exit Slips from Previous Meeting

Composite Level	4	4.5	4.5-5	4.8	5
Count	1	3	3	2	6

Concurrent Minimum	Yes	No
Count	9	6

Domain Minimums	3	3.5	4
Count	3	2	4

Takeaways from the Exit Slips

- Nearly all participants suggested a composite score between a 4.5 and a 5.
- This composite level is in line with what the decision consistency matrix suggested.
- We will focus on three potential composite scores today for a potential recommendation: 4.5, 4.8, 5.0.
 - These are based on the scores recommended from the previous meeting.
- There is some disagreement regarding a conjunctive minimum. However, some people who did not vote for a conjunctive minimum suggested that they would be open to considering individual domain scores in the additional exit criteria (i.e. teacher judgment).

Takeaways from Parent and Student Input Focus Groups

- There was consensus that for very low proficiency students, EL services were appropriate. Students also felt that EL classes were a safe space for them.
- Parents felt that being kept in EL service impeded academic progress.
- Many suggested that being classified as an EL led teachers to have lower expectations for their children.
- There is a perception that ELs are clustered in less rigorous classes when they are ready to be in more rigorous coursework.
- Some parents felt that if their child struggled in any way, teachers assumed it was a language issue as opposed to something else.
- Parents were concerned about their children being separated from English-speaking peers.

SPPS EL Student Performance of Students who were Exited under old Criteria Grades 6-12 in 2015-16

	N	Q1 and Q2 Average GPA	Std. Deviation
Exit Old and 5.0 Criteria	223	3.06	.84
Will not Exit under New Criteria	583	2.7	.85

	N	Q1 and Q2 Average GPA	Std. Deviation
Exit Old and 4.5 and 3.5	355	2.95	.86
Will not Exit under New Criteria	451	2.68	.85

Number of Elective Classes in Q1 and Q2		
Grade	All Students	Exited
6	2	4
7	2	4
8	2	4
9	4	4
10	4	2
11	2	2

Anoka-Hennepin Analysis

Analysis Questions: How do exited students perform on the MAP reading and math tests 3 years after they exited EL status? How does this vary based on proficiency definition?

- Included 2 proficiency definitions:
 - Definition 1: Composite level 5
 - Definition 2: Composite level 4.5, listening, reading, and writing above a 3.5
- Students who met proficiency using both cut scores performed similarly in both reading and math 3 years after exiting EL services
- More students exit using Definition 2

Recommendation: Definition 2

Analysis Questions: Do students who barely exit EL services have different outcomes than students who are barely kept in EL services? Does the evidence suggest it is better to keep kids in longer or let them out earlier?

- Examined students with a composite score of 5.0 or 5.1 vs. a composite score of 4.8 or 4.9 at the end of grades 3-7 to predict whether or not they were reclassified in the following year.
- There was no difference in Math and Reading MCAs at the baseline.
- After one year, there continued to be no difference between the group that exited vs the group that stayed in EL services.
- For students at the margin of exiting, retaining them in EL services does not appear to have an effect on MCA scores.

Recommendation: Set proficiency level at the lower end of what is suggested by the decision consistency matrix.

Takeaways from Additional Analysis

- Discussion

Grade Level Differences

- Do we set different composite score expectations by grade or grade cluster?

If yes...

- By grade or grade cluster?
- What are your **statistical** arguments for this difference?
- What do you think the composite scores should be for each grade or grade cluster?

Conjunctive Minimum

- Several people still expressed an interest in keeping a conjunctive minimum.
- Even if some people opted against it in their cut score suggestion, they were open to it being part of the additional criteria for exiting students.
- Our own look at the data has confirmed that even if a student has a 4.5-5.0 composite, individual domains could remain quite low.

Conjunctive Minimum (2)

- Do we include individual domain scores in the proficiency definition?

If yes...

- All domains or some domains?
- Are you more comfortable with a composite score on the low end if individual domains are considered?
- What do you think the minimum should be?

Appendix D

Additional Criteria Meeting Slides



Additional Standardized EL Criteria Working Group

January 25, 2017

- Name
- Organization and role
- What you are hoping to achieve at these meetings

Working Group Norms

1. We will begin and end on time.
2. We will acknowledge individual speakers.
3. We will encourage full, professional, and respectful participation of all members.
4. We will be present in mind and body.
5. We will keep comments and questions relevant and concise.

Today's Goals

- Participants will:
 1. Compile a list of recommended criteria that can be used in addition to ACCESS scores to inform exiting decisions

Looking Forward

- This group will reconvene on April 5th to discuss this topic again
- We will need help from help piloting this policy in May
- This working group is unique because this policy will be informed by the ACCESS proficiency definition and by the entrance and exit criteria working group

Agenda

- Review the deliverable, scope of project, and ground rules
- Review statutes and ESSA's language regarding using additional criteria to determine English language proficiency
- Table discussion
- Wrap up and finish by 4

- A recommendation to the commissioner regarding additional standardized criteria that can be used in addition to ACCESS scores to inform exiting decisions.
- No requirement for consensus
- The clearer and more unified our recommendation is, the easier it is to present to the commissioner
- The commissioner makes the final call

- The additional standardized criteria that we are discussing today would only be used *after* a student has reached a proficient score on the ACCESS test and would only be used at the discretion of educators once final exiting decisions are being made.
- Also keep in mind the ACCESS cut score measures a limited definition of proficiency. What else do we need to consider?

Scope of Working Group

In Scope

- Identifying potential additional criteria for informing proficiency decisions
- Discussing ways to standardize the collection of information
- Evaluating the pros and cons of certain criteria
- Discussing how measures will apply to the general population of English learners

Out of Scope

- Creating a parallel proficiency definition that does not include the ACCESS test
- Discussing criteria that could be used by some districts but not others

Statute Overview (1)

- Minnesota Statute 124D.59 States

“ "English learner" means...if the pupil scored below the state cutoff score or is otherwise counted as a non proficient participant on the assessment measuring the pupil's emerging academic English, or, in the judgment of the pupil's classroom teachers, consistent with section 124D.61, clause (1), the pupil is unable to demonstrate academic language proficiency in English, including oral academic language, sufficient to successfully and fully participate in the general core curriculum in the regular classroom.

- Minnesota Statute 124D.59 States

“A district that enrolls one or more English learners must implement an educational program that includes at a minimum the following requirements:

(1) identification and reclassification criteria for English learners and program entrance and exit criteria for English learners must be documented by the district, applied uniformly to English learners, and made available to parents and other stakeholders upon request;

ESSA States:

“Establishing and implementing, with timely and meaningful consultation with local educational agencies representing the geographic diversity of the State, standardized statewide entrance and exit procedures...”

ESSA Final Regulations

Each SEA must describe its standardized entrance and exit procedures for English learners, consistent with section 3113(b)(2) of the Act. These procedures must include valid and reliable, objective criteria that are applied consistently across the State.

At a minimum, the standardized exit criteria must—

(A) Include a score of proficient on the State’s annual English language proficiency assessment;

(B) Be the same criteria used for exiting students from the English learner subgroup for title I reporting and accountability purposes; and

(C) Not include performance on an academic content assessment.

For Discussion Questions

- Designate a note taker and a reporter at your table
- We will check in after each question and record responses from each group
- Your responses will form the beginning of a recommendation to the commissioner

Discussion Point 1

From your experience, how are exiting decisions being made now?
What have districts used as criteria in addition to the ACCESS test?
Why? Who makes the final exit call?

Discussion Point 2

Let's have some hypothetical fun.

Imagine you have two students, Dennis and Michelle, who are in the same grade and have identical ACCESS scores. Their ACCESS scores meet the proficiency definition set by the other working group. Neither of them is identified as a special education student.

Which factors might lead you to take a closer look at exiting Dennis as opposed to Michelle?

Discussion Point 3

- What information or measures could be used to inform exiting decisions of students once they have already reached a proficient score on the ACCESS test?
- What are the pros and cons of the information or measures you propose?
- How would you standardize the collection of this information?

- Which criteria would you recommend using in addition to ACCESS scores when exiting students?
- Why do you recommend using these criteria?
- How would you ensure that the criteria were collected and evaluated in a standardized way across the state?



Additional Standardized EL Criteria Working Group

April 5, 2017

Working Group Norms

1. We will begin and end on time.
2. We will acknowledge individual speakers.
3. We will encourage full, professional, and respectful participation of all members.
4. We will be present in mind and body.
5. We will keep comments and questions relevant and concise.

Today's Goal

Draft a recommendation of criteria that can be used in addition to ACCESS scores to inform exiting decisions.

- A recommendation to the commissioner regarding additional standardized criteria that can be used in addition to ACCESS scores to inform exiting decisions.
- No requirement for consensus
- The clearer and more unified our recommendation is, the easier it is to present to the commissioner
- The commissioner makes the final call

Agenda

- Review notes from previous meeting
- Review additional stakeholder input
- Compile ideas for gathering additional information about student proficiency
- Make recommendations

- The additional standardized criteria that we are discussing today would only be used *after* a student has reached a proficient score on the ACCESS test and would only be used at the discretion of educators once final exiting decisions are being made.
- Also keep in mind the ACCESS cut score measures a limited definition of proficiency. What else do we need to consider?

Scope of Working Group

In Scope

- Identifying potential additional criteria for informing proficiency decisions
- Discussing ways to standardize the collection of information
- Evaluating the pros and cons of certain criteria
- Discussing how measures will apply to the general population of English learners

Out of Scope

- Creating a parallel proficiency definition that does not include the ACCESS test
- Discussing criteria that could be used by some districts but not others

ESSA States:

“Establishing and implementing, with timely and meaningful consultation with local educational agencies representing the geographic diversity of the State, standardized statewide entrance and exit procedures...”

Minnesota Statute 124D.59 States

“(2) the pupil is determined by a valid assessment measuring the pupil's English language proficiency **and by developmentally appropriate measures, which might include observations, teacher judgment, parent recommendations, or developmentally appropriate assessment instruments**, to lack the necessary English skills to participate fully in academic classes taught in English.”

Conversation Recap

Suggested Criteria included

- Student work and writing samples
- Classroom rubrics based on performance indicators
- A language checklist like SOLOM or a new checklist based on Dutro's matrix
- WIDA Model

Challenges Included

- Time
- Cost (particularly with the model)
- The ability to standardize each collection method
- Test validity (specifically with the Model)
- Would any of these measures count against the assessment time regulation?

Cut Score Update

- Meeting with the commissioner on 4/10
- Most participants recommended a composite score of 4.5, no domain under 3.5
- There was some variation in recommendations that we will put forth to the commissioner to consider

Stakeholder Input

- Parent Input
- Survey

Parent Input

- There was consensus that for very low proficiency students, EL services were appropriate. Students also felt that EL classes were a safe space for them.
- Parents felt that being kept in EL service impeded academic progress.
- Many suggested that being classified as an EL led teachers to have lower expectations for their children.
- There is a perception that ELs are clustered in less rigorous classes when they are ready to be in more rigorous coursework.
- Some parents felt that if their child struggled in any way, teachers assumed it was a language issue as opposed to something else.
- Parents were concerned about their children being separated from English-speaking peers.

Outstate Stakeholder Input

- Scheduling participants outstate during testing season proved challenging
- A survey went out through the EL newsletter
- 183 participants completed the survey

<u>Approximate Location</u>	<u>Count</u>
Minneapolis	48
Saint Cloud	31
Saint Paul	15
Worthington	10
Benson	6
Eden Prairie	5
Red Wing	4
Plymouth	4
Cold Spring	3
Chaska	2
Mankato	2
Prior Lake	2
Milaca	2
Hutchinson	2
Clearwater	2

Survey Results

- Classroom Observations
- Teacher Judgment
- Parent Recommendations
- Developmentally Appropriate Assessment Instruments
- Any other measure

Classroom Observations

Pros

- Might provide helpful information related to classroom performance
- Doesn't rely on "one moment in time"
- Holistic and authentic look at the student

Cons

- Subjective
- Time intensive
- Concerns about resources, especially outstate
- May depend on how supportive the class that you observe is

Teacher Judgment

Pros

- Teachers work with these kids regularly and know them well

Cons

- Concerns that teachers may focus on content mastery as opposed to language ability
- Subjective and hard to standardize

Parent Recommendations

Pros

- Parents do know the children well and have an opinion on what school success looks like
- Empowers parents to be a part of their child's education planning
- The decision affects their child and they should be at the table

Cons

- Perception that parents don't know what language supports their child needs
- Worries that parents might not understand what EL services provide
- Parents usually see students in social settings, not in academic settings

Additional Criteria Suggested in Survey

- Student input
- Grades
- Student work portfolios
- Content assessments

Applying the Criteria

- Should this additional criteria be applied to every student who meets the cut score?
- Should the criteria only be applied to students who meet the cut score but are below some higher bar (say a 6 composite, no domain under a 5 for example)?
- What are the pros and cons of doing this?

Break

Gallery Walk

- Each poster represents a type of criteria that may be collected
- We want to gather ideas for specific instruments or procedures that may collect this data (remember we have to be able to audit this)
- Go to each poster and record each idea that you don't see represented

Closer Look (1)

- Each person will choose to go to a poster representing a type of criteria that they are particularly interested in.
- More than one person may be at a poster (but please spread out)
- Each group will be in charge of thinking through the criteria

Each group must:

- Limit the procedure/protocol/instruments on each poster to no more than 2
- Consider how feasible each component is for a large district (large meaning >1000 ELs)
- Consider how feasible each component is for a small district (3 or fewer FTEs who may be split between buildings)
- Give some specifics for what the collection instrument would look like and how collection would work
- Is this something that would need to be further developed and piloted?

Considering the Exit Procedure

- Do we have measures that can be considered at the same time?
- Do we have measures that should be considered in some sort of order?
- Do we have measures that should be weighted differently?

Appendix E

Process Agreement Form for Proficiency Setting Working Group

Every Student Succeeds Act- English Learner Committee

English Learner Proficiency Definition Working Group Process Agreement

Purpose

The purpose of the ESSA English Learner Proficiency Definition Working Group is to create a recommendation for the statewide English language development (ELD) proficiency level using ACCESS test scores. By the end of the second session, the working group will draft a proposed statewide definition for the commissioner's consideration.

Role of members

Members are expected to attend and fully participate in all meetings and to articulate their views and the views of their constituencies. Members are encouraged to strive to bridge gaps in understanding, seek creative resolution of differences which integrate the needs of all stakeholders, and to commit to the purpose enumerated above.

Attendance of members

Consistent attendance and participation is critical to the process. Committee members are expected to attend each meeting at the following dates and times:

- Wednesday, January 25 8-11:30 a.m.
- Thursday, January 26 8-3:30 p.m.

If you are not able to attend the majority of the meetings, please designate an alternate to attend on the dates that you will be absent. The alternate is encouraged to attend all meetings as an observer.

Role of MDE

MDE staff will support the work of the committee by: preparing background materials to promote informed discussion; conducting and sharing data runs that model the effects of different ways to calculate and weight indicators; and coordinating the facilitation of the committee. When the work of the committee is complete, MDE staff will be responsible for resolving any remaining technical details and communicating the details of the system in Minnesota's state plan.

Decision Making

Members are encouraged to build consensus on options by integrating the perspectives and needs of all stakeholder groups. The recommendations throughout the process will indicate the level of consensus achieved by the group. The Committee's recommendations will be submitted to MDE Commissioner Brenda Cassellius for her consideration for inclusion in the ESSA State Plan.

Equity Lens

Educational equity is a central MDE value. MDE's mission statement is: "Leading for educational excellence and equity. Every day for everyone." Members are encouraged to raise, reflect on, and find equitable solutions throughout this process.

Equity Definition

Education Equity is the condition of justice, fairness, and inclusion in our systems of education so that all students have access to the opportunity to learn and develop to their fullest potential. The pursuit of education equity recognizes the historical conditions and barriers that have prevented opportunity and success in learning for students based on their race, income, and other social conditions. Eliminating those structural and institutional barriers to educational opportunity requires systemic change that allows for distribution of resources, information, and other support depending on the student's situation to ensure an equitable outcome. Equity is different from equality; equity is a principle that is based upon justness and fairness, while equality demands everyone be treated at the same level.

Equity-Focused Guiding Questions

- What groups are impacted by the decision and what is the nature of the impact? Groups may include:
 - Students of color
 - Native American students
 - Ethnic background
 - Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students
 - Students with disabilities
 - Students in poverty
 - English Learners
 - Gender
- What are the potential positive, neutral or harmful impacts on the identified groups?
- Have representatives from these groups been collaboratively engaged on the decision?
- How will the decision advance equity, address structural barriers, and reduce or eliminate disparities?

Internal Communication

In order to facilitate an open and collaborative discussion, members agree to:

- refrain from using acronyms
- represent your interests and concerns; don't just restate positions
- look for areas of common interests while respecting all opinions
- as needed, respectfully agree to disagree
- ensure many voices are heard: step up if you are someone who has a tendency to stay quiet in meetings, if you are someone who talks more readily in meetings - choose your moments and step back at other times listen when others are speaking and try to understand others' positions
- be open and consider all viewpoints
- assume best intentions, but acknowledge impact: all educators are in this work because they want the best for students, even if we have diverging opinions. You can assume people have the best intentions and also acknowledge the impact of actions/statements if there is harm that occurs despite those best intentions

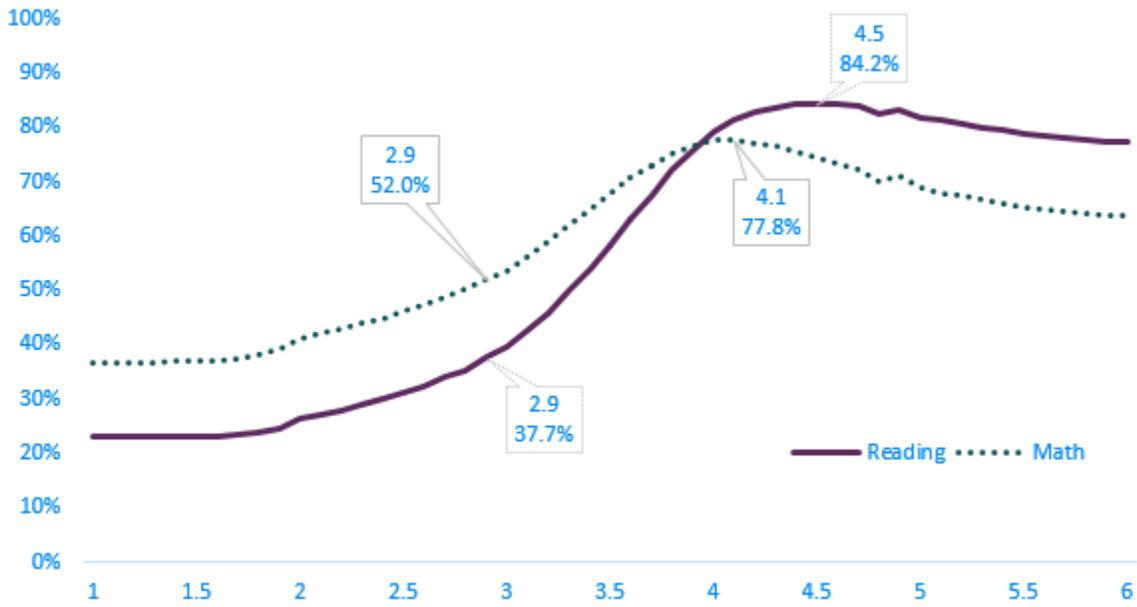
Appendix F

Handouts Provided During Proficiency Definition Discussions

Handout 1: Decision Consistencies and Distributions of Scores on MCAs

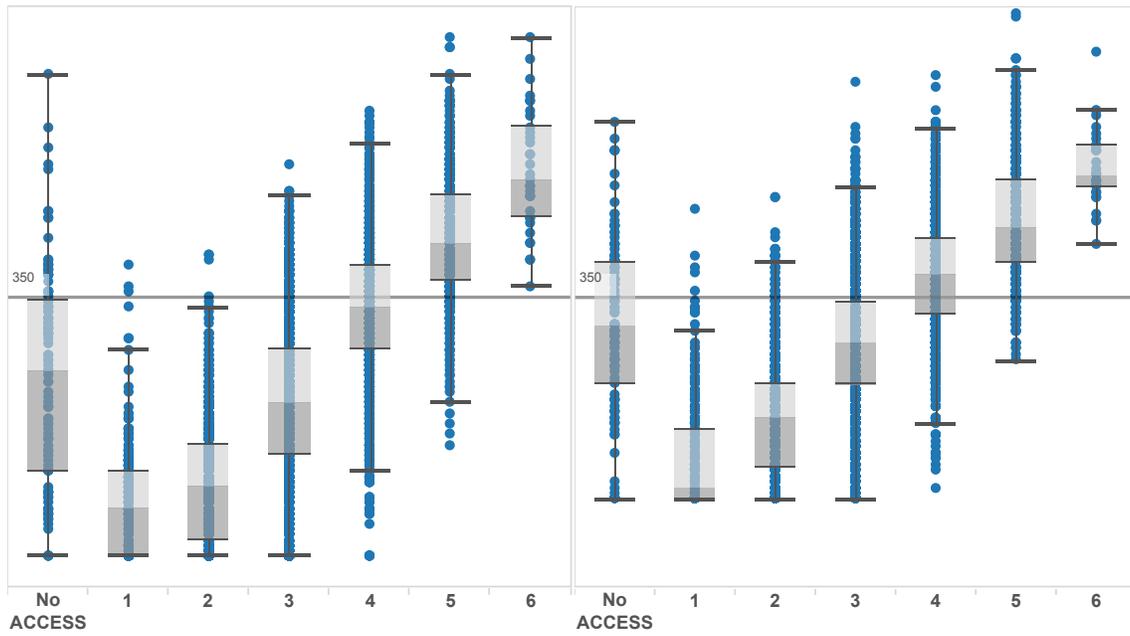
The following graphs are presented by grade. The first graph for each grade is the decision consistency matrix data. The x-axis represents the ACCESS 2.0 overall composite scores and the y-axis represents the percentage of students who would be proficient on ACCESS 2.0 and proficient on the MCA plus the percentage of students who would not be proficient on ACCESS 2.0 or the MCA for reading and math. The closest score to the points of inflection are called out on the graph. Participants were told that maximizing the decision consistency was one factor to consider in their decision, but that, typically, somewhere in the range of the two inflection points is where students display the English language skills needed to participate in their core academic areas. The second set of graphs show the distribution of scale scores for students who did not take the ACCESS (generally students who are not English learners) as well as the distribution of English learners by overall composite score on ACCESS 2.0. The proficiency score is marked by the line in the middle of the graph. Only English learners appear in the first two graphs. Participants were told to consider both the proficiency indicator for at what proficiency level students tended to be proficient on the MCAs as well as when the distribution of English learners looks similar to their non-English learner peers. The final two graphs were provided to give the overall distribution of scores for students who have not been identified as English learners in the current year or previous two years to allow for the an additional comparison of English learners to their non-English learner peers.

Grade 3

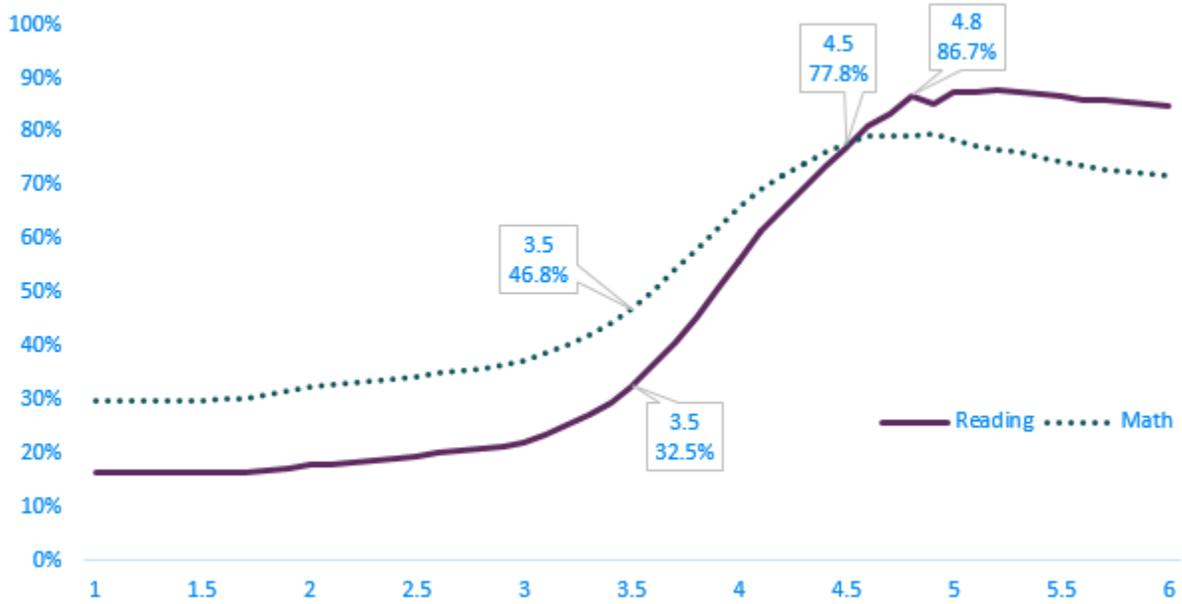


Reading

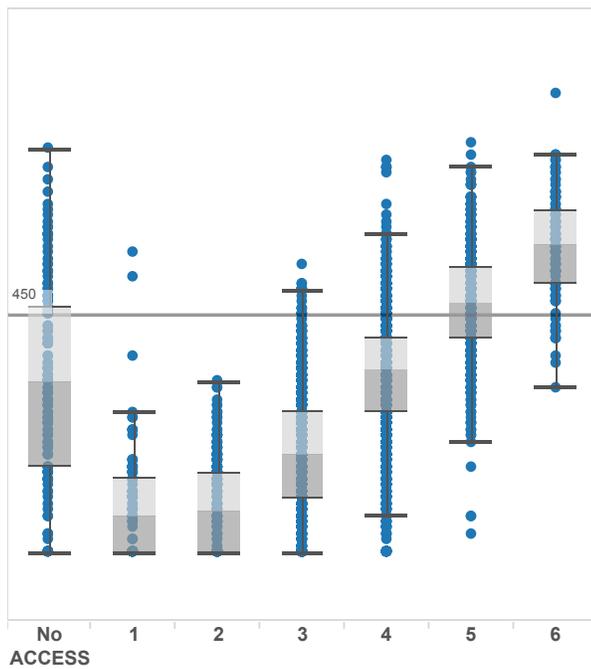
Math



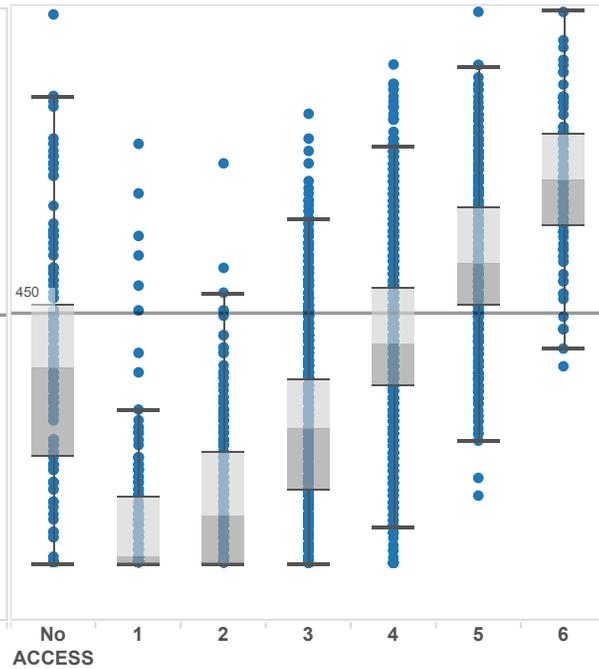
Grade 4



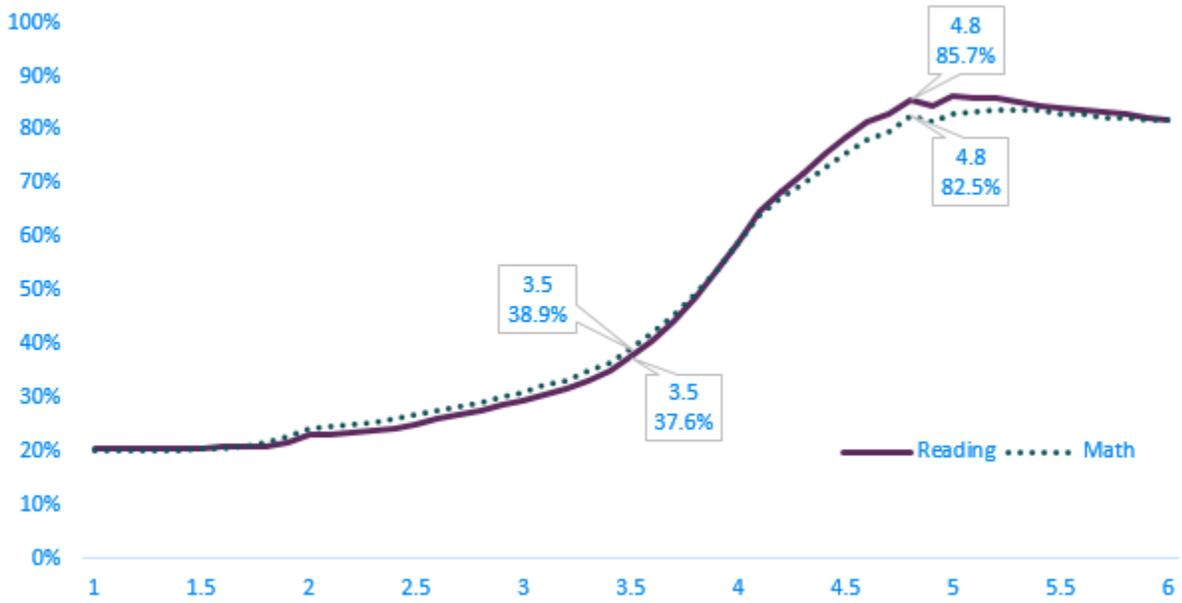
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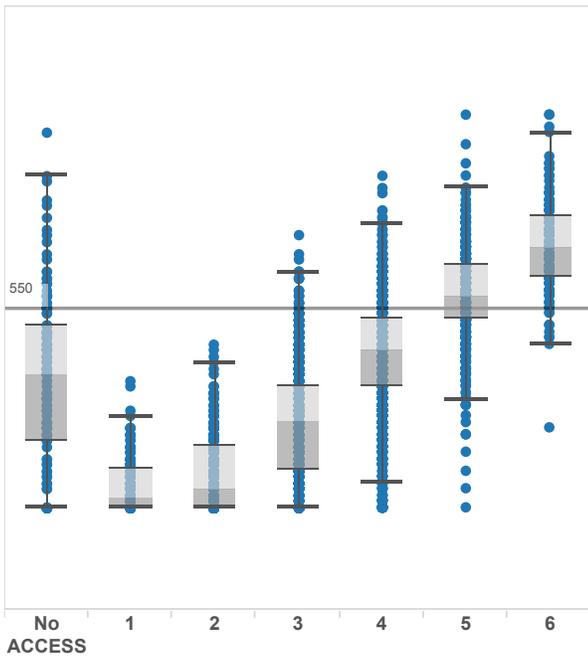
Math



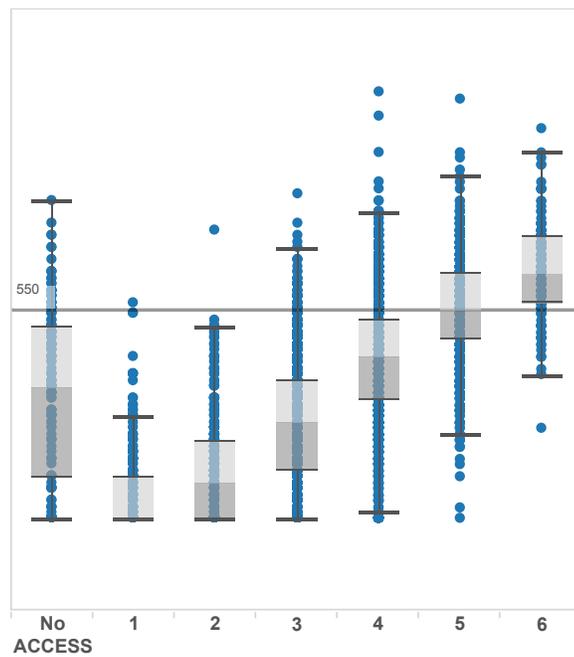
Grade 5



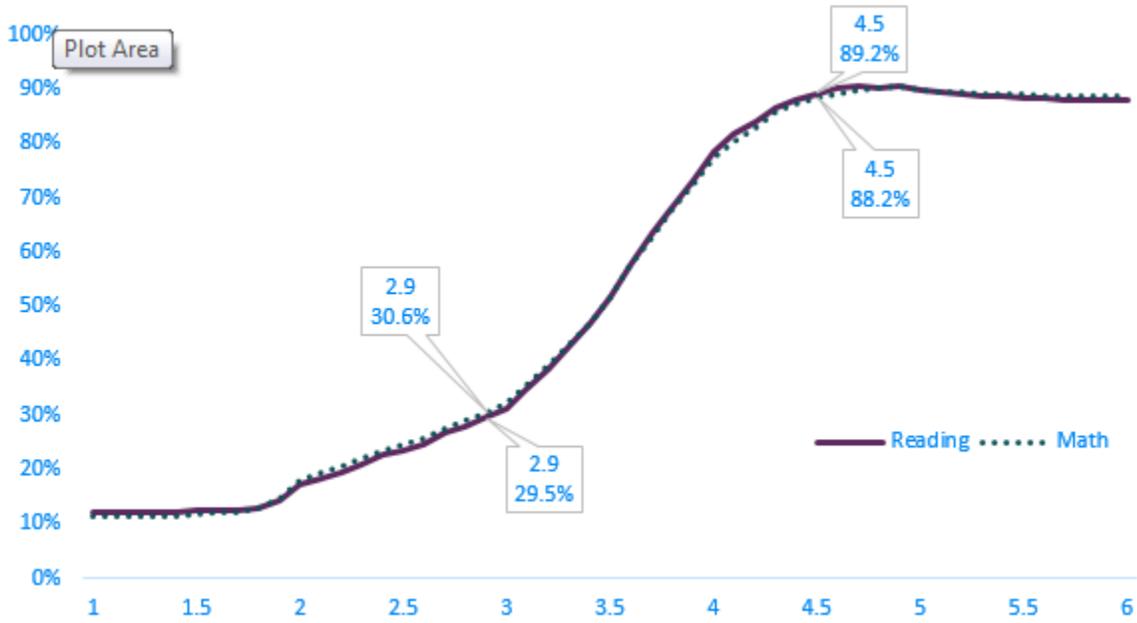
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Math

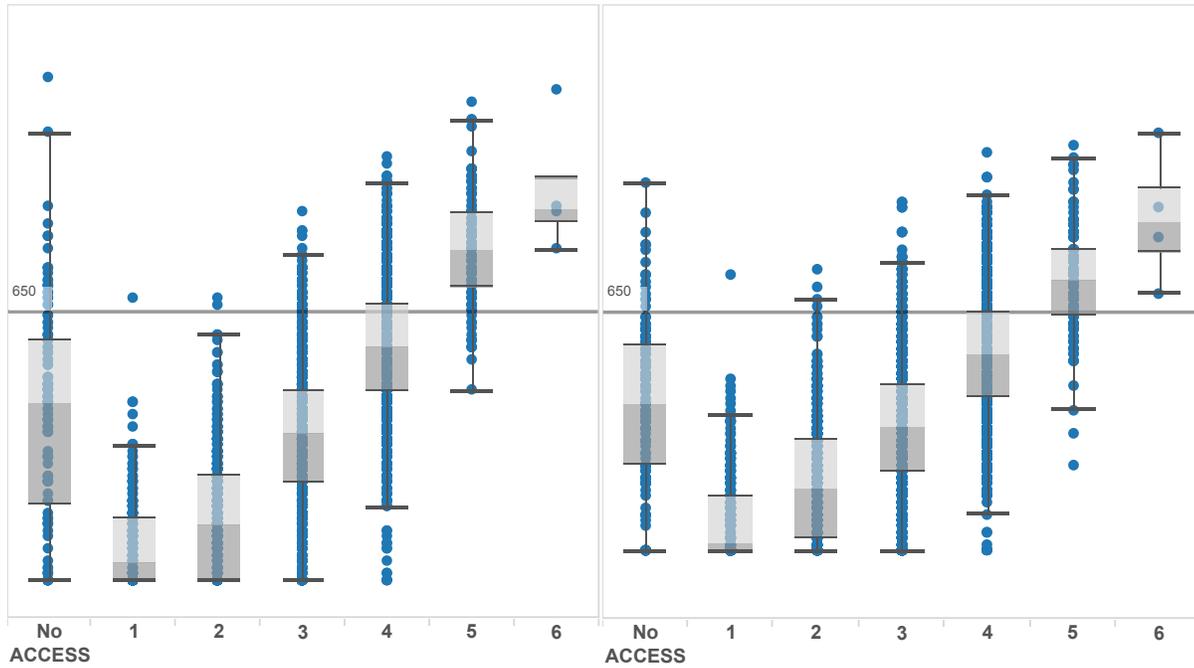


Grade 6

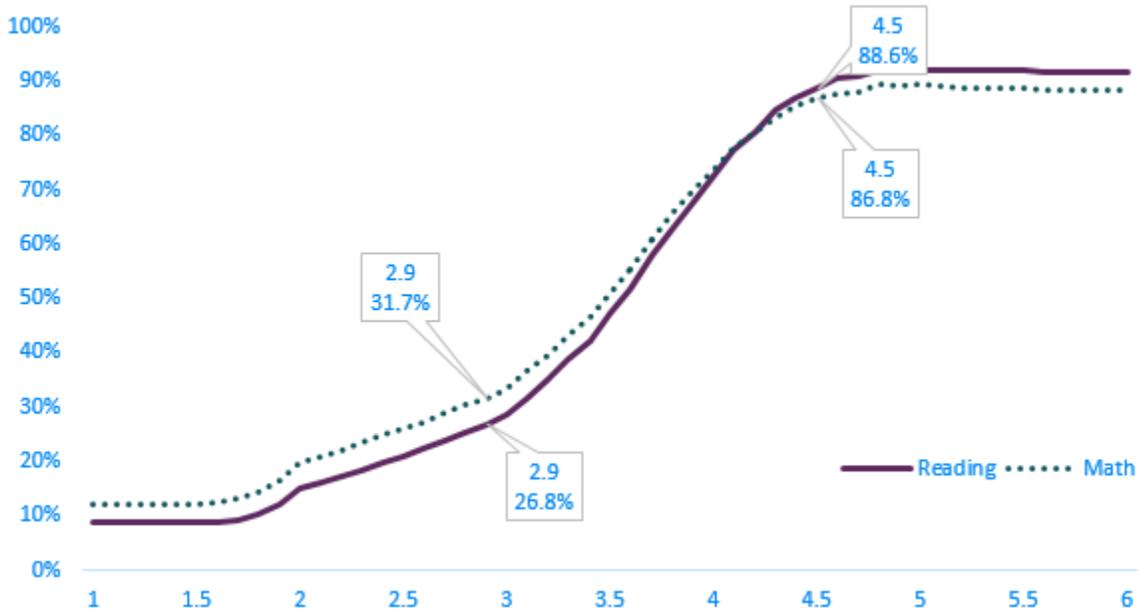


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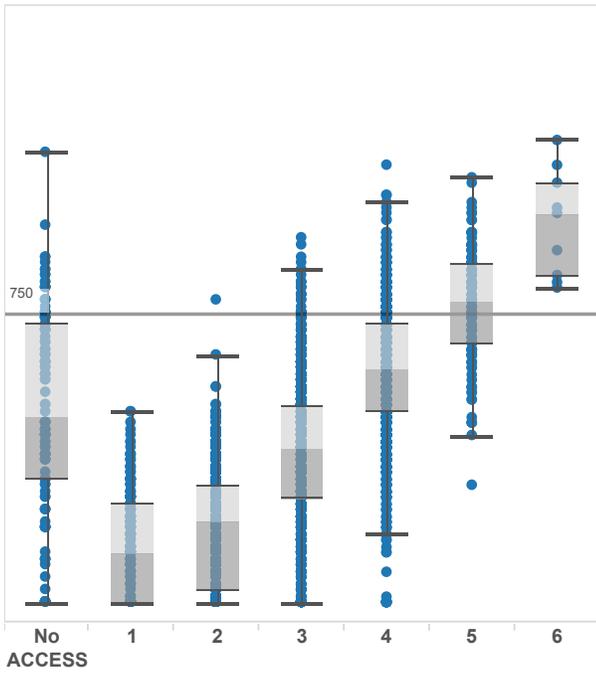
Math



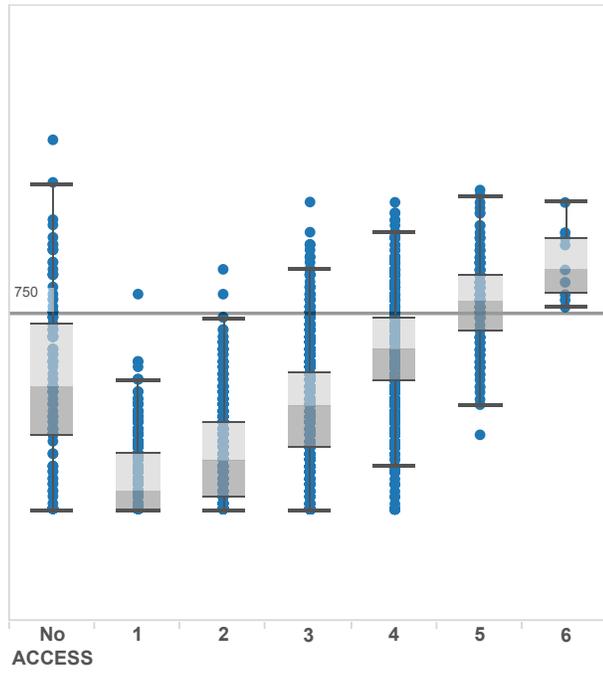
Grade 7



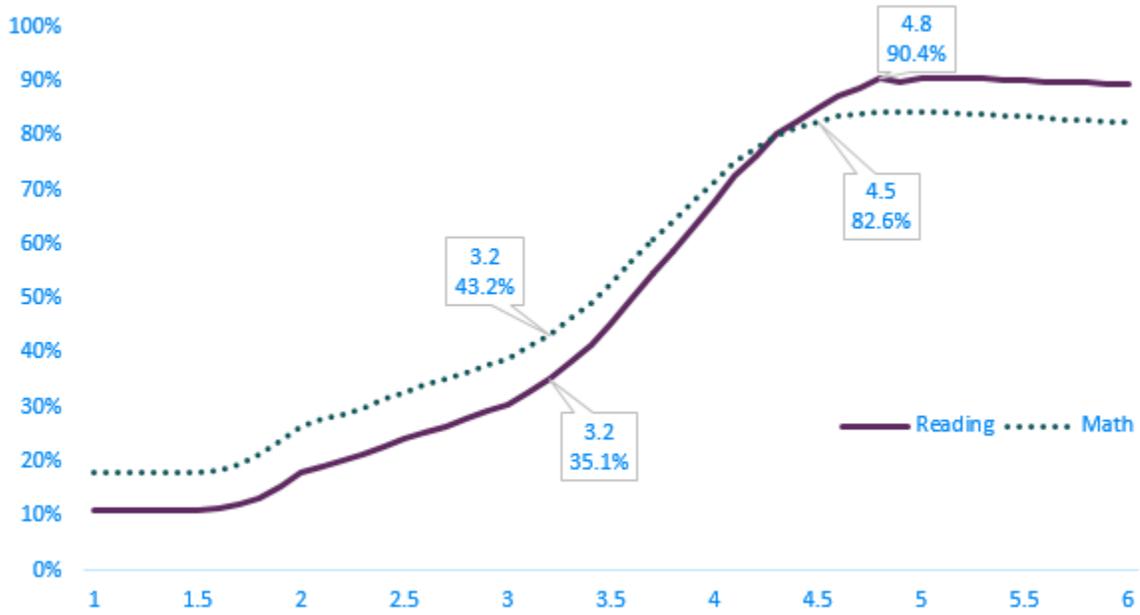
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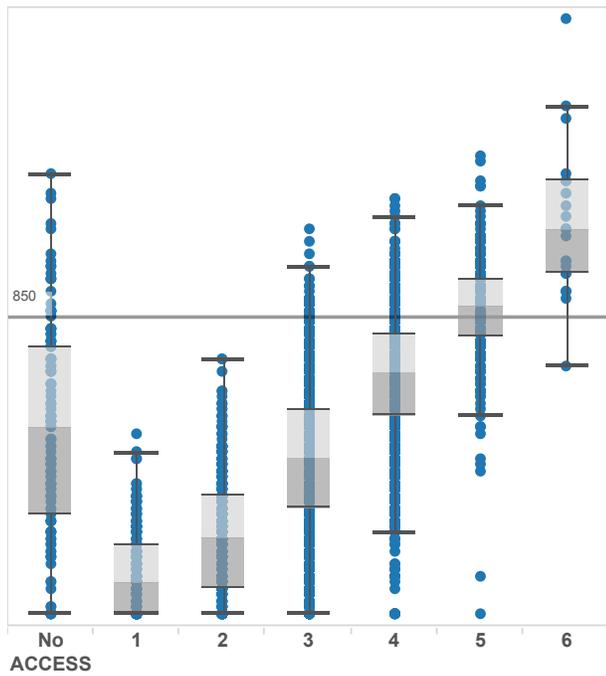
Math



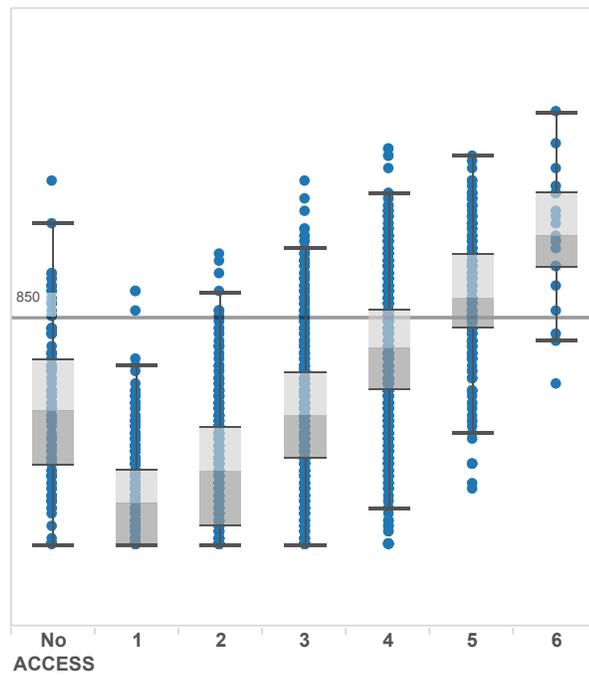
Grade 8



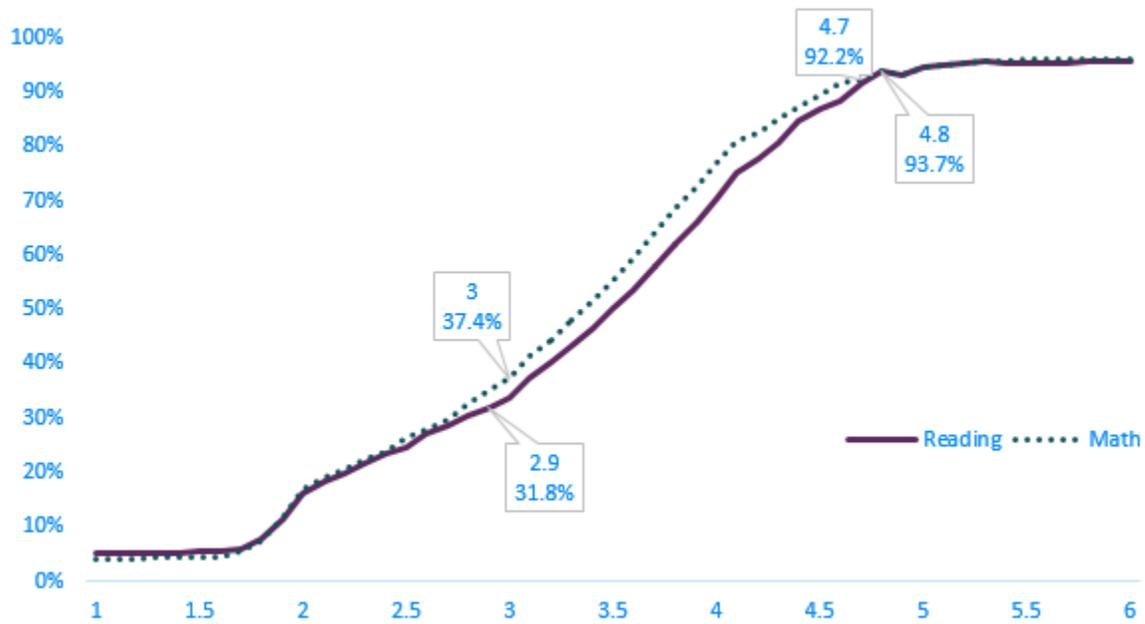
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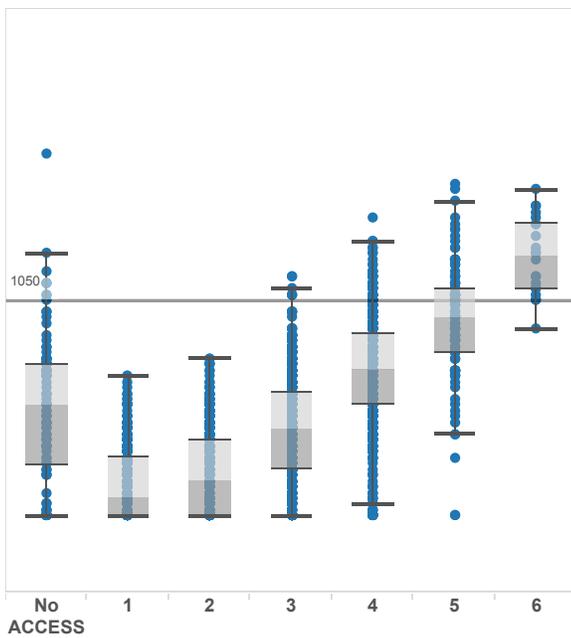
Math



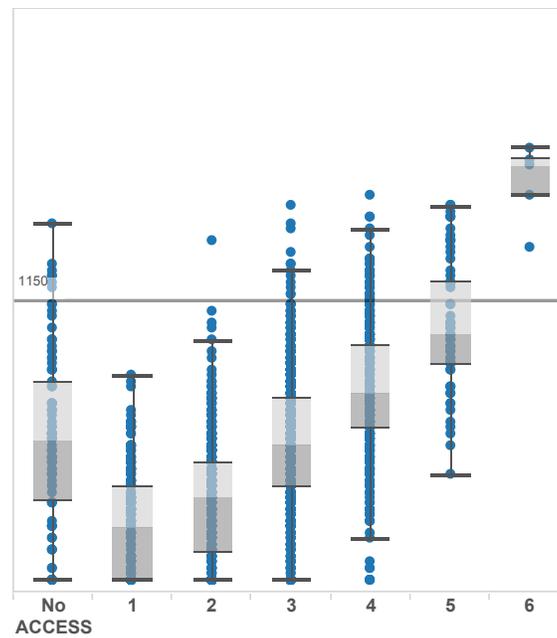
High School



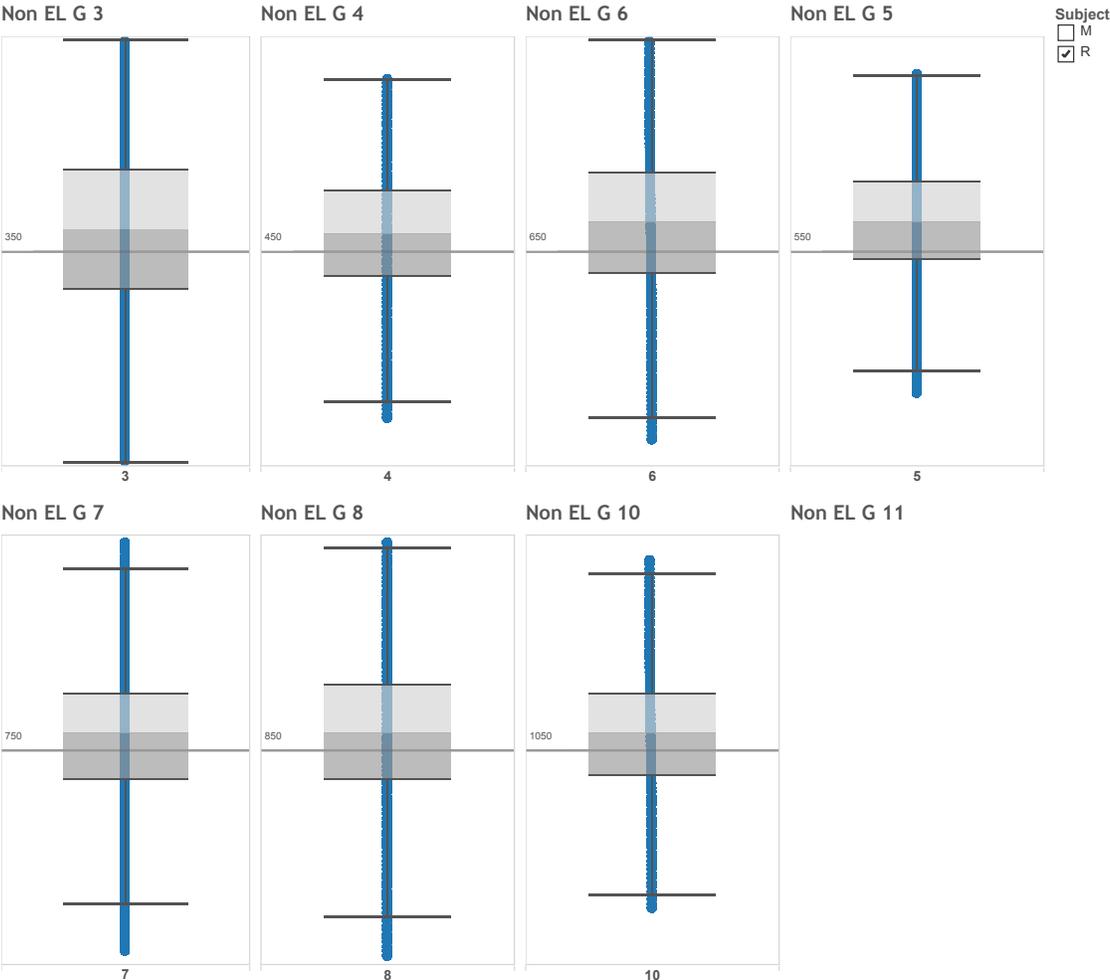
Reading



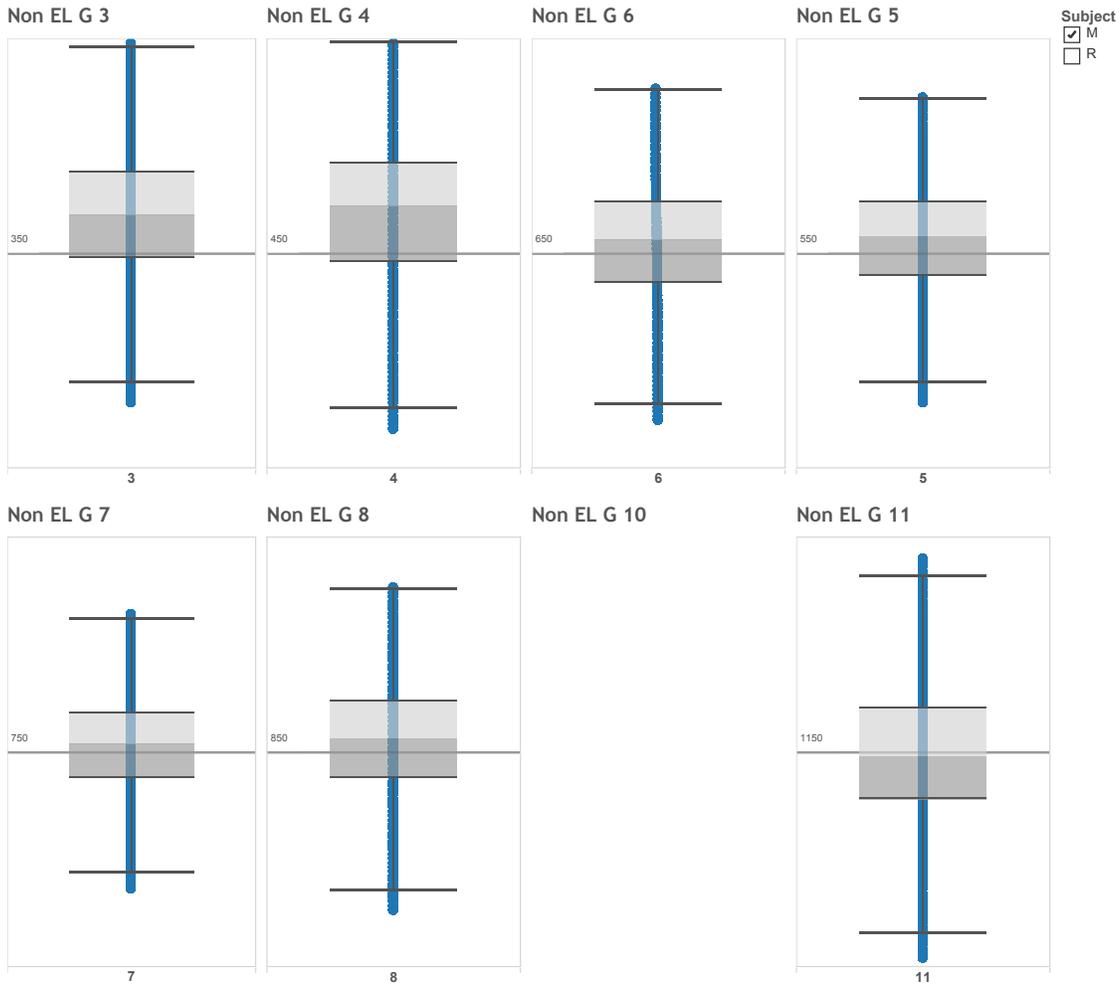
Math



Not Prior 2 Year EL MCA Reading Distribution by Grade



Not Prior 2 Year EL MCA Math Distribution by Grade



Handout 2: Data in the 3.0-5.0 Overall Composite Range to Narrow Recommendations

Reading decision consistency at specific composite proficiency levels on ACCESS 2.0 scale

Grade	3.0	3.5	4.0	4.5	5.0	Highest Consistency Composite Score
3	39.6%	58.3%	79.3%	84.2%	81.8%	4.4
4	22.1%	32.5%	55.9%	77.1%	87.5%	4.9
5	29.3%	37.6%	58.9%	78.3%	86.3%	4.7
6	31.3%	51.9%	78.4%	89.2%	89.9%	4.7
7	28.5%	47.3%	72.5%	88.6%	92.1%	5.2, 5.3
8	30.3%	41.5%	67.8%	84.9%	90.6%	5.2
10	33.8%	46.7%	70.3%	86.8%	94.6%	5.3

Math decision consistency at specific composite proficiency levels on ACCESS 2.0 scale

Grade	3.0	3.5	4.0	4.5	5.0	Highest Consistency Composite Score
3	53.7%	67.8%	77.7%	74.3%	68.9%	4.1
4	37.1%	46.8%	66.0%	77.8%	78.6%	4.8
5	31.0%	38.9%	58.6%	75.6%	83.1%	5.2
6	32.3%	51.8%	77.4%	88.2%	89.8%	4.8
7	33.5%	51.1%	73.7%	86.8%	89.4%	5.0
8	38.8%	52.6%	71.3%	82.6%	84.5%	4.9
11	37.4%	55.3%	76.8%	89.6%	94.7%	5.7

Note: Data reported in the above tables verifies that the student is reported in the same grade on the MCA as on ACCESS - the rest of the handout uses the grade reported on ACCESS and will match data presented moving forward. This is presented to help inform how similar these results would be to cleaned data.

Grades 3-5

Reading

3.0	ACCESS Not Proficient	ACCESS Proficient
MCA Not Proficient	2,063	12,810
MCA Proficient	9	3,749

Consistency = 31.1%

3.5	ACCESS Not Proficient	ACCESS Proficient
MCA Not Proficient	4,590	10,283
MCA Proficient	54	3,704

Consistency = 44.5%

4.0	ACCESS Not Proficient	ACCESS Proficient
MCA Not Proficient	8,938	5,935
MCA Proficient	332	3,426

Consistency = 66.4%

4.5	ACCESS Not Proficient	ACCESS Proficient
MCA Not Proficient	12,315	2,558
MCA Proficient	1,101	2,657

Consistency = 80.4%

5.0	ACCESS Not Proficient	ACCESS Proficient
MCA Not Proficient	14,244	629
MCA Proficient	2,195	1,563

Consistency = 84.8%

Math

3.0	ACCESS Not Proficient	ACCESS Proficient
MCA Not Proficient	2,385	10,949
MCA Proficient	58	5,694

Consistency = 42.3%

3.5	ACCESS Not Proficient	ACCESS Proficient
MCA Not Proficient	4,755	8,579
MCA Proficient	307	5,445

Consistency = 53.4%

4.0	ACCESS Not Proficient	ACCESS Proficient
MCA Not Proficient	8,555	4,779
MCA Proficient	1,154	4,598

Consistency = 68.9%

4.5	ACCESS Not Proficient	ACCESS Proficient
MCA Not Proficient	11,288	2,046
MCA Proficient	2,573	3,179

Consistency = 75.8%

5.0	ACCESS Not Proficient	ACCESS Proficient
MCA Not Proficient	12,798	536
MCA Proficient	4,094	1,658

Consistency = 75.7%

Grades 6-8

Reading

3.0	ACCESS Not Proficient	ACCESS Proficient
MCA Not Proficient	2,308	8,314
MCA Proficient	4	1,271

Consistency = 30.0%

3.5	ACCESS Not Proficient	ACCESS Proficient
MCA Not Proficient	4,490	6,132
MCA Proficient	16	1,259

Consistency = 48.3%

4.0	ACCESS Not Proficient	ACCESS Proficient
MCA Not Proficient	7,541	3,081
MCA Proficient	135	1,140

Consistency = 73.0%

4.5	ACCESS Not Proficient	ACCESS Proficient
MCA Not Proficient	9,634	988
MCA Proficient	485	790

Consistency = 87.6%

5.0	ACCESS Not Proficient	ACCESS Proficient
MCA Not Proficient	10,471	151
MCA Proficient	940	335

Consistency = 90.8%

Math

3.0	ACCESS Not Proficient	ACCESS Proficient
MCA Not Proficient	2,589	7,943
MCA Proficient	20	1,663

Consistency = 34.8%

3.5	ACCESS Not Proficient	ACCESS Proficient
MCA Not Proficient	4,731	5,801
MCA Proficient	81	1,602

Consistency = 51.8%

4.0	ACCESS Not Proficient	ACCESS Proficient
MCA Not Proficient	7,683	2,849
MCA Proficient	305	1,378

Consistency = 74.2%

4.5	ACCESS Not Proficient	ACCESS Proficient
MCA Not Proficient	9,623	909
MCA Proficient	814	869

Consistency = 85.9%

5.0	ACCESS Not Proficient	ACCESS Proficient
MCA Not Proficient	10,392	140
MCA Proficient	1,338	345

Consistency = 87.9%

High School

Reading

3.0	ACCESS Not Proficient	ACCESS Proficient
MCA Not Proficient	690	1,599
MCA Proficient	0	128

Consistency = 33.8%

3.5	ACCESS Not Proficient	ACCESS Proficient
MCA Not Proficient	1,080	1,203
MCA Proficient	1	127

Consistency = 50.0%

4.0	ACCESS Not Proficient	ACCESS Proficient
MCA Not Proficient	1,578	711
MCA Proficient	6	122

Consistency = 70.3%

4.5	ACCESS Not Proficient	ACCESS Proficient
MCA Not Proficient	1,989	300
MCA Proficient	20	108

Consistency = 86.8%

5.0	ACCESS Not Proficient	ACCESS Proficient
MCA Not Proficient	2,214	75
MCA Proficient	56	72

Consistency = 94.6%

Math

3.0	ACCESS Not Proficient	ACCESS Proficient
MCA Not Proficient	621	1,168
MCA Proficient	1	77

Consistency = 37.4%

3.5	ACCESS Not Proficient	ACCESS Proficient
MCA Not Proficient	958	831
MCA Proficient	3	75

Consistency = 55.3%

4.0	ACCESS Not Proficient	ACCESS Proficient
MCA Not Proficient	1,369	420
MCA Proficient	13	65

Consistency = 76.8%

4.5	ACCESS Not Proficient	ACCESS Proficient
MCA Not Proficient	1,619	170
MCA Proficient	25	53

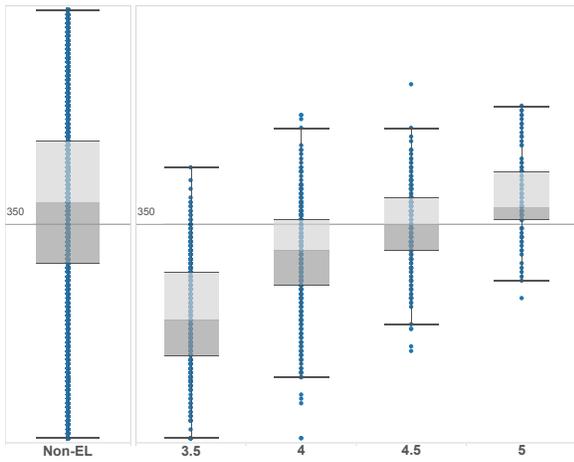
Consistency = 89.6%

5.0	ACCESS Not Proficient	ACCESS Proficient
MCA Not Proficient	1,740	14
MCA Proficient	50	49

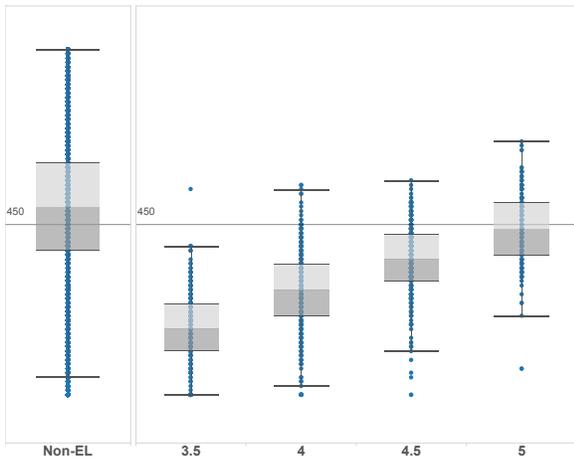
Consistency = 94.7%

Reading

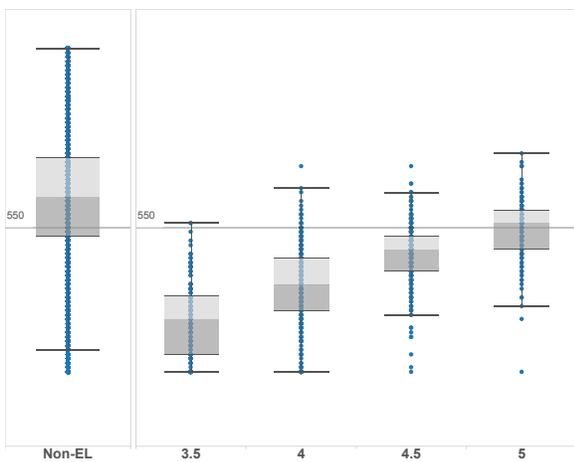
Grade 3



Grade 4

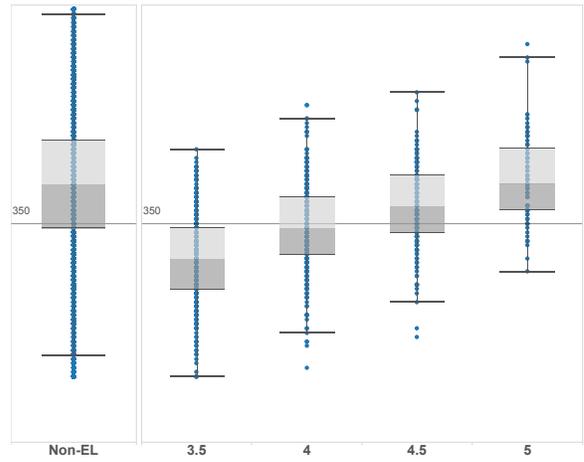


Grade 5

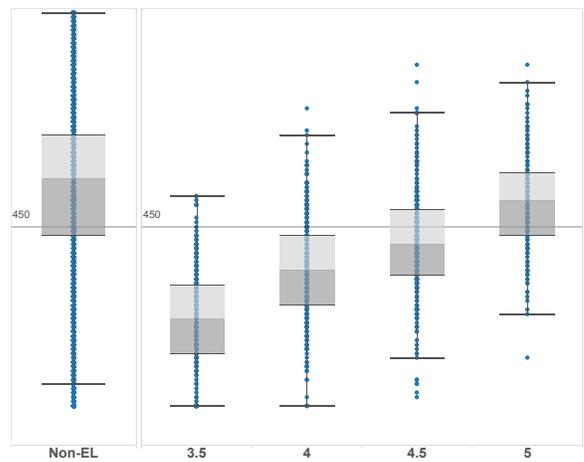


Math

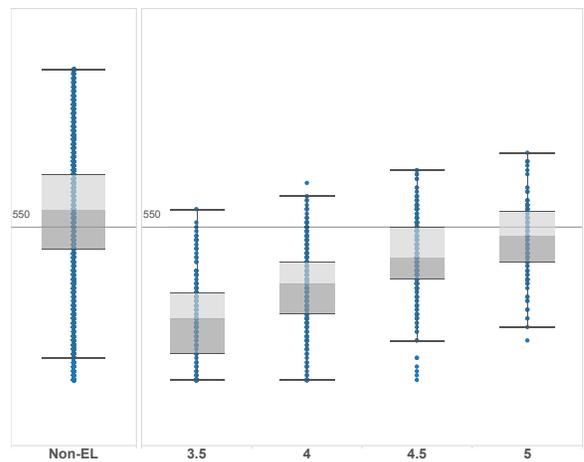
Grade 3



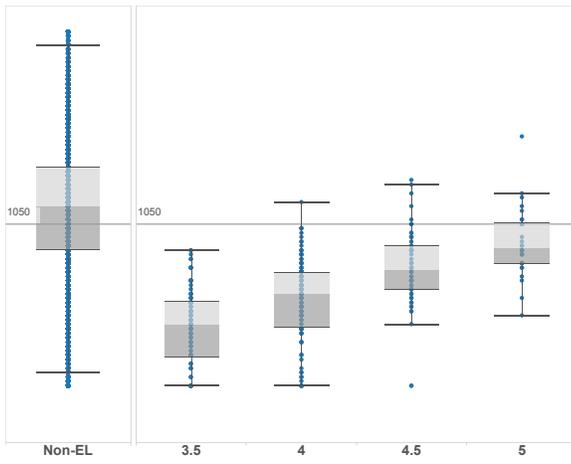
Grade 4



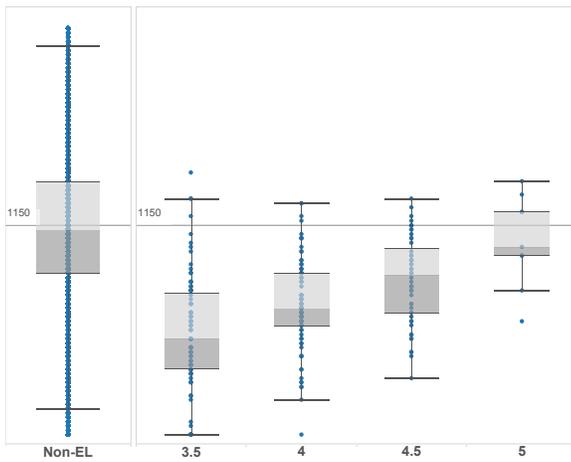
Grade 5



Grade 10 – Reading



Grade 11 – Math



Appendix G

Notes from Proficiency Setting Meetings

English Learner Proficiency Definition Working Group Notes Day One

- Session started with a review of the day’s goal. The overall goals were:
 1. Develop a common understanding of what English language proficiency for English Learners (ELs) means and what purpose a proficiency definition should serve.
 2. Create guidelines to evaluate a recommended proficiency definition based on ACCESS scores.
- Group introduced one another, reviewed group norms, reviewed the agenda, and reviewed the deliverable (a recommendation to the commissioner regarding an ACCESS cut score).
- Reviewed current statutes regarding English language proficiency.
- Group discussed the first discussion question: What do we expect if a student is “proficient in English”?
- Responses suggested that a proficient student:
 - Could meet MCA/Content tests and meet standards across all areas without noticeable language barriers
 - Could produce work that was linguistically comparable to their peers
 - Could use transferable skills across academic, social, civic tasks
 - Could advocate for self and exhibit agency
 - Would be culturally proficient
 - Wouldn’t need added language support
 - Displayed strong productive and receptive skills
 - Would enjoy success after school and would have the linguistic skills they need to have a variety of choices. Do what they want where language isn’t an issue
 - Can think and produce complex thoughts and critical thinking
- Group discussed the second discussion question: What is the purpose of a standardized English language proficiency definition?
- Responses suggested that the purpose of a standardized proficiency definition included:
 - Consistency, Validity, Accountability, Reliability – everyone is on the same page regarding what proficiency means and outcomes are predictable.
 - Equity – common expectations
 - A definition wouldn’t be too high and not too low
 - A common definition could help with practice (what is the outcome)
 - A common definition could help provide a uniform and adequate education
 - It is required by law
 - Guides expectations for EL teachers vs content teachers (like a North star)
 - Guides the role and profession and collaboration

During this part of the conversation the question of who defines sufficient English and how “peers” are defined came up.
- Groups discussed the third question: Has your district used – or do you know of districts who have used – a proficiency definition that was different than the state’s proficiency definition?
 - Teacher recommendation (classroom performance and assessments, credits earned)
 - MCAs (if students were close to exiting, or the opposite)
- Reasons for keeping students in EL included:
 - Funding considerations/resource/accountability
 - Coordinators wanted to keep an eye on them

- There was concern about support outside of EL services
- Perception that L2 literacy conflicted with language acquisition
- There was confusion about the expectation
- A concern that while the student was doing fine now, they may struggle down the road.
- Groups discussed the fourth discussion question: How can we know if a statewide proficiency definition is serving its purpose?
 - ACCESS proficiency leads to success elsewhere
 - MN looks like other states in regards to proficiency rates and standardized test proficiency
 - The proficiency definition qualitatively “seems right” down the road
 - Once students are out, they remain successful
 - Proficiency definition is clear and well calibrated
 - Increase in positive outcomes (such as fewer long-term English learners, fewer need for remedial outcomes down the road, etc.)
- Groups convened and created guidelines that they wanted to use in order to evaluate potential proficiency definitions. The final list of guidelines is below:
 - A proficiency definition should be clear.
 - It should be informed by, but not dictated by, academic measures (that is, it should be language driven).
 - It should be forward looking yet immediate (i.e. students can exit in a reasonable amount of time but will still succeed down the road)
 - The group was open to change the proficiency definition by grade.
 - A proficiency definition should be focused on student outcomes and attainable yet realistic.
 - Compliant with state and federal law.
 - “Sufficient language” is informed by standards rather than a normative sense of “good English”

We are valuing the qualitatively “right” language strengths (a lot of emphasis was put on writing).

English Learner Proficiency Definition Working Group Notes Day Two

- Session began with a reminder of the working group's norms and the deliverable that the group is working towards.
- MDE reviewed methods used to evaluate the effectiveness of potential cut scores. These measures included:
 - Decision consistency matrices
 - Relationship between proficiency for ELs and non-ELs on MCA
 - Projected proficiency rate
- Groups were given summary data to discuss. Summary data showed various composite scores at different grades and how students at those composite scores did on the MCA. Comments from the discussions include:
 - Groups were uncomfortable using MCAs as the primary measure of school success.
 - The general range that people talked about tended to be between a 4.5 to a 5. Some groups spoke about making the range between 4-5.
 - With secondary students, several people suggested looking at the relationship between ACT scores and ACCESS scores. MDE talked about how that was technically possible, but there would be an issue matching scores since it would be based on student names, not MARSS numbers.
- After the discussions some group members wanted to analyze how ELs fared on MCAs 1-4 years after they were exited from EL status. MDE showed some data that showed that the proportion of ELs that were proficient on the MCA increased each year after exiting EL status.
- The group also wanted to look at writing. Some members suggested that a writing score of 4 may be too high because at that point ELs often times better writers than mainstream peers. Participants were informed that exit-able students are not always as low in writing. Again – what is the purpose of EL services – does the writing service belong to EL alone or is that for others? The purpose of the score is to decide where the point of exiting EL instruction, not because we expect less of students.
- Groups were then asked to analyze their own data and determine if they could narrow a range of composite scores that could serve as the cut score.
 - Groups again focused mostly on the 4.5-5.0 range.
 - Several group members referenced WIDA's performance definitions to determine where the cut score should be. These group members tended to argue that a proficiency score closer to 5 would be more appropriate.
 - Several group members expressed concern that there may be insufficient data to create a cut score for high school since students only take the MCA in both math and reading once in high school.
 - There was also some discussion of looking at how many students need to take remedial courses in post-secondary settings, but there was once again concern about obtaining and properly linking the data.
- After lunch, the topic of a cut score for high school was shelved and the group concentrated on 3rd-8th grade results.
- Much of the conversation after lunch focused on examining the projected proficiency and consistency of different cut scores. There was robust discussion about whether or not this was an authentic way of looking at the effectiveness of a cut score. Some group members were adamant that WIDA's performance definitions should take precedence and that the cut score should remain close to a composite score of around 5. Other group members were skeptical, noting that once the composite score got too high, large proportions of students were not proficient on the ACCESS test but were proficient on the MCA.

The conversation will be revisited after selected school districts take a closer look at their own internal data to see how students fare at different cut scores. The group also wants to hear what additional criteria might be considered when exiting students.

English Learner Proficiency Definition Working Group Notes Day Three

Looking at the following composite scores:

4.5

4.8

5.0

The decision consistency matrix suggests that the range from 4.5 to 5.0 is the zone at which language generally no longer prevents students from accessing content in core classes.

Parent and student focus groups asked stakeholders about their experiences as ELs and their thoughts about EL programs. Some had concerns about EL classes being less rigorous and having lower expectation. Concerns that any kind of struggle might be perceived as a language issue. A lot of concerns that upper level ELs didn't have enough time or classes with native English speakers.

Looking at Data

John and Phi, St. Paul

What you did, why, and what the conclusion was.

There was a lot of discussion in the group about what opportunities ELs have when they exit and if they are succeeding. He looked at students who exited in 15-16 (grades 6-12 b/c those students get letter grades) and their performance in class in 2016-17. 500 kids exited with old cut score (avg. B-) and around 225 with new cut score (B average).

4.5 with a conjunctive minimum should be at the high end of where we're looking.

What happens to these students when they exit? Do they have access to advanced courses and electives? They had access to performing arts and visual arts in middle school. In high school the schedules were more constrained, with a focus on required core classes for graduation.

In general, students who are exited outperform the general education students. Phi looked at the core content classes and advanced courses that former ELs enrolled in last quarter. What's the rate of enrollment in advanced coursework compared to never ELs? Level 1-3 are not taking advanced classes. In levels 4-6, they are enrolled in core content classes and passing at or above the level of never ELs. They are performing at or above the same level as never ELs in advanced courses.

In the SPPS they go from 18% exiting to 11% exiting with a move to a 4.5 with no domain under 3.5.

They have hesitations in going above the 4.5.

Comment: support is not the same across the state

Even with 4.5, fewer kids exit, so this is not lowering the bar

Ashley, Anoka-Hennepin

They wanted to follow students after they exited. They went back to 2013 to follow them 2 to 3 years out of the program. They wanted to look at growth in MAP (offered in grades 2-8). They also wanted to look at credit earning in HS. The numbers were too small per grade level in the high school, so they focused on elementary and middle school. Only those who met that 5 overall with a 4 in each of the domains. They exited in 2013. They applied the 5.0 and 4.5 with no domain under 3.5 (only listening and writing). Across the two models, students had extremely similar growth over the three years in the same two models.

Former ELs had growth that was higher than the RIT growth norms outlined in NWEA MAP compared to others across the nation starting at that same scale score. They looked at grades, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7. In general, kids performed in the 45th to 50th percentile.

In AH they saw with old proficiency definition, 26.1% exit rate. Would have been 5% with new scale. Went to 9% with model 1. Went to 18.1% with model 2. The 4.5 is more rigorous. They came to the conclusion it would not be desirable to have a cut score above a 4.5.

They saw fairly similar growth across grades 2 through 7.

MDE Analysis

Dennis looked at the question of whether we are exiting kids too early or keeping them in too long. He looked at kids who barely exited and kids who were barely kept in. 4.8/4.9 versus 5.0/5.1.

How did they do down the line. In 2015 there was no difference in MCA scores. After 1 year there continued to be no difference in performance on MCA scores. This only looks at kids that are right on the edge. If you already have strong language skills, does additional EL service result in different performance on the MCAs.

Decision Consistency Matrix Analysis

With a 5 in 3rd grade, almost 1/3 would not be prof. on ACCESS, but would be on the MCA.

Only around 4% of Kg would exit with a 5

WIDA webinar – they may need to revisit the performance definitions

Conjunctive Minimum

A 4.5 with no domain under 3.5 would result in about 10% proficient statewide, so it is more rigorous. In 2012 the proficiency rate was about 6% and it grew to 20% in 2016.

A 4.5 with no domain under 3.0 would result in slightly more kids scoring proficient.

Appendix H

Notes from Additional Criteria Meetings

English Learner Additional Criteria Working Group Notes Day One

- Meeting began with introductions and group norms.
- The meeting's goal was to compile a list of recommended criteria that could be used in addition to ACCESS scores to inform exiting decisions.
- The group worked with the understanding that additional input would be gathered by outstate stakeholders. The group would reconvene on April 5th to revisit the discussion.
- The group first discussed what districts are currently using to inform exiting decision.
 - Most exiting decisions are currently being driven by ACCESS scores. Districts reported using MCA scores, literacy assessments (such as Fountas and Pinnell), and grades to determine whether or not a student should be exited.
- The group then discussed a hypothetical situation in which two students had identical ACCESS scores but teachers thought one should exit EL designation and one should be looked at more closely. When asked what situation might prompt teachers to look more closely at one student than at another, the group generally thought that every student who met the cut score should be evaluated with the additional criteria to prevent a teacher's own biases of students from interfering in exiting decisions.
- The third discussion question asked participants to discuss the following:
 - What information or measures could be used to inform exiting decisions of students once they have already reached a proficient score on the ACCESS test?
 - What are the pros and cons of the information or measures you propose?
 - How would you standardize the collection of this information?
- Suggested criteria included:
 - Student work samples or writing probe. There was some concern however that if a standardized way of gathering a sample, would it count as an assessment and therefore count against the assessment time regulation?
 - Using a classroom rubric and writing sample based on the WIDA performance indicators. This could be standardized and would be language based, but would be very work intensive.
 - A language checklist such as the SOLOM. This is language based and standardized, but would again be a significant amount of extra work.
 - WIDA model. It is standardized but it costs money. There could also be validity issues if the model is taken too soon after the ACCESS test is administered.
 - A rubric or checklist based on Susan Dutro's matrix.

During the discussion there was a fair amount of discussion regarding how the burden of proof to demonstrate that a student wasn't ready to exit rests on teachers, not students. Therefore, if work samples are required, or issues are raised by teachers, then teachers need to raise them ahead of time and need to have evidence ready to support their claim.

English Learner Additional Criteria Working Group Notes Day Two

- Successful and sufficient: are they passing classes? Can they participate in a conversation? Are they able to participate in higher order thinking tasks? Do we consider supports? So if a general education student gets support, than an EL should be able to succeed on that support alone.
- Regarding teacher judgement, you would need something like a rubric.
- Parents might want to arbitrarily keep kids in service.
- One district in particular didn't perform well on MCAs for the general population, so why should ELs perform unusually well.

Discussion 1

From your experience, how are exiting decisions being made now? What have districts used as criteria in addition to the ACCESS test? Why? Who makes the final exit call?

- This district only looks at the cut score for the most part. The EL teacher makes a call of whether or not they're proficient on the ACCESS score. Follow the 5 and all 4s guidance. Don't really consider other measures.
- At the high school, there is consideration of classroom performance and teacher judgment but it wasn't standardized in any way.
- One EL teacher in particular made the exiting decisions at all schools, even ones she didn't work at.

Discussion 2

State statute talks about using observations, teacher judgement, parent recommendations, and developmentally appropriate assessment instruments to determine if students still require EL services.

What are the pros and cons of each of these measures?

Can you think of additional measures that you might use?

How would you standardize the collection of this information?

Observations

In SPED they also do observations, and all teachers write things up differently. That process is not standardized either. Any observation would have to be guided or have a template. Some people buy into them, but some people see them as a hoop to jump through, so it won't be very thorough. A pro could be that you're taking time to observe students.

- One teacher didn't mind it, but she didn't want to rely only on that. Something like a shadowing protocol that standardized what teachers are looking for. What are we expecting to observe? What types of classrooms would we even go in?
- Observations would probably have to be math or/and language arts, but you could include other core subjects. But it would have to be the same according to the participants. What if one teacher has built in supports and that helps the students? But other teachers don't have built in supports? You might be observing differences in teachers, not kids.

- Would we want to observe across all domains? Listening, speaking, reading, and writing? Would that be part of the rating? If a classroom is really language rich, that makes the observations easy. But if classes aren't, you may have to observe more.
- An observation could affirm "successfully and meaningfully participate", but it shouldn't be the sole additional criteria.

Teacher Judgment

- Define which type of "teacher" gets to have judgment. That's the first thing that would need to happen.
- Even after rubrics get standardized for other things, but people apply them differently (in the context of leadership teams).
- What is the teacher even supposed to be judging?
- There are some concerns that teachers might just judge based on how well they like the students, or the work ethic of the students.
- Many of the issues that plague observations are also a problem here.
- If you're a strong teacher with good language supports in your classroom, then a different type of kid might be able to fully and meaningfully participate. But not so in a different classroom.

Parent recommendations

- Some concern that parents may not have a standard bar to judge a student's English participation is.
- Some parents would want more services. Some parents would want fewer.
- If it's not the only thing you're using to make the call, it could work. But it would have to be part of a system.
- Participants started talking about a year long record of multiple inputs (teachers, parents, etc.) kind of like an IEP. But this could become overwhelming paperwork like in SPED.
- If you did sit down with parents, it would be less data driven, but more a "what do you want for your kid?" What does meaningfully participate in the classroom mean to you for your child?
- Some concern culturally: would parents defer to the teacher for a decision anyways?
- Right now it's hard to get parents to want to come to school. Parents have a good track record in the district of coming to conferences.
- However, parents may be less likely now to come to school for a conference due to worries about immigration enforcement. Attendance is down now, so this may continue.
- What about home visits? One district can do it, but other districts might not be able to.

Assessment Instruments

- How do you select a test? Is this going to drive bids for a test?
- The district uses FAST for reading. Kids tend to look better on FAST than on MCAs.
- Not much to say about assessment instruments. Everyone's curriculum is different, they come with their own assessments. People use different assessments.

Grades

- There is already teacher subjectiveness. They often don't measure a student's true ability. They reflect whether or not the kid did the homework.
- They don't think grades would satisfy the teacher judgment piece, but it could be a component of it.
- Grades could be a component to see if a student is "succeeding" if parents also think students are doing well and teachers think so...
- Do you do this for all classes? Core classes? What if most of the class is not passing, not just EL students? Some schools have classes where large numbers of students fail the class, possibly because of the teacher. Is that a good bar to judge a student on?
- If you used multiple things to look over (grades, parents, etc.), then you might have to add more weight to some components than others.

Rubrics

- Helpful for observations and judgment.
- Can do descriptors might be helpful to base a rubric on. You could provide evidence either by artifact or observation. Should involve both EL teacher and classroom teacher.
- Used the analogy of a doctor and a parent. Have you seen your child...?

Discussion Question Three

Let's have some hypothetical fun.

Imagine you work for the state education agency. What steps might you take to ensure:

-All schools and districts knew how to use these additional criteria in a standardized way?

-All schools and districts were using these additional criteria in the same way?

- There would need to be some on site outreach. PD for schools and districts could happen via videos and webinars. There could be a train the trainer model.
- If you do a webinar or video, keep it short.
- Whatever happens should happen maybe at the end of the summer or around an early release so there is no intrusion into prep time.
- Theoretically, if there were a rubric, then everyone would have to be trained.
- There would need to be an accountability piece where these rubrics can be audited (if a rubric or form were used).
- An online form would expedite things for districts. Keep evidence of "was the student failing anything", "when was a conversation with the parent". Maybe it wouldn't even have to be a centralized report, MDE just mandated the steps that had to be taken, the district is responsible for keeping a record of it.
- With train the trainer, maybe an in person workshop for trainers, and then webinars/videos that the trainers could use to train their staff.
- There would need to be an expectation for administrators to carve out some time.
- What about SPED considerations? Would we need to include an "outside factors" piece to a rubric? What if SPED factors affect observations, then what?

English Learner Additional Criteria Working Group Notes Day Three

Introduction

- Norms reviewed
- Goal – draft a recommendation of criteria that can be used in addition to ACCESS scores to inform exiting decisions.
- Deliverable – recommendation to take to the Commissioner
- Agenda
 - Review notes
 - Review stakeholder input
 - Compile ideas for gathering additional information about student proficiency
 - Make recommendations
- Clarify slide
- Scope of working group – in and out of scope
- Statute Overview – ESSA, Minnesota 124D.59
 - Regulations changed a bit, new understanding around congressional regulations and DOE involvement

Review of Prior Feedback

- Conversation recap – suggested criteria, challenges
 - Additional conversation – use ACCESS from the previous year, option of extraordinarily exit won't happen, but extraordinarily retain in EL is what we are designing. Could previous year's ACCESS be used? Could be an issue because of the test change for ACCESS. This can be overcome with some measures (DSR).
 - We would have a list of criteria to be used but not all have to be used, maybe 2 out of 3 measures. Burden of proof is on the teacher, not the student. How would a teacher have the necessary information especially at the end of the year? Data needs to be gathered uniformly and fairly – could be an equity issue – may be racial or ethnic issue. Any option would be done district-wide.
 - May be a range of scores that would warrant the additional criteria
 - Students to be exited – they should be on par with their grade level peers, getting poor grades is not helping them get anywhere. In statute – language around participation in classes. We don't want most kids to be unsuccessful. However, we do have kids not proficient on MCA, but they get to move on with their grade level. Kids need to successfully access curriculum. Many EL students get put in remedial classes. We want ELs to be able to take honors classes. Is a late exit model beneficial or does it make kids feel marginalized? There have been studies that if a child is proficient but kept in EL, they do not do as well for several reasons.
 - We set initial cut scores because when we look at the margin of who should be successful in classes. i.e.: 4.5-5.0. Proficiency cut score is the minimum.
 - Update on phone call: most 4.5, no lower than 3.5 on the new scale. It is a tough bar. We will bring this to the Commissioner on Monday. The work and data review shows where the cut score lies to show where language should not be an issue.

- High level kids – what service they get at a higher level.
- Help stakeholders understand what these new numbers mean with the more rigorous standards (test aligned with rigorous standards).
- GPA, class scores, etc. were taken into account when looking at these new cut scores (recent call).
- Context and culture of the districts – need to remember to design this statewide.
- Different conversations around capacity of content and honors teachers
- Remember purpose of criteria – what will this method fix? Lots of issues whether large or small districts.
- Mesh the ideas- we are more alike than different, look at data
- Student equity- are asking to move forward- denial of EL service by parents, we have a responsibility to our stakeholders-parents, students
- Stakeholder input
 - Parent input- parents feel that students who are low in EL are appropriate to receive EL services, being kept in EL impeded academic progress, EL classification leads to less teacher expectations, perceptions that ELs are in less rigorous classes, parents are concerned that their children are segregated in EL
 - Parents may have had bad experiences in EL and may not understand the difference in conversational and academic English. Once I educate – the thought process changes.
 - Sometimes due to lack of staff and not being able to serve upper level ELs, but the programming isn't giving help that kids need to access higher level. The students aren't getting the help they need – maybe they need to show success in an upper level ELD class.
 - It is fine to keep students in, but then what? Students aren't receiving equitable service. Some think they just need more time but it isn't just that they need more time
 - This (parent input) is the perception statewide
 - Empower parents so that they know what their kids need to be successful. Some of this is still true. (I missed one of the points here).
 - One of the criteria, students have to be successful in a higher level class.
 - As we move forward, we can't tackle systemic equity – this should be a separate issue to work on in a different group
 - Outstate stakeholder input
 - 183 responses
 - Classroom observations, teacher judgment, parent recommendation, appropriate instruments, other – was open ended
 - Pros, Cons on a slide
 - Teacher judgment slide
 - Parent recommendations slide (pros and cons)
 - Additional criteria suggested in survey – student input, grades, student work portfolios, content assessments
 - Impression – student input is important – may not work as well with younger students, but is successful with older – maybe include starting at 4th grade.

- Student portfolios – could be collected electronically (Dropbox, etc.).
- None of these is perfect – always going to be some form of error. These are choices, there can be some flexibility.
- Time is important to keep in mind, but the time concern when we continue to do things they always have been done but don't take things away. We want to balance and take something off of the table because of the time issue. We want to re-examine how we look at ELs and programming. We have to change the system in order to do this.
- Most districts in greater MN – formative language assessment isn't happening.
- Remember – we only use this for some (ACCESS), what are we trying to shape, for auditing purposes
- Concern about all of the criteria – unresolved – have been concerned that just one domain is keeping kids in EL. Concern about writing. Some kids missed on speaking – the system kicked them off. Concern about missing a .2 on a domain – keeping kids in when they are close to getting the score needed for exiting.
- Do we have formative assessments – some districts do but they are not calibrated. If we want formative assessments to guide us, can we collect what districts are doing and look at those? Hard to have statewide formative assessments since those are based on what classes are doing. Formative assessments – some are established based on testing. Are those can-do's, formative assessments based on test?
- This is where we need to go as a profession. Maybe a working portfolio could do some of this, some things are getting too "muddy" – why – students are working hard to take the test and they even after they pass we keep them in and have additional criteria, if student is at the point of looking at this extra criteria, we need to bring student in and discuss specifics of why he/she is in

Applying the Criteria

- Should additional be applied to everyone or at/above a certain bar, pros and cons
- How do we know this is a student issue and not a system issue? Cut score is really high
- Sometimes we create a higher bar for ELs that not even non-ELs have to meet. With domain scores at 3.5, do we really need this? According to the law, we have to create additional criteria.
- What is this thing supposed to do – go back to that. If test didn't do its job, that is when we use this.
- This is open-ended. Is this for a set time frame? If a student passes once and is retained, students still need to pass again.
- MA – ACCESS 5.0, literacy 4.5 and will be looking after this testing session.
- Poster session and activity – see posters
- Final decision: K-2; 3-12 (grades, parents)
- Formative assessments – first check
- Grades/student performance – second check
- Combination of formative language, grades with older students, parent or parent and student input.
- We will put together a flow chart and see what you think – it will need to be piloted

- In effect for 2018-2019
- What do we do this year – we use cut score (once approved by Commissioner). Teacher judgment factors in base don law but there isn't a way to standardize it yet. New cut score will be out to use this spring.
- We can't exit students (this year) who are not proficient.

Appendix I

English Learner Parents and Student Feedback

ESSA February English Learners listening session feedback

Federal programs staff hosted two listening sessions with English Learner (EL) community members including parents, administrators, teachers, and former students to better understand what a community-driven definition of successful English Learner services might look like. Sessions were hosted at the Wilder Foundation in St. Paul, and at the Hennepin County Library – Sumner in Minneapolis. In addition, EL students volunteered to participate in a separate session. Each group had between six and eight participants, and conversation was open and frank. Several themes emerged.

Institutional racism

Participants described stigmatization and negative assumptions from students and general education teachers towards students with EL status. Even where the stereotype was well-meaning or charitable, lowered expectations kept students from performing to their potential. Community members report general education teachers have a negative reaction to the EL flag on a student's record.

Some participants did describe that EL provide a supportive, safe place for students to integrate into US culture.

Screening and exit need to be consistent and unbiased

Participants report that identification of EL students is often poorly informed or biased. Participants describe that the home language survey is applied based on student or family names or physical appearance. Staff administering a home language questionnaire should receive the proper training.

Exit from EL should be based on formative assessment, grades, and reading level. Examine how bias may impact teacher discretion.

Improve communication and cultural intelligence

Parents and students need to be informed when services start and stop. Families need to better understand why their students are receiving services, including what student scores are and what growth has been shown.

Parents often do not feel validated in their concerns. Parents may need education to understand how the American system works. Parents need additional time to express concerns. Family nights and family workshops are valuable. Ideally, EL should empower parents to ask for services.

Value home cultures and support teachers

Feedback included that EL teachers should educate others in their building on the culture and experience of EL students and families. General and special education teachers should be accountable for EL student performance, in addition to EL teachers. Statewide, staff need cultural intelligence training.

Participants shared that immigrant families have an easier time understanding the system if taught by someone with shared or similar life experience. Participants indicate Minnesota needs more educators of color and there need to be more EL teachers, in general.

Focus on academic progress

Participants shared their own and their children's experience with EL services impeding academic progress. Comments included that people had lower expectations of EL students. It was observed that clustered lower expectations lowered EL students' self-esteem, causing them to lose interest in school. Once back in the general education environment, some participants observed that EL students lagged in college readiness. Multiple participants commented on the lack of rigor or lower expectations.

In addition, participants mentioned that being separated from native English speakers presented an obstacle. Special education services were also reported as delayed if children were placed in EL services.

Differentiate support

Participants commented that different focus needed to be placed on EL supports in reading and writing. Producing academic English was identified specifically as an area of importance. Some observers report that EL students improved writing faster than general education students when a specific priority was placed on writing.

Participants noted that students new to the country, some with limited exposure to formal education, had different needs than students born in the United States. Of these new to country students, remarks describe that those who speak a different dialect of English feel out of place and poorly served if placed in the same classroom as those who have had no English or no formal education experience. New to country families need support in what to expect of the education system and how to advocate for their students.

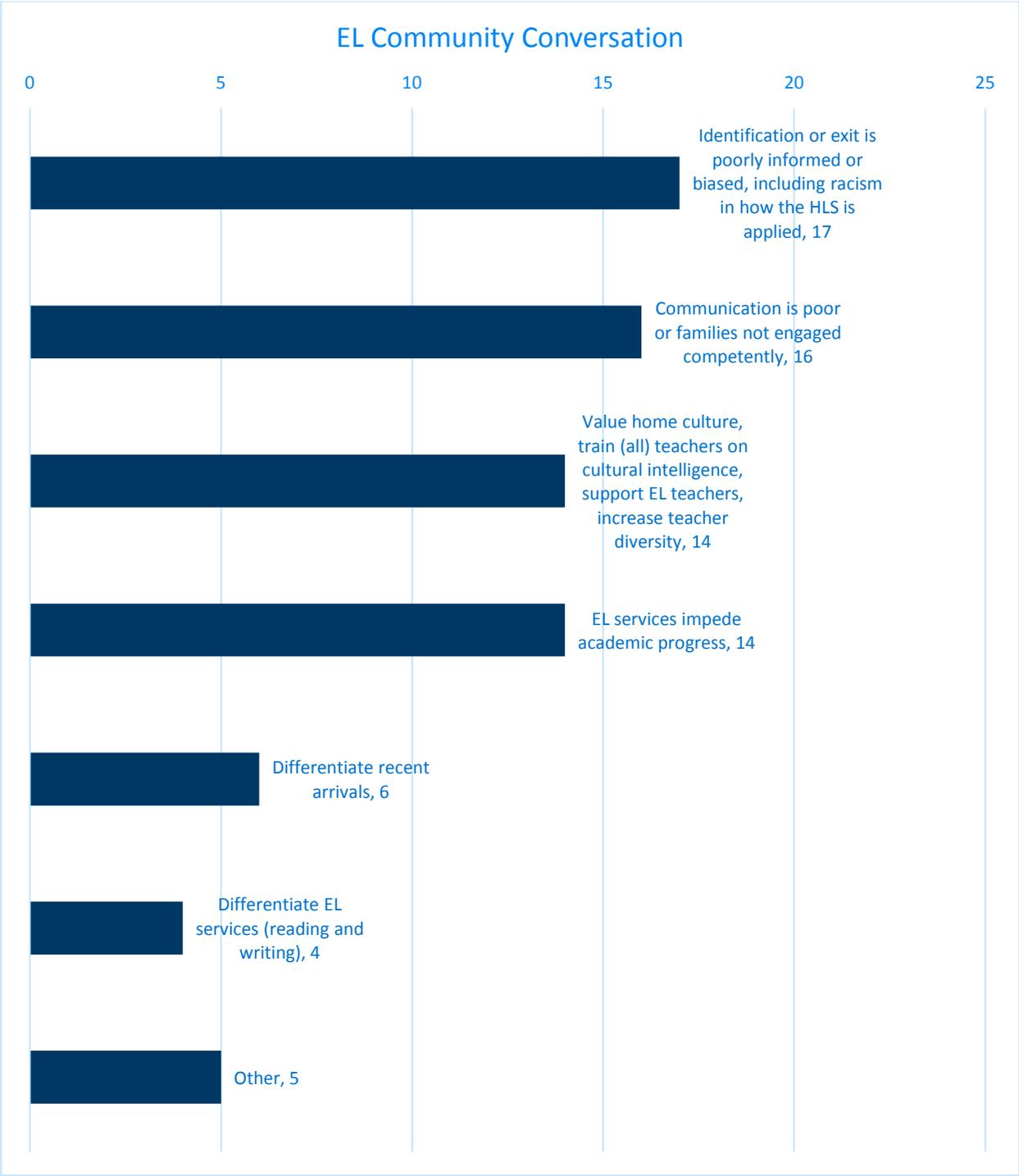
Student observations

Multiple students report that EL services and participation was not communicated with them. The process and timing of 'graduation' from services was also not explained. Students report that using technology, including recorded native English speakers, was helpful.

Students had varying awareness of the biliteracy certificate program, allowing them college credit for proficiency in their home language. Because of varying background experiences, some students needed support to become literate in their home language.

Students reported that EL classrooms felt safe. Having adults of the same ethnicity or nationality was helpful in allowing otherwise reticent students to participate in class.

Figure I1. Frequency of common themes in the EL Community Conversations.



EL student survey

35 students receiving EL services were offered a four question survey. 35 students provided responses. Of these 14 students identified as Asian, 14 identified as Black or African, and 6 identified as Hispanic. 10 indicated they were born in the USA, 12 indicated they were not. Students who were not domestic born had spent a median 3 years in the US. 16 were in 9th grade, 12 were in 10th grade, 2 were in 11th grade, and 3 were in 12th grade.

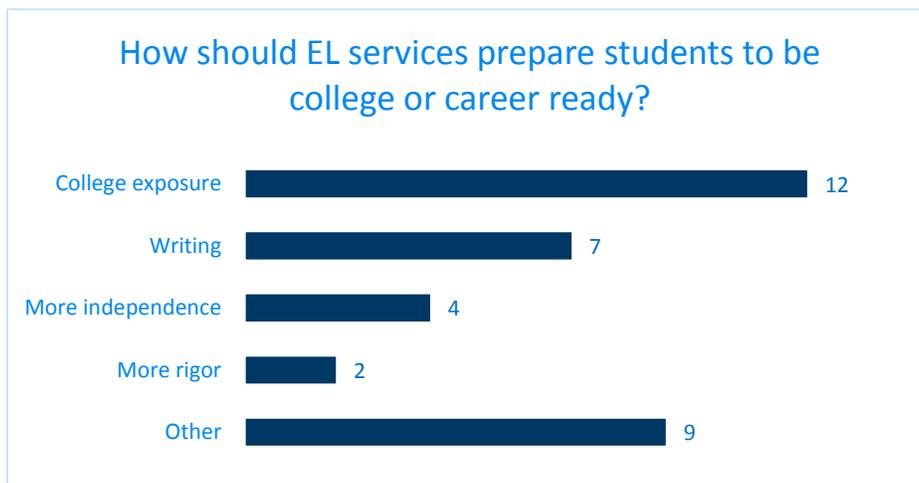
When asked what EL services offered them, students commented on how EL improved written and spoken English. This included how EL improved academic performance as well as helping socially.

Figure 12. Frequencies of student responses to the question, “What does EL offer you?”



When asked how EL can help students be college or career ready, students asked to hear more about the college experience. More support for writing was the second most frequent theme.

Figure 13. Frequencies of student responses to the question, “How should EL services prepare students to be college or career ready?”



Students most frequently reported that grades or another measure of academic performance would be good indicators of when to exit EL. Other comments included, “...when I started speaking English more than my own language...”

Figure 14. Frequencies of student responses to the question, “When do you know if you have had enough EL services?”

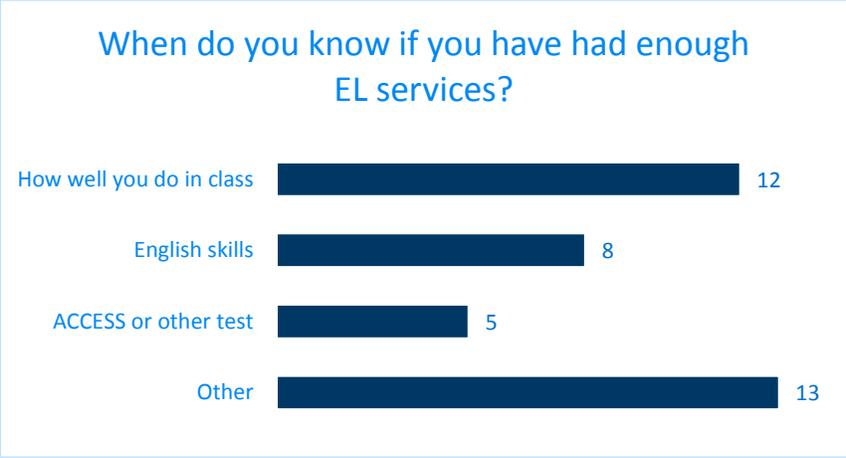
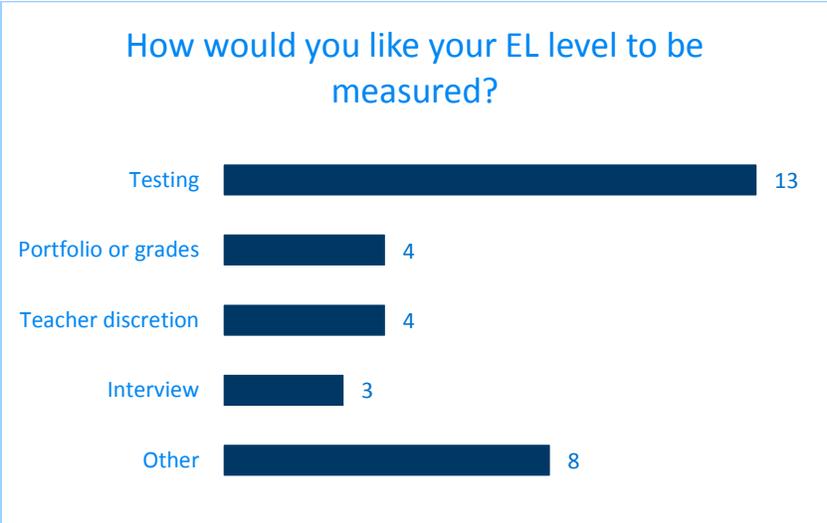


Figure 15. When asked how they would like EL level to be measured, most students commented that some form of testing was acceptable. Portfolio or teacher discretion were also mentioned.



Appendix J

Additional Criteria Survey

Figure J1. Frequencies of teacher responses to the question, “From your experience, how are exiting decisions for English learners being made now? What have districts used as criteria in addition to the ACCESS test? Why? Who makes the final exit call?”

In addition to ACCESS, what measures are used when exiting students?

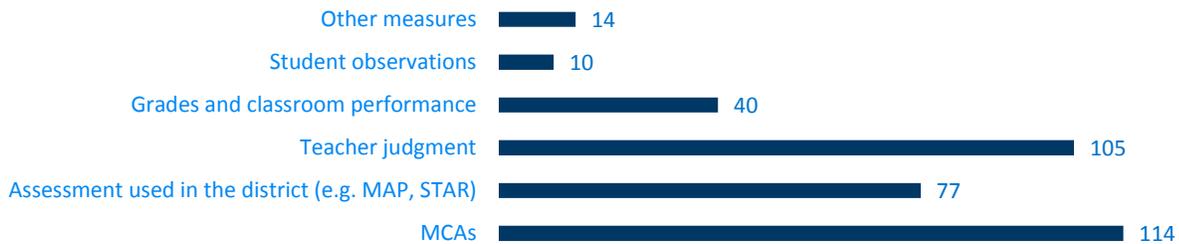


Figure J2. Frequencies of teacher responses to the question, "What are the pros and cons of using classroom observations to inform exiting decisions?"

What are the pros of using classroom observations to inform exiting decisions?



What are the cons of using classroom observations to inform exiting decisions?

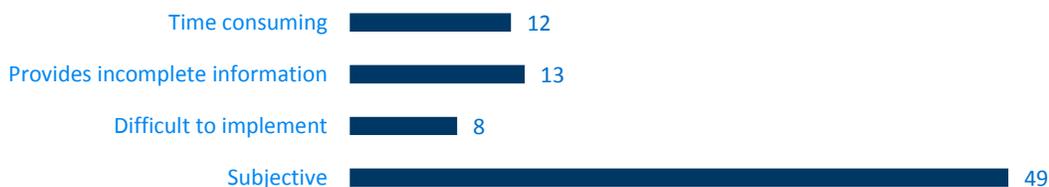


Figure J3. Frequencies of teacher responses to the question, “What are the pros and cons of using teacher judgment to inform exiting decisions?”

What are the pros of using teacher judgment to inform exit decisions?



What are the cons of using teacher judgment to inform exit decisions?

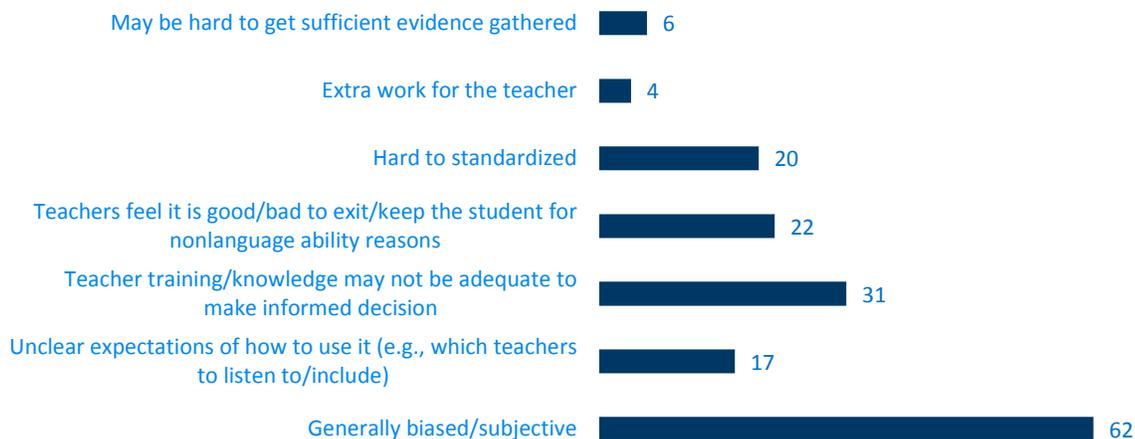


Figure J4. Frequencies of teacher responses to the question, “What are the pros and cons of using parent recommendations to inform exiting decisions?”

What are the pros of using parent recommendations to inform exiting decisions?



What are the cons of using parent recommendations to inform exiting decisions?

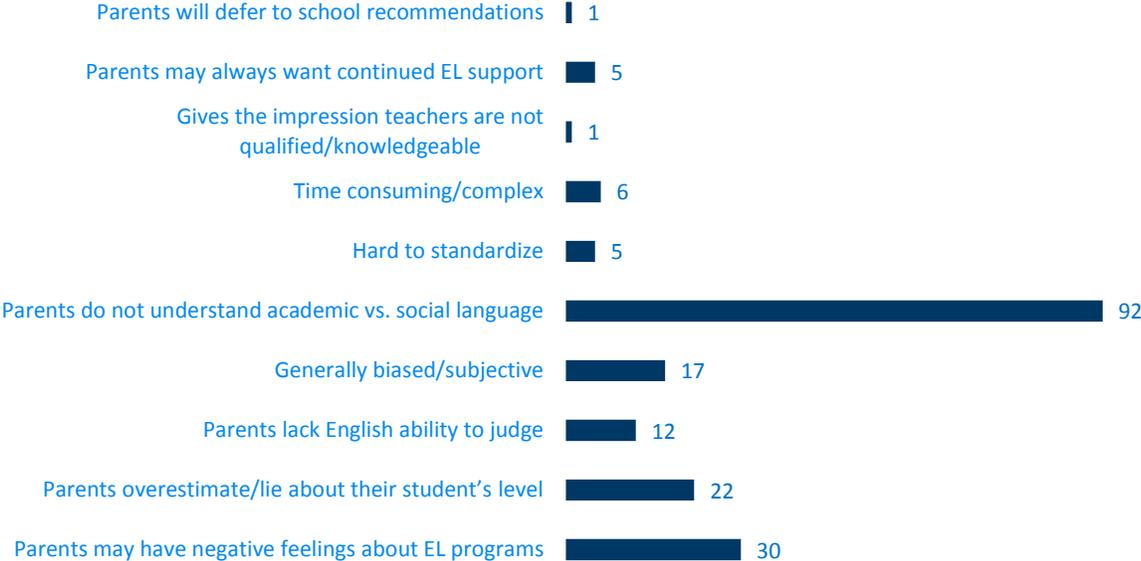


Figure J5. Frequencies of teacher responses to the question, “What are the pros and cons of using developmentally appropriate assessment instruments to inform exiting decisions?”

What are the pros of using an additional assessment to inform exiting decisions?



What are the cons of using an additional assessment to inform exiting decisions?

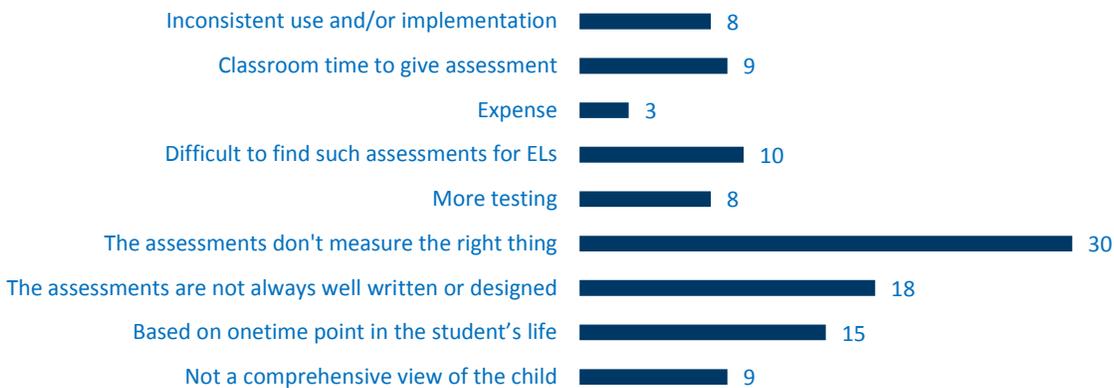
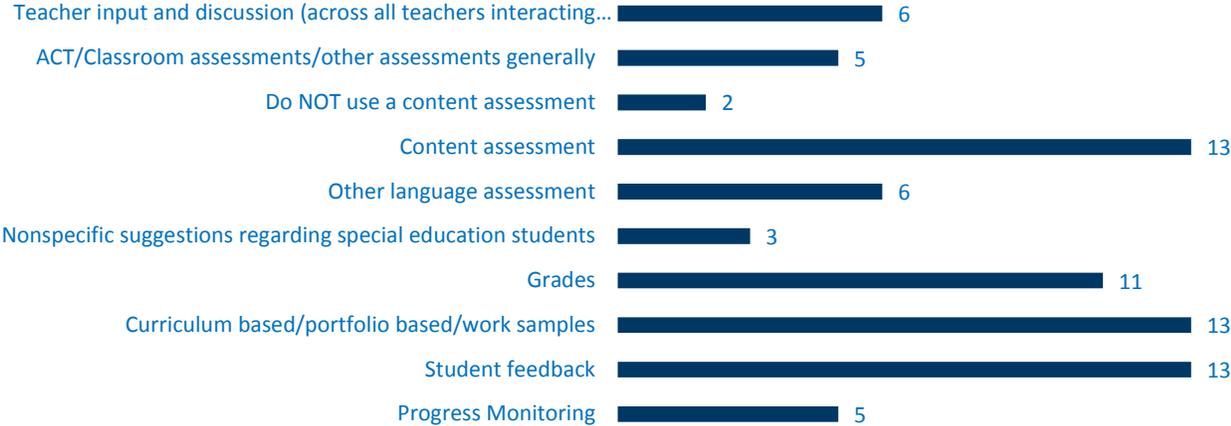


Figure J6. Frequencies of teacher responses to the question, “Can you think of other measures that you might use to inform exiting decisions?”

What other measures could be used to inform exiting decisions?



Appendix K

Impact Data for Final Recommended Proficiency Definition

Table K1. Estimated percent proficient based on proficiency definition options recommended by proficiency definition stakeholder group.

Proficiency Definition	Approximate Percent Proficient
Composite 4.5 no domain <3.5	12.3%
Composite 4.5 one domain may be <3.5	15.5%

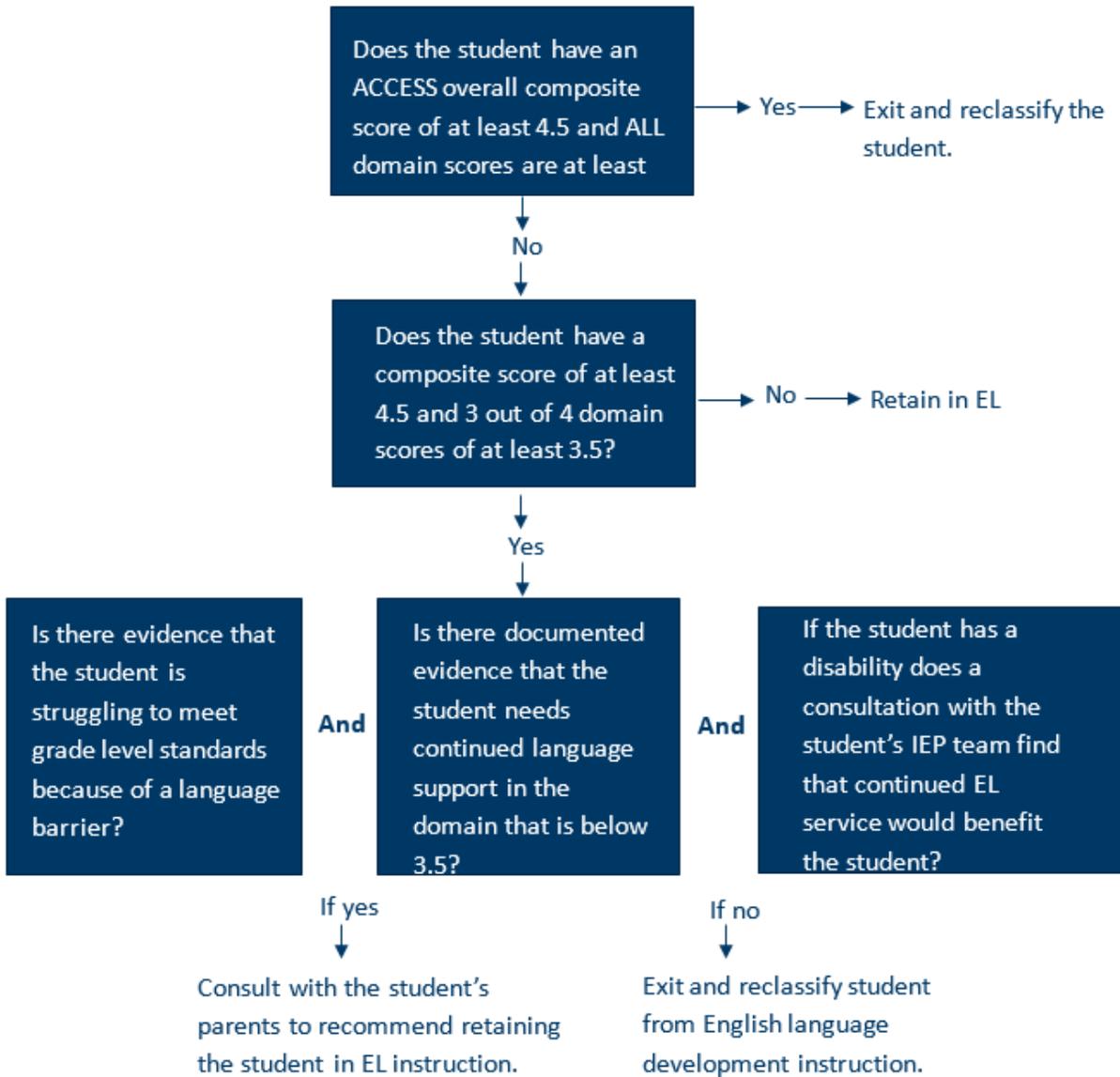
Table K2. Information relating to which domain students tend to miss using the two proficiency definitions.

Characteristic	Count
Met Composite and 3/4 Domains	10,614
Met Composite and 4/4 Domains	8,416
Met Composite, <3.5 Listening	12
Met Composite, <3.5 Reading	141
Met Composite, <3.5 Speaking	1656
Met Composite, <3.5 Writing	389

Appendix L

Final Recommended Additional Criteria Flowchart

Additional Criteria Decision Tree



If schools and districts are unable to or fail to document a continuing need for language support, they may not retain a student in EL services.

Appendix M

Final Evaluation Results of Proficiency Definition Process

Table M1. Responses to the statement, “After the workshops and conference calls, I felt that:”

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I understood the purpose of the workshops and conference calls	11	4	0	0
I understood how to review the decision consistency matrix	7	7	0	1
I felt comfortable expressing my opinions in the workshops and conference calls	10	4	1	0
I understood the proficiency impact data	10	4	0	1

Table M2. Responses to the statement, “The time spent in the different components of the cut score setting process was:”

	Too Much	About Right	Too Little	Did Not Attend
Grounding day giving and overview of proficiency	2	11	0	2
Data day reviewing potential cut scores	0	11	3	1
Conference call reviewing updated research	0	13	1	1

Table M3. Responses to the statement, “At the end of the process:”

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I felt the training provided me with the information needed to recommend a cut score	7	6	1	0
It was clear that the group was setting a minimum proficiency score	8	5	1	0
I found the participant feedback and discussion helpful in my decisions about where to set the cut score	5	8	1	0
I found ACCESS impact projections helpful in my decision making	7	6	1	0
I found historical ACCESS helpful in my decision making	5	8	1	0
I found additional analyses provided by school districts helpful in my decision making	6	8	0	0
I felt comfortable expressing my opinions throughout the process	9	5	0	0
Everyone was given the opportunity to express his or her opinions throughout the workshops	9	5	0	0

Table M4. Responses to the statement, “Please rate the clarity of the following components of the workshop.”

	Very Clear	Somewhat Clear	Somewhat Unclear	Very Unclear
Instructions provided by the workshop leaders	12	3	0	0
Interpreting the decision consistency matrix	10	4	1	0
Grad level impact projections	11	4	0	0

Table M5. Responses to the question, “How important was each of the following factors in your cut score recommendation?”

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
WIDA’s performance definitions	6	8	0
Your perception of how students perform in school at each proficiency level	7	6	0
Your prior experience with students	11	2	0
Discussions with other participants	10	3	1
Student impact data	13	1	0
Decision consistency matrix	10	3	1

Table M6. Responses to the statement, “Please read the following statement carefully and indicator your response”

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I am confident that the recommended cut score represents a minimum level of English, as required by law, to access core curriculum	6	8	0	0

Appendix N

Commissioner Approval for Adopting Proficiency Definition

This is to confirm my approval of the following cut scores for the ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 administered to the majority of English learners in Minnesota:

Cut Scores for ACCESS for ELLs

Grade	Composite Score	Domain Score
K	4.5	3 of 4 Domains (Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening) 3.5
1	4.5	3 of 4 Domains (Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening) 3.5
2	4.5	3 of 4 Domains (Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening) 3.5
3	4.5	3 of 4 Domains (Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening) 3.5
4	4.5	3 of 4 Domains (Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening) 3.5
5	4.5	3 of 4 Domains (Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening) 3.5
6	4.5	3 of 4 Domains (Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening) 3.5
7	4.5	3 of 4 Domains (Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening) 3.5
8	4.5	3 of 4 Domains (Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening) 3.5
9	4.5	3 of 4 Domains (Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening) 3.5
10	4.5	3 of 4 Domains (Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening) 3.5
11	4.5	3 of 4 Domains (Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening) 3.5
12	4.5	3 of 4 Domains (Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening) 3.5

All cuts were approved as recommended by the Teacher and Stakeholder group.



Brenda Cassellius, Commissioner
April 10, 2017