

Progress Toward English Language Proficiency Overview

Under ESSA in Minnesota, progress toward English language proficiency will be calculated using a path-to-proficiency index based on students' growth on the ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 test. This document provides greater detail about how the path to proficiency will be calculated and updated for each student.

ACCESS for ELLs 2.0

The ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 test assesses students' English language proficiency in four domains: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. A student receives a scale score in each domain, and the domain scale scores are then combined to create a composite scale score.

The composite scale score corresponds to an English proficiency level (between 1.0 and 6.0), depending on which grade the student is in. A composite score of 4.5—and a minimum of 3.5 in at least three of four domains—is Minnesota's definition of proficiency on ACCESS for ELLs 2.0.

ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 was used for the first time in the 2015-16 school year, replacing the first version of ACCESS for ELLs. The test was created by the WIDA consortium, which has recommended that states begin measuring progress starting with the change from the 2016-17 school year to the 2017-18 school year.

A student's progress toward English language proficiency score

The growth-to-proficiency model used for this indicator will calculate scores for English learners (ELs) in grades 1-12.

At the student level, the model will use a four-step process the first time a student is included.

Step 1. Determine the maximum amount of time expected to achieve proficiency based on the student's starting grade and initial ACCESS 2.0 composite proficiency level.

Step 2. Set annual targets for the student, based on the understanding that progress tends to be quicker at lower levels and slower at higher levels.

Step 3. Calculate the points a student received in the current year, based on their scale score relative to their target for the year.

Step 4. Update annual targets, based on the current year's score.

Step 1. Determine the maximum amount of time to proficiency

The model categorizes the student's first ACCESS composite proficiency level as beginning, intermediate, or advanced.

It then uses the following tables to set the maximum amount of time expected for the student to achieve proficiency, taking into account the student's grade. These timelines are based on available historical data for students in Minnesota.

Timelines for Students at the Beginning Level

Grade First Identified	Number of Years to Reach Proficiency
Kindergarten	7
1-8	6
9-12	7

Timelines for Students at the Intermediate Level

Grade First Identified	Number of Years to Reach Proficiency
Kindergarten	7
1-3	5
4-8	6
9-12	7

Timelines for Students at the Advanced Level

Grade First Identified	Number of Years to Reach Proficiency
Kindergarten	3
1-12	2

These timelines include the student's first year as an EL. For example, a student identified as advanced in kindergarten is expected to reach proficiency by grade two, and a student identified as intermediate in grade three is expected to reach proficiency by grade seven.

Students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE)

Students with limited or interrupted or formal education at the beginning or intermediate levels are given an additional year to achieve proficiency. For example, a SLIFE in grade seven with an intermediate proficiency level

would be expected to achieve proficiency in seven years rather than six years. SLIFE at the advanced level do not receive the additional year.

For more information on SLIFE, consult [the SLIFE page](#) of the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) website.

Step 2. Set annual targets for the student

Once a student’s timeline has been set, the grade at which they are expected to achieve proficiency—and thus the target scale score necessary to be proficient at that grade level—can be determined. For example, a beginning student in grade one has six years to achieve proficiency (including grade one), and is therefore expected to have a composite proficiency level of 4.5 by grade six. The student would therefore be expected to have a composite scale score that equates to that proficiency level in grade six; this is the student’s goal scale score.

After the goal scale score has been determined, a path to that scale score is charted along the timeline. Because English language development tends to be faster at lower proficiency levels and slower at higher proficiency levels, the path expects more growth in the earlier years (when the student’s proficiency level is lower) and slower growth in the later years (when the student’s proficiency level is higher). These particular paths are based on historic data and may be updated as additional data on the new test is collected.

A student with a two-year timeline is expected to be proficient in their second year.

A student with a three-year timeline is expected to be 50 percent of the way from their initial score to their goal scale score after year one, and they are expected to be proficient in their third year.

The following tables provide the annual targets for students with timelines between four and eight years to reach proficiency. In these tables, “Proficiency” refers to the goal scale score the student is expected to achieve by the final year on the timeline.

For Students with Four Years to Reach Proficiency

Year	Target
1	Start
2	50% from Start to Proficiency
3	83% from Start to Proficiency
4	Proficiency

For Students with Five Years to Reach Proficiency

Year	Target
1	Start
2	40% from Start to Proficiency
3	70% from Start to Proficiency
4	90% from Start to Proficiency
5	Proficiency

For Students with Six Years to Reach Proficiency

Year	Target
1	Start
2	33.3% from Start to Proficiency
3	60.0% from Start to Proficiency
4	80.0% from Start to Proficiency
5	93.3% from Start to Proficiency
6	Proficiency

For Students with Seven Years to Reach Proficiency

Year	Target
1	Start
2	28.6% from Start to Proficiency
3	52.4% from Start to Proficiency
4	71.4% from Start to Proficiency
5	85.7% from Start to Proficiency
6	95.2% from Start to Proficiency
7	Proficiency

For Students with Eight Years to Reach Proficiency

Year	Target
1	Start
2	25.0% from Start to Proficiency
3	46.4% from Start to Proficiency
4	64.3% from Start to Proficiency
5	78.6% from Start to Proficiency
6	89.3% from Start to Proficiency
7	96.4% from Start to Proficiency
8	Proficiency

Step 3. Calculate points

A student receives 0 points if any of the following is true:

- The student does not have a valid score for the year.
- The student is past their timeline to reach proficiency and is not yet proficient.
- The student's composite scale score is lower than the previous year's.

If a student reaches or surpasses their target for the year, they receive 100 points. Students who are past their timeline to reach proficiency receive 100 points in the year they achieve proficiency.

If a student does not reach their target for the year, they receive index points equal to 100 multiplied by:

$$\frac{\text{Actual Change in Scale Score}}{\text{Target Change in Scale Score}}$$

For example, a student at Wobegon Middle School received a composite scale score of 220 last year, exactly reaching their target for the year. This year, their target is 300, and they score 280. The actual change in their scale score is 60 scale score points, and their target change is 80 scale score points. Their individual progress toward English language proficiency score for the year would be $(60/80) * 100 = 75$ index points.

Step 4. Update annual targets

If a student exceeded their target for the year, their remaining targets are updated accordingly. The student's score from this year is treated as their new starting point. The timeline remains the same. For example, if the student had six years to reach proficiency this year, next they will have only five left. Their score from this year will be treated as the "Start" score in the table, "For Students with Five Years to Reach Proficiency."

If a student missed or exactly met their target for the year, their remaining targets stay the same.

After the first time a student is included, only two steps are needed:

Step 1. Calculate the points a student received this year, based on their score relative to their target for the year.

Step 2. Update annual targets based on this year's score.

A school's progress toward English language proficiency score

A school's progress toward English language proficiency index is the average of student scores.

Example:

Twenty-five students at Wobegon Middle School are English learners. The average of their individual scores is 83.

Therefore, Wobegon Middle School's progress toward English language proficiency score for the school overall would be 83.