Guidebook: Exploring ACCESS for ELLs Data

Revised March 2023

Annually, English learners participate in the ACCESS for ELLs (ACCESS) or Alternate ACCESS for ELLs (Alternate ACCESS) assessment, which provides substantial information on how English learners (ELs) are progressing toward acquiring English. This guide focuses on using data for the ACCESS; for more information on Alternate ACCESS data, refer to the *Alternate ACCESS for ELLs Interpretive Guide for Score Reports* (WIDA (wida.wisc.edu) > Assess > Alternate ACCESS for ELLs > Alternate ACCESS for ELLs Scores and Reports).

Knowing what data is provided and how to look at the data in useful ways is an important part of exploring the ACCESS data. The purpose of this guide is to provide the following information at an introductory level:

- What is the ACCESS
- Who takes the ACCESS
- What types of data are provided
- How to access the data
- What typical performance over time looks like
- How to interpret and use the data in meaningful and appropriate ways

The ACCESS is a criterion-referenced statewide assessment, which means it measures performance against a fixed set of criteria: the WIDA English Language Development Standards. Criterion-referenced assessments are used to determine student learning of concepts and skills defined in the standards. However, while criterion-referenced tests may provide information about the extent to which students have mastered certain concepts, they alone do not illustrate the whole picture of what a student has learned. This assessment provides one data point that should be considered in the context of additional evidence of student learning, such as student projects and assignments, and other data from the district's comprehensive assessment system. This guide will provide suggestions on how to explore this assessment data and other types of information to consider when interpreting this data.
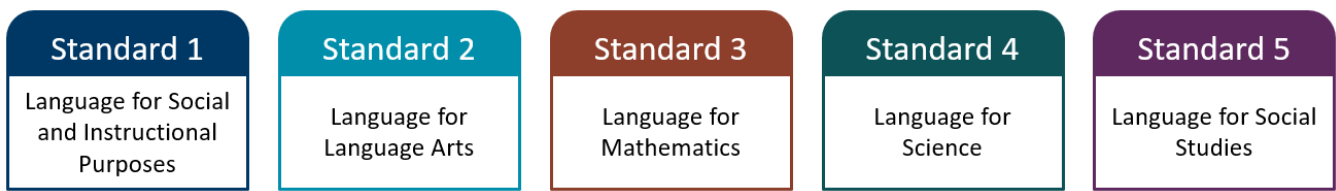

When making educational decisions, it is important to use data from all parts of a balanced and comprehensive system of assessment.

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What is the ACCESS for ELLs?

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.59, require that all English learners be assessed in grades K–12 in English language proficiency. ACCESS for ELLs (ACCESS) is developed by the multi-state WIDA Consortium and is used to meet this federal requirement.

The ACCESS is an English language proficiency accountability assessment that is aligned to the WIDA English Language Development (ELD) Standards (WIDA > Teach > Teaching with Standards > ELD Standards Framework). These standards represent the social, instructional, and academic language that students need in order to engage with peers, educators, and school curriculum. The standards serve as a resource for planning and implementing language instruction and assessment for multilingual learners as they learn academic content. Although Minnesota English learner educators are in the process of implementing the WIDA ELD Standards Framework: 2020 Edition (WIDA > Teach > Teaching with Standards > ELD Standards Framework > The 2020 Edition), the current ACCESS is aligned to the WIDA 2012 Amplification of the ELD Standards. An updated ACCESS aligned to the 2020 Edition is expected to be operational in the 2025–2026 school year. More information on this transition can be found in *Using Assessment Results During Transition to New English Language Development (ELD) Standards* (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > Statewide Testing > District Resources). Note: While the standards are in transition, you will see resources relevant to both sets of standards on the WIDA website.

There are five WIDA ELD Standards (WIDA > Teach > Teaching with Standards > ELD Standards Framework). Each standard ensures that English learners engage in the communication of information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content areas of each standard.

Standard 1	Standard 2	Standard 3	Standard 4	Standard 5
Language for Social and Instructional Purposes	Language for Language Arts	Language for Mathematics	Language for Science	Language for Social Studies

There are several components to the WIDA ELD Standards Framework. This framework includes the WIDA Can Do Philosophy, the WIDA Guiding Principles of Language Development, and the Theoretical Foundations of the WIDA ELD Standards Framework, 2020 Edition (Appendix F). All of these documents can be found on the WIDA ELD Standards Framework page of the WIDA website (WIDA > Teach > Teaching with Standards > ELD Standards Framework).

There are four language domains assessed by the ACCESS: listening, reading, speaking, and writing.

While the Kindergarten ACCESS remains paper-based, the ACCESS is primarily administered online, with paper test materials available for eligible students. The kindergarten test is a one-on-one administration using paper materials. The grades 1–12 online tests are administered in the following grade clusters: grade 1, grades 2–3, grades 4–5, grades 6–8, and grades 9–12. Paper accommodations are administered for the Listening, Reading, and Writing domains in the following grade clusters: grade 1, grade 2, grade 3, grades 4–5, grades 6–8, and

grades 9–12. Paper accommodations for the Speaking domain are administered in the following grade-level clusters: grade 1, grades 2–3, grades 4–5, grades 6–8, and grades 9–12.

For online grades 1–12, the Listening and Reading domains are adaptive, which means that the next item a student receives is based on their performance earlier in the test. The Speaking and Writing domains are not adaptive and will not adjust to the student's performance. Instead, the Speaking and Writing domains are tiered, meaning that the items on different tiered forms target specific proficiency levels.

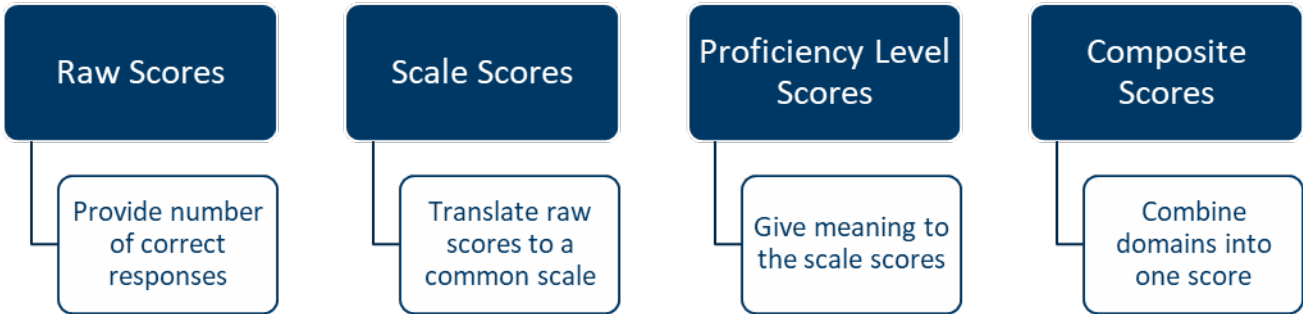ACCESS data is used for many purposes, including:

- Measuring individual student progress in acquiring English and determining if students will be exited from Language Instruction Educational Programming (LIEP).
- Supporting EL and content educators in instructional and curriculum planning in the classroom and at the school and district levels.
- Calculating accountability indicators, which are used to ensure schools and districts are adequately meeting the needs of English learners and prioritizing state-level support for identified schools.

Note: The ACCESS assessment and score reports are not designed or intended to provide any meaningful information about an individual educator's skills or performance. School- and district-wide trends are more meaningful in evaluating long-term program impacts than as methods for evaluating any one individual educator or any particular small group of students.

Elements of ACCESS Data

There are several types of data that are generated when a student takes ACCESS. Understanding each type is necessary in order to make decisions about which type of information is most appropriate for a given purpose.

Much of the information in this section is adapted from the *ACCESS for ELLs Interpretive Guide for Score Reports*, which is available on the ACCESS for ELLs Scores and Reports page (WIDA > Assess > ACCESS for ELLs Scores and Reports).

Raw Scores	Scale Scores	Proficiency Level Scores	Composite Scores
Provide number of correct responses	Translate raw scores to a common scale	Give meaning to the scale scores	Combine domains into one score

Raw Scores

Raw scores are the number of questions answered correctly or the score a student receives on a scoring rubric for a specific task. These scores are not reported for ACCESS because they can be misleading. For an adaptive test, the number of correct responses a student has on ACCESS does not provide a meaningful measure of

student language proficiency. For example, consider two students taking the Reading ACCESS. As the students move through the test, their performance determines which questions they see. The lower-proficiency student sees easier items, and the higher-proficiency student sees more difficult items. These two students may answer the same number of questions correctly, but the English language proficiency levels those scores represent are very different.

Scale Scores

Scale scores are created when a raw score is converted onto a standardized scale. Meaningful comparisons can then be made because the translation from raw to scale score takes into account the item difficulty of the questions the students answered correctly. Additionally, the same scale is used for each domain across all grades. This means that scale scores can be used to track how much a student's proficiency within a domain increases over time. Scale scores allow you to compare student performance across grades, within each domain and with more granularity than you will see when looking only at proficiency levels.

Use Scale Scores to:
- Make comparisons across grade levels, but not across domains
- Monitor student growth over time within a domain

Proficiency Levels

While scale scores can show growth in language proficiency over time, they do not have any inherent meaning; scale scores require proficiency levels to provide that meaning. Proficiency levels on the ACCESS are interpretive scores that describe the student's performance in terms of the six WIDA English language proficiency levels.

Level 6
Reaching

Level 5
Bridging

Level 4
Expanding

Level 3
Developing

Level 2
Emerging
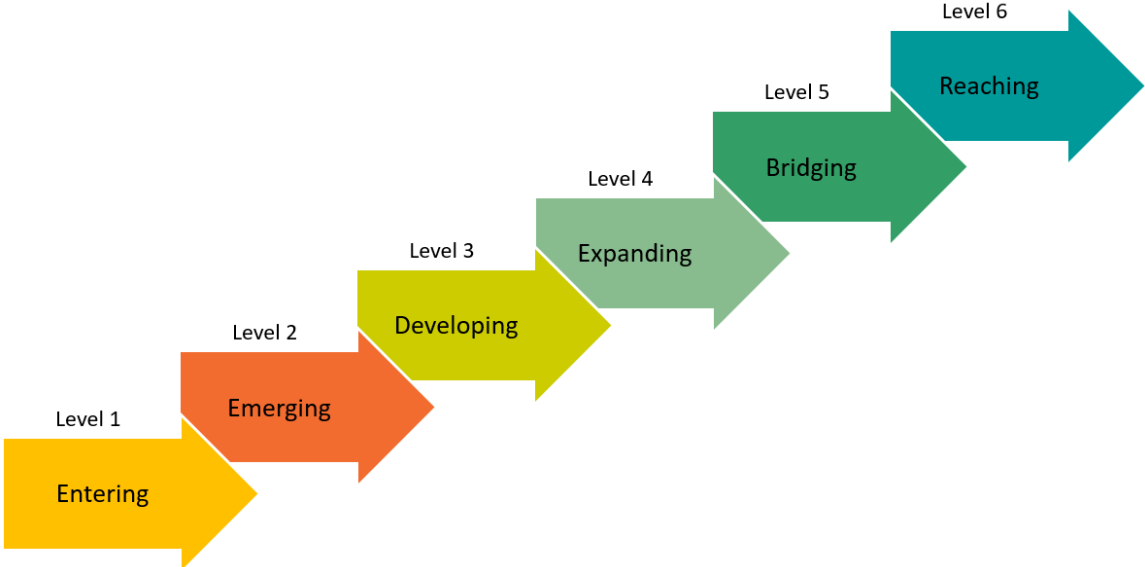
Level 1
Entering

The Performance Definitions provide further context as to what each of these proficiency levels mean for Expressive Domains and Receptive Domains (wida.wisc.edu > Resource Library). Additionally, the Can Do Descriptors (WIDA > Teach > Understanding What Students Can Do > Can Do Descriptors) highlight what students can do at each proficiency level.

The proficiency level score is a whole number followed by a decimal. The whole number reflects the student's proficiency level, and the number after the decimal reflects how far the student has progressed within that level. For example, a student with a score of 3.4 is at proficiency level 3, and is not quite halfway toward achieving proficiency level 4.

Proficiency level scores are grade-specific. For example, a fifth grader at proficiency level 4 might earn a scale score of 355. That same scale score for a third grader might translate to a proficiency level score of 5.2.

Proficiency level scores are also domain-specific. For example, a sixth grader at proficiency level 4.3 in Listening might have a scale score of 370. That same student who earns a scale score of 370 in Reading might have a Reading proficiency level of only 3.8.

Take care when comparing proficiency level scores across grades, as proficiency levels are relevant to the context of a particular grade. A second grader with a 4.0 in Listening and a 3.0 in Speaking has more developed listening skills than speaking skills. However, a second grader with a 4.0 in Listening and an eighth grader with a 4.0 in Listening are exposed to very different grade-level content as they test. While their score reports reflect the same proficiency level, the eighth grader is demonstrating more skill by responding to more challenging content. The same concept applies when students in different grades take the same grade-level cluster test. For example, when a sixth grader and an eighth grader take the Grades 6–8 test and both earn proficiency level scores of 4.0, this is the result of the eighth grader earning a higher scale score. The eighth grader must perform better than the sixth grader to earn the same proficiency level score because the proficiency level is grade-specific.
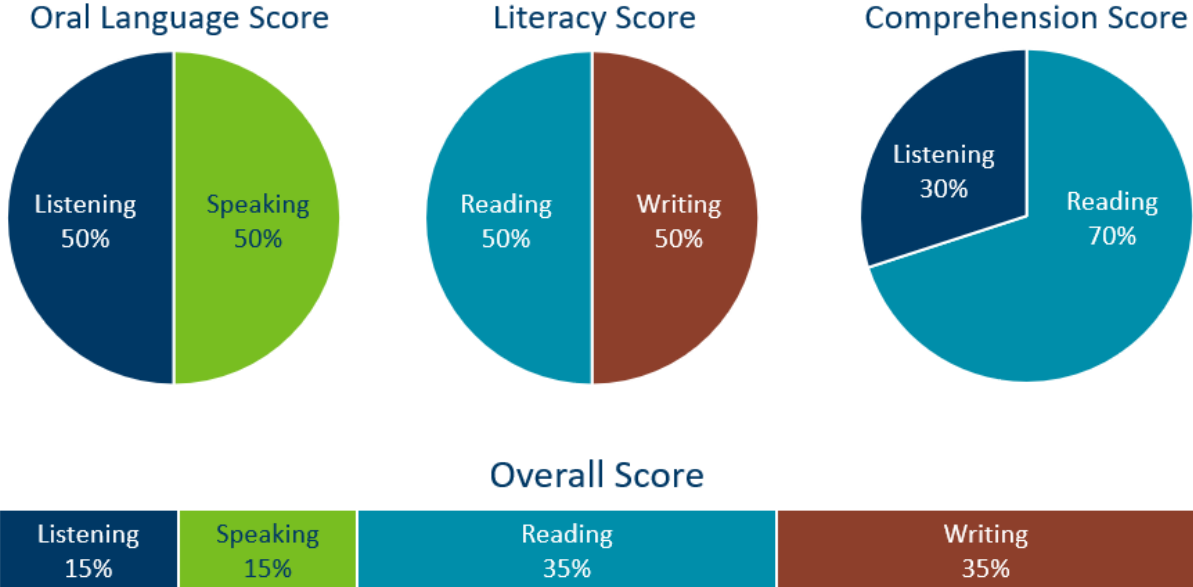
> ## Use Proficiency Levels to:
>
> - Make comparisons across domains within a grade
> - Develop student-specific language proficiency profiles using the WIDA Can Do Descriptors
> - Determine student eligibility for EL service as one of multiple criteria

Composite Scores

In addition to proficiency levels and scale scores for each domain, students receive a proficiency level score and a scale score for different combinations of the language domains. These composite scores are Oral Language, Literacy, Comprehension, and Overall.

Only students who complete all four domains receive all four composite scores. If a student does not complete a particular domain, scores for that domain and any associated composite scores will be missing from the student's results.

The following graphic illustrates how the composite scores are determined. The Oral Language and Literacy composites equally weight the two domains used at 50% each. Oral Language uses Listening and Speaking, while Literacy uses Reading and Writing. The Comprehension composite weights Reading at 70% and Listening at 30%. The Overall composite weights Reading and Writing at 35% each and Listening and Speaking at 15% each.

Oral Language Score

| Listening 50% | Speaking 50% |

Literacy Score

| Reading 50% | Writing 50% |

Comprehension Score

| Listening 30% | Reading 70% |

Overall Score

| Listening 15% | Speaking 15% | Reading 35% | Writing 35% |

Composite scores demand careful consideration. An Overall proficiency level, for example, can helpfully summarize student performance. However, students with identical Overall proficiency levels might have very different profiles in terms of their oral language and literacy development. One student might have very strong speaking skills, while another might excel at reading. Because a high score in one domain can inflate a composite score, a student's individual performance in each domain is more informative than a single composite score.

How is ACCESS data used in Minnesota?

Determining English Language Proficiency

In the state of Minnesota, an English learner (EL) is considered proficient in English if their ACCESS Overall composite proficiency level is 4.5 or higher and their proficiency levels for at least three of the four domains are 3.5 or higher. For more information about these scores, see the Elements of ACCESS Data section earlier in this guide. Students must demonstrate English language proficiency on ACCESS in order to be exited from English learner programming.

For more information on how the ACCESS is used for reclassification of English learners, refer to the English Learner Education page (MDE (education.mn.gov) > Districts, Schools and Educators > Teaching and Learning > English Learner Education).

North Star Accountability System

Progress Toward English Language Proficiency is a calculation used in the North Star Accountability system and is based on changes in students' overall composite scores. For students taking ACCESS, a path to proficiency is plotted for each student based on their initial composite score and the grade they were in when they received that score. Each student's path to proficiency includes targets for each year. These targets reflect the observed trend that students tend to progress faster at lower proficiency levels and slower at higher proficiency levels on the ACCESS test. District- and school-level reports are produced that represent, in general, whether students are making progress towards proficiency based on each student's target.

For more information about the Progress Toward English Language Proficiency indicator, refer to the Accountability Indicators page (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > School Achievement > School and District Accountability > Accountability Indicators).

Note: MDE received waivers from federal accountability requirements in 2020 and 2021. No Progress Toward English Language Proficiency data were calculated in those years. For more information about using results in those years, see the How do I get data for my analyses? section below.

How do I get data for my analyses?

MDE provides statewide assessment results at the individual student, school, district, and state level. Some types of results are available publicly on the MDE website and some are secure. Access to secure results varies by district, depending on the district's policies for data sharing. This guide references data that is provided to districts on the Secure Reports section of the MDE website (MDE > Data Center > Secure Reports). While all users of this guide may not have access to Secure Reports, MDE recommends that data from Secure Reports, not from public reporting, be used for exploring school and district data because it allows the most flexibility to explore the data and summarize it in meaningful ways. Secure Reports are intended for school and district use, while other public reports have different intended primary audiences.

If you do not have access to Secure Reports, know that many districts upload the results provided by MDE to their Student Information System (SIS) or data warehouse, so the data you need may be available there.

Depending on your role and access within your district, you may need to contact your District Assessment Coordinator (DAC) for more information on data available to you for the analyses in this guide. If you are not sure who your DAC is, you can find their contact information listed in MDE-ORG (MDE > Data Center > Schools and Organizations (MDE-ORG)).

If you do not have access to Secure Reports or information in your SIS, you may be able to use public data to look at all or some recommended data for questions A, B, C, D, E, F, G, and H in the data exploration flow chart section below.

Note: For spring 2020, no summary-level data was provided by MDE for ACCESS due to COVID-19. While the majority of ACCESS assessments were administered prior to COVID-19 closures, this may not be the case for all districts. Although MDE did not summarize data, districts may have summarized information following guidance

provided by MDE. Refer to *Statewide Assessment Reporting Guidance Due to COVID-19* for more information on using the 2020 results appropriately, considerations for summarization within the district or schools, and information on maintaining student data privacy (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > Teaching and Learning > Statewide Testing > District Resources > Archive (on the right side of the page under the image)).

In addition, the 2020–21 school year presented unique circumstances due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, special consideration is needed for reporting and analyzing assessment results. Due to the challenges of the pandemic, MDE does not support widely comparing 2021 statewide assessment results to previous years or trend data. Specific information and guidance on using and interpreting 2021 test data is available in the *2021 Statewide Assessment Reporting Guidance* (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > Teaching and Learning > Statewide Testing > District Resources > Archive (on the right side of the page under the image)).

Accessing Assessment Data in Secure Reports

Assessment data can be gathered from two primary locations in Secure Reports: Test Results Summary and the District and School Student Results (DSR and SSR) files. Test Results Summary is an interactive report that provides schools and districts detailed final summary data on Minnesota's statewide assessments. The DSR/SSR files are spreadsheets that provide schools and districts final student-level data on Minnesota's statewide assessments. More detailed information on using these reports is available in the report-specific user guides posted to the Assessment Secure Reports Data Submissions page (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > Business and Finance > Data Submissions > Assessment Secure Reports). Specific instructions for using these reports for analyses described in this guide can be found in Appendix B and Appendix C of this guide.

Using Individual Results

Refer to your district's data privacy policies and procedures when sharing the data with other district and school staff. Ensure individual student-level data is only shared with individuals who have a specific legitimate educational interest in knowing the information. Schools should share student data on an as limited a basis as possible to serve the needs of the students while also protecting their rights and privacy.

Even if the data are summarized, results may be presented for a small number of students, which may make it possible to identify individual students. Ensure student data privacy is maintained when accessing or sharing data electronically, or when sharing printed hard copies of any reports or results.

Accessing Accountability Data in Secure Reports

Accountability data related to how English learners are progressing toward English language proficiency can be gathered from two primary locations in Secure Reports: North Star Report and Progress Toward English Language Proficiency Roster. North Star Report is an interactive report, which provides schools and districts final summary data on Minnesota's accountability system. The Progress Toward English Language Proficiency Roster is a spreadsheet that provides schools and districts final student-level data on the Progress Toward English Language Proficiency indicator. Specific instructions for using these reports for analyses described in this guide can be found in Appendix D and Appendix E of this guide.
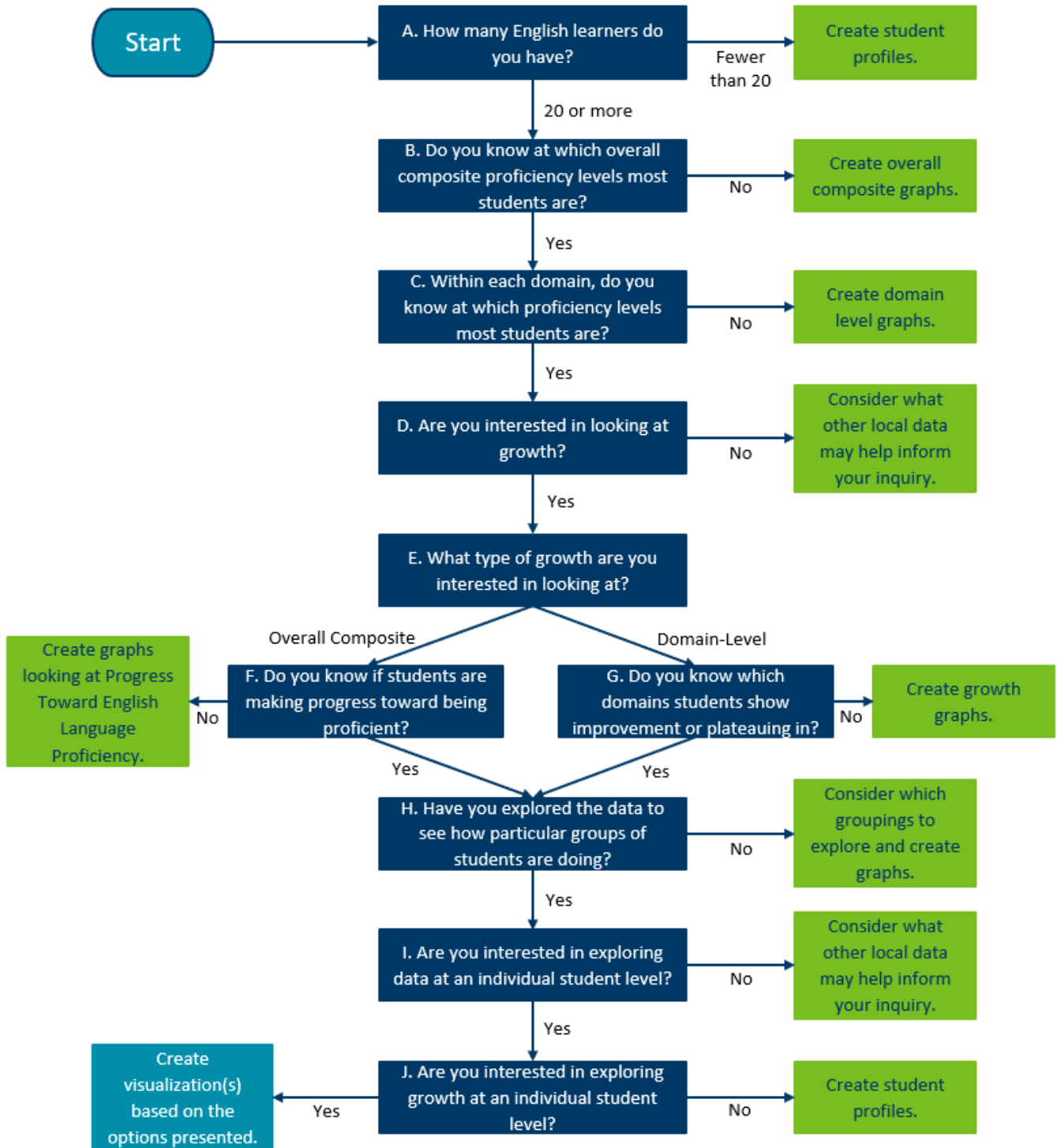
Note: Due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on data collection and usability, assessment data collected during the 2019–20 and 2020–21 school years were not used for statewide accountability purposes. This means the Progress Toward English Language Proficiency data was not calculated and is unavailable for use in 2020 and 2021.

How can I explore ACCESS data?

While the information provided in this section is not the only way to explore your English learners' data, the following flowchart and accompanying explanations provide one recommended process. Along with the process recommendations, there are examples of potential types of data visualizations that can be created. The flowchart presents the recommended order for someone unfamiliar with the data to dig into it systematically, but it is not the only way to explore ACCESS data. Consideration of your local context and needs should always be made when working with the data.

Depending on the type of information sought, one year of data or multiple years of data may be best to consider. If using data to inform decisions for the future year, the most recent year of data may be sufficient. However, in general, having information about whether the same trends have been observed over time is useful.

Flowchart for Exploring ACCESS

Start

A. How many English learners do you have? — Fewer than 20 → Create student profiles.

20 or more ↓

B. Do you know at which overall composite proficiency levels most students are? — No → Create overall composite graphs.

Yes ↓

C. Within each domain, do you know at which proficiency levels most students are? — No → Create domain level graphs.

Yes ↓

D. Are you interested in looking at growth? — No → Consider what other local data may help inform your inquiry.

Yes ↓

E. What type of growth are you interested in looking at?

Overall Composite ↙ | ↘ Domain-Level

F. Do you know if students are making progress toward being proficient? — No → Create graphs looking at Progress Toward English Language Proficiency.

G. Do you know which domains students show improvement or plateauing in? — No → Create growth graphs.

Yes ↓ | Yes ↓

H. Have you explored the data to see how particular groups of students are doing? — No → Consider which groupings to explore and create graphs.

Yes ↓

I. Are you interested in exploring data at an individual student level? — No → Consider what other local data may help inform your inquiry.

Yes ↓

J. Are you interested in exploring growth at an individual student level? — Yes → Create visualization(s) based on the options presented. — No → Create student profiles.

Data Exploration

A. How many English learners do you have?

When considering how best to look at the data provided by ACCESS, it is important to consider the number of students being examined. If there are fewer than 20 students, it is not recommended that you explore the information quantitatively. While you can quantitatively summarize, or aggregate, the data for student counts of 10–20, each student represents five to 10 percent of the total. With each individual student's results significantly impacting the overall results, one unusual result can lead to misinterpretation of the information provided. For smaller counts, consideration of the local context is imperative when examining aggregate data. Additionally, being aware of a shift in the population of students served between years is necessary in order to interpret the information appropriately and to arrive at accurate conclusions about what the ACCESS data is saying about the EL program overall. If the local context is not considered, a school may conclude that their EL program needs a major overhaul when it might actually just be a reflection of the changing population of students.

Instead of relying on aggregate data when there are small counts, consider creating student profiles and looking for patterns qualitatively and/or based on additional local-level data that may inform practices or instruction at the school or district and at an individual level to consider how best to meet the students' needs.

> **LOCAL CONTEXT**
>
> If the school or district has recently increased from four to eight English learners, with all four of the new students being Recently Arrived English learners, those four students who are new to the district will likely have a lower language proficiency than the four students who were enrolled previously. Because these four students are half of the population of English learners, the aggregate data may be skewed to show lower levels of proficiency than historically shown.

B. Do you know at which overall composite proficiency levels most students are?

The highest-level information provided by ACCESS is the overall composite level of students. Knowing the distribution of the English learners at a school or district and whether they are at beginning, intermediate, or advanced levels of English language proficiency is important, as the instructional needs for students at the various levels will differ.

C. Within each domain, do you know at which proficiency levels most students are?

While the overall composite gives a general idea of student language acquisition, the fact that several scores are combined into one score can often mask strengths or weaknesses within particular domains. Therefore, it is important to also look at the data at a domain level.

When exploring the data by domain, keep in mind that the distributions for performance on each domain varies. While comparing the domains can quickly reveal overall strengths and weaknesses, each domain should also be investigated independently. Sometimes it is helpful to look at changes in domain distributions over time at your school or district to determine if there are overall improvements in each domain. However, it is important to remember that each year the strongest performing students are exited from EL programming and are no longer part of the more recent data.

D. Are you interested in looking at growth?

If change over time is of interest, growth is important to consider. Growth may be based on changes in scores over time for individual students or changes in performance over time for groups of students. Much of the information in this section is adapted from the *ACCESS for ELLs Interpretive Guide for Score Reports*, which is available on the WIDA website (WIDA > Assess > ACCESS for ELLs Scores and Reports).

Both proficiency levels and scale scores can help you understand student growth year over year. Proficiency levels are a practical way to understand students' skills, while scale scores offer a more nuanced measure of how much a student's language use and control is changing. As you review ACCESS scores and consider student growth, keep the following information in mind:

- A student's foundation in a home language or primary language is a good predictor of English language development. For example, a student with a strong literacy background in a home language is likely to acquire literacy in English at a quicker pace than a student with lower levels of home language literacy.
- The pace of language development is different for each individual. It is common for younger students and those at the beginning proficiency levels to make progress more quickly than older students and those at more advanced proficiency levels.
- Students rarely acquire proficiency across domains at the same pace. Often, oral language skills (listening and speaking) develop faster than literacy skills (reading and writing). At the same time, receptive language skills (listening and reading) often develop faster than productive language skills (speaking and writing). Every student's growth is different, but it is not unusual for students to need longer to develop skills in writing than in any other domain.
- Multiple consecutive years of data are necessary to analyze student growth. Consider the first year a student takes ACCESS as an opportunity to establish a baseline for test performance. Results from the second year can show growth, and only with three years or more of test results can you see trends in the student's language development.

> **GROWTH DEFINITION**
>
> Growth for groups of students is typically measured by a change in percentages over time.
>
> In this guide, growth for individual students always refers to measurable change in English language skills over time for a student. This type of growth is the most appropriate to use with a criterion-referenced test.

E. What type of growth are you interested in looking at?

Growth at the domain level will influence growth at the overall composite level, so typically both are important to consider. If the question of interest is whether the student is making progress at a rate at which they will likely exit within a typical timeframe, the overall composite is best to explore because the overall composite is the primary exit criteria. However, the composite is a weighted score representing each of the four domains, which can make it difficult, if not impossible, to identify the areas that are most in need of support. Therefore, exploring the data at the domain level will provide useful insights.

F. Do you know if students are making progress toward being proficient?

The Progress Toward English Language Proficiency Indicator in North Star is the only growth data provided by MDE that may help address this question. This calculation is completed only at an overall composite level because the calculation needs to be aligned with the definition of proficiency used for making student reclassification decisions. In addition to the appropriate and inappropriate uses listed in the table below, it is important to consider the purpose of the indicator. The accountability indicator was created to be as lenient as is reasonable. That means that the timelines set for students are at the high end of what would typically be expected. However, for some students, a longer timeline may be more appropriate.

Appropriate Use	Inappropriate Use
Look at groups of students	Use targets in isolation for student goal setting
Consider system supports provided	Assume students not meeting targets need special education services
Investigate how close student groups were to meeting their targets	Consider only one year of data for individual students

The targets provided for accountability should not be used in isolation. These targets were set based on the typical student who took the majority of the timeline provided. That means, on average, that half of the students statewide who are realistically "on track" to be proficient within their timeline will be above their target and half will be below their target. When exploring composite growth, consider whether the timelines assigned for accountability are the most appropriate to use for answering the question(s) of interest. For many students, more rigorous targets than those set in the North Star system are appropriate and should be considered for local analyses.

G. Do you know which domains students show improvement or plateauing in?

Improvement can be defined as an increase in scale score or in proficiency level. At an aggregate level, average scale scores or the percentages of students in each proficiency level can be used to explore changes in how students are performing in each domain over time. A student may plateau in their language development because they have topped out the scale that the test measures, because instruction is not provided to support higher proficiency levels in the domain, or because students are struggling in a domain.

Generally, students will reach high levels of proficiency in receptive skills (listening and reading) before they reach high levels of proficiency in productive skills (speaking and writing). However, there may be other factors that will cause the student to not follow typical growth patterns. These factors include, but are not limited to, whether the student has a disability and how that disability may affect their performance in a domain, the student's proficiency in the domain in their home language, whether the domain exists in the student's home language, and the extent to which the skills being tested in the domain are supported by the instructional practices used.

Domain-Specific Considerations for Looking at Growth

The data shows that students tend to plateau at high levels of proficiency in listening and at mid-levels of proficiency in speaking. In reading and writing, a "target" proficiency level can be established using methods similar to those used to establish the proficiency definition, but once that level has been achieved, it is important to continue to focus on improving that student's skills in those domains. Therefore, instead of MDE providing growth calculations for each domain, information about typical performance and the type of information to consider, specific to each domain, is provided. Districts and schools can then make informed decisions using more than just assessment data to determine whether students are making expected progress in their English language proficiency. The typical performance based on average daily membership (ADM) is provided in Appendix F of this guide.

Listening

The Listening domain is often the first a student will master. Typically, over 40% of all students taking ACCESS receive a 6 on this domain each year. For students at lower proficiency levels, look for changes in proficiency levels and scale scores in a positive direction to determine whether the student is making expected growth. For this domain, students remaining at the high performance levels (5–6 on ACCESS) likely means the student is making acceptable growth.

Speaking

While progress from proficiency levels 1 and 2 is typically seen in the Speaking domain, students in proficiency level 3 tend to remain at level 3 and typically do not progress to proficiency level 4 or beyond before testing as proficient. Additionally, because the kindergarten assessment is scored by the Test Administrator (unlike grades 1–12, which are scored by the service provider), there often appears to be negative progress in first grade when comparing proficiency levels between the two years. For students at proficiency levels 1 and 2, look for changes in proficiency levels and scale scores in a positive direction to determine whether the student is making expected growth. For students at proficiency level 3, typical progress in this domain likely does not reflect acceptable growth for students, and improvement in this domain is needed across the state.

The *WIDA Speaking Scoring Scale Grades 1–12* is a helpful reference to understand how student responses are scored (WIDA > Resource Library > WIDA Speaking Scoring Scale Grades 1–12).

Reading

Students receiving a proficiency level score of 3.5 or higher on the Reading domain are likely to have the reading skills necessary to be successful in core content classes. For students at lower proficiency levels on ACCESS, look for changes in proficiency levels and scale scores in a positive direction to determine whether the student is making expected English language proficiency growth. Students at a proficiency level of 3.5 or higher who maintain or improve their proficiency level likely have made acceptable growth.

Writing

Students typically do not reach a proficiency level of 5 or higher on writing before being reclassified. Once students receive a proficiency level score of 3.5 or higher on the Writing domain, they are likely to have the language skills necessary to be successful in core content classes. For students at lower proficiency levels on ACCESS, look for changes in proficiency levels and scale scores in a positive direction to determine whether the student is making expected English language proficiency growth. Maintaining or improving proficiency level scores of 3.5 or higher likely means the student is making adequate growth.

The *WIDA Writing Scoring Scale Grades 1–12* is a helpful reference to understand how student responses are scored (WIDA > Resource Library > WIDA Writing Scoring Scale Grades 1–12).

H. Have you explored the data to see how particular groups of students are doing?

It may be beneficial to go back and further explore the data to determine if there are systematic strengths or weaknesses that may be hidden by grouping all students together. Possible ways of exploring the data include, but are not limited to: by school, by proficiency level, by grade, by home language, by special education status, or by length of time enrolled in a language instruction educational program (LIEP).

Some student groups that may be of interest are provided in MDE aggregate reporting (e.g., by grade), but other groupings will require using the individual student results to create additional groupings. One group of interest may be long term English learners (LTELs). Appendix G of this guide provides questions to consider when defining this group and looking at their outcomes.

I. Are you interested in exploring data at an individual student level?

In addition to providing overall program information, ACCESS is designed to provide information at an individual level in order to help inform instruction. If the questions being addressed are at the program level or higher, exploring the data at an individual level may not be appropriate.

Remember that the data from ACCESS is just one point in time and one measure of student progress toward English language proficiency. Therefore, consideration of other information available at the local level (e.g., from the EL or content teacher or interim assessments) is imperative when considering the information at the individual level. A student profile is one way this information can be brought together to provide useful information to teachers.

J. Are you interested in exploring growth at an individual student level?

WIDA recommends using scale scores when looking at individual student growth. This is because a change in scale score indicates the student has had an overall improvement in their English language development. However, scale scores cannot be used to determine whether there is an overall improvement relative to the grade-level standards without also considering the proficiency level information. Therefore, in addition to monitoring increases in scale scores, it is also important to determine whether students improved their proficiency levels. A student may be continuing to improve their English language proficiency overall, but is falling further behind relative to the necessary proficiency levels to fully access content instruction in English.

Domain Level Growth

One potentially useful way to look at the data is to explore the number of students maintaining high levels of proficiency or improving their proficiency level and/or scale scores. What is considered a high level of proficiency at the state level differs by domain.

Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing
5.0–6.0	4.0–6.0	3.5–6.0	3.5–6.0

For Listening, a high level of proficiency is 5.0 or higher; for Speaking, a high proficiency level is 4.0 or higher; for Reading and Writing, proficiency levels of 3.5 or higher are considered high.

Overall Composite Growth

The accountability indicator is really meant to look at aggregates of students—not individual students—even though it is based on individual-level targets. If you are using the accountability indicator to look at individual students, it is important you are looking at several years of data in conjunction with other local information.

Data Visualization Options

There are several ways to explore ACCESS data through MDE and WIDA systems, but these systems may not be sufficient for all of your school or district's needs. Visualizing information using charts, graphs, infographics, and other techniques provides an additional option that may help detect patterns in the data and communicate findings to broader audiences. When determining which visualization to use, consider the primary audience the data will be shared with and the question the visualization is meant to help answer.

Several examples and recommended ways to visually display information depending on the audience or the question being addressed are provided here. Some of the graphical displays are available in Test Results Summary or on the Minnesota Report Card, although most will need to be created by using individual level data available in the DSR/SSR, Progress Toward English Language Proficiency Roster, or your Student Information System (SIS).

Guiding Questions

Throughout this section, you will see guiding questions sections to consider while exploring each type of information and using this information to make data-driven decisions. However, there are also some overall guiding questions to consider as you think about how to visualize the information you have gathered.

- Which data visualization(s) is (are) most appropriate for your intended audience?
- Which data visualization(s) is (are) most useful for having meaningful conversations about student needs and English learner programming?
- Are there any other types of visualizations that would be useful?
- How might you combine data visualizations to tell a story?

Student Profiles

Although there is often a focus on or preference for using quantitative data to make educational decisions, qualitative data is often the most useful type of data to explore for patterns or themes when engaging in data-driven decision-making. This is particularly true when considering information available at an individual student level.

Student profiles are a powerful way to consider each individual student, their needs, and the assets they bring. The profiles also provide an opportunity to consider other student characteristics that would not be available when exploring summary data provided by MDE. Examples of this type of information are the student's language proficiency in their home language(s) and the type of language instruction programming in which the student is participating. An example of what a Student Profile may look like and the information included is provided below.

A full-size example and a template for creating student profiles are available in Appendix A of this guide.

Sumaya Ahmed

Assets

Generally strong home language proficiency.

Motivated to learn and asks a lot of questions.

Accommodations/Supports

Parents need oral translations in Somali of all materials sent home.

Student works best in small group settings.

Student Characteristics

Grade: 5

Home Language(s):

Somali

Home Language Proficiency:

Fluent in listening, speaking and reading, but struggles with writing.

Additional Support Status

☐ Individualized Education Plan (IEP)

☐ 504 Plan

☒ No IEP or 504

Language Instruction Education Program Type:

☐ Content-Based ELD Instruction

☐ Developmental Bilingual

☒ Dual Language

☐ Heritage Language Instruction

☐ Newcomer Program

☐ Transitional Bilingual

☐ Two Way Immersion

☐ Other

State Assessment Data

2022 Assessment Data

Domain	Proficiency Level
Composite	3.4
Listening	4.7
Reading	3.3
Speaking	2.2
Writing	3.8

Trend Data

Domain	2018	2019	2020
Composite	1.4	2.3	3.4
Listening	2.5	3.4	4.7
Reading	1.9	2.5	3.3
Speaking	1.5	2.0	2.2
Writing	1.1	2.5	3.8

Local Assessment Data

Test Name: ABCDE

Language Assessed: English

Domain	Achievement	Progress
Literacy	Meeting Expectations	Average
Oral	Below Expectations	Below Average
Listening	Exceeding Expectations	Above Average
Reading	Meeting Expectations	Average
Speaking	Below Expectations	Below Average
Writing	Meeting Expectations	Above Average

Overall Composite Graphs

Overall proficiency data are typically visualized by using stacked bar graphs or separate bar graphs for each proficiency level. Stacked bar graphs allow for easy comparison of whether the distributions are similar when comparing groups or whether the distributions have shifted over time.
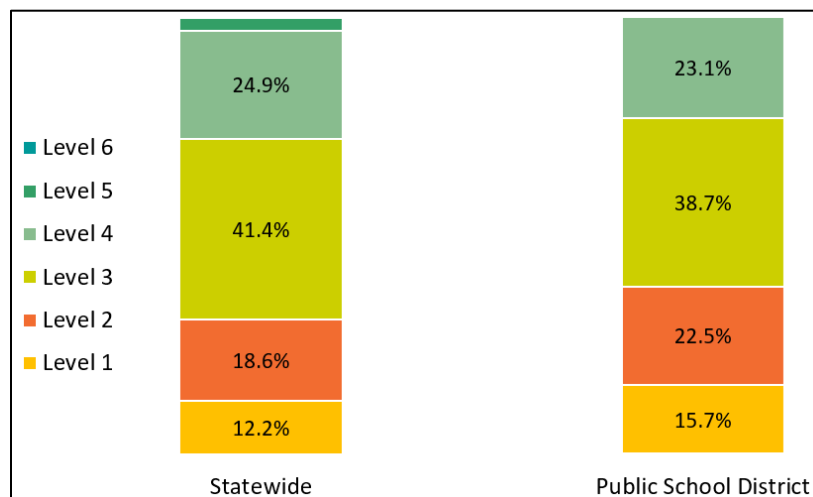
However, sometimes stacked bar graphs can make it difficult to visually determine the relative frequency of each proficiency level or to compare the distributions. When exploring whether the distribution is similar for each proficiency level across time or similar to a comparison group, a bar chart that represents each proficiency level individually may be the better visualization choice. If exploring data over time for more than two years, a line chart, instead of a bar graph, is recommended to represent each year (an example is provided in the Growth Graphs section of this guide).

Statewide and **Public School District** Proficiency Levels on the Overall Composite

Values by level:
- Level 1: 12.2% / 15.7%
- Level 2: 18.6% / 22.5%
- Level 3: 41.4% / 38.7%
- Level 4: 24.9% / 23.1%
- Level 5: 2.8% / 0.0%
- Level 6: 0.1% / 0.0%
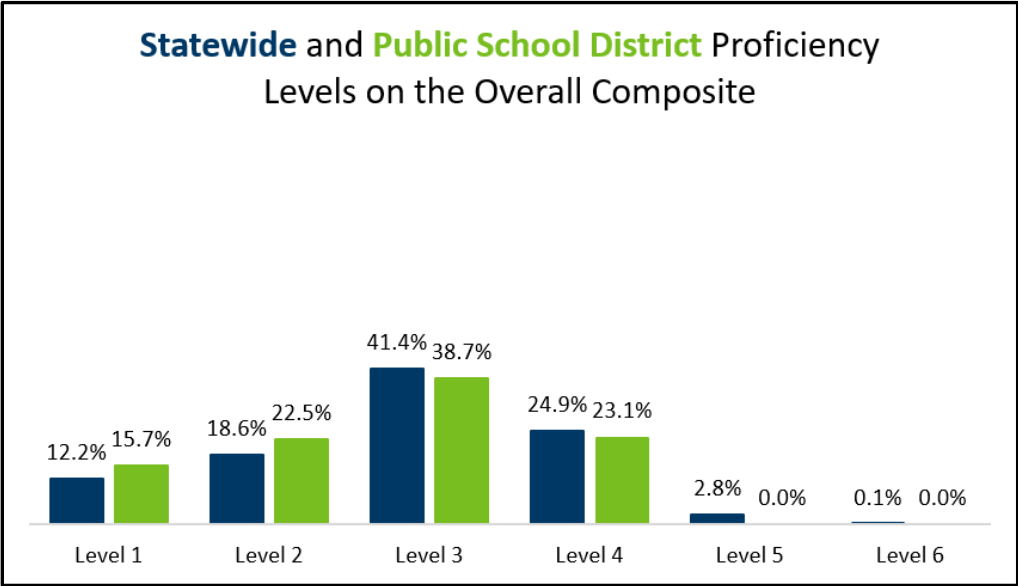
Guiding Questions

- Which levels of English language proficiency are most common in your school or district?
- Does your school or district's data look similar to the state overall?
    - If not, in what way(s) is it different?
    - What may explain why you are seeing a difference?
- What are some key characteristics of the English learners in your school or district?
    - Do you see different levels of English language proficiency by these student characteristics?
- How is the work of the school or district's English language development program represented in these English language proficiency scores?
    - Are there differences in proficiency level by program type (e.g., students mainstreamed, students in newcomer programs, or students with push in/pull out models)?
- What other local data is available to learn more?

Domain Level Graphs

Similar to when looking at the overall composite, a stacked bar or a chart with individual bars can be used to look at proficiency level data at a domain level. Stacked bar graphs allow for easy comparison of overall distributions to identify relative strengths and weaknesses in how students are performing in each domain.
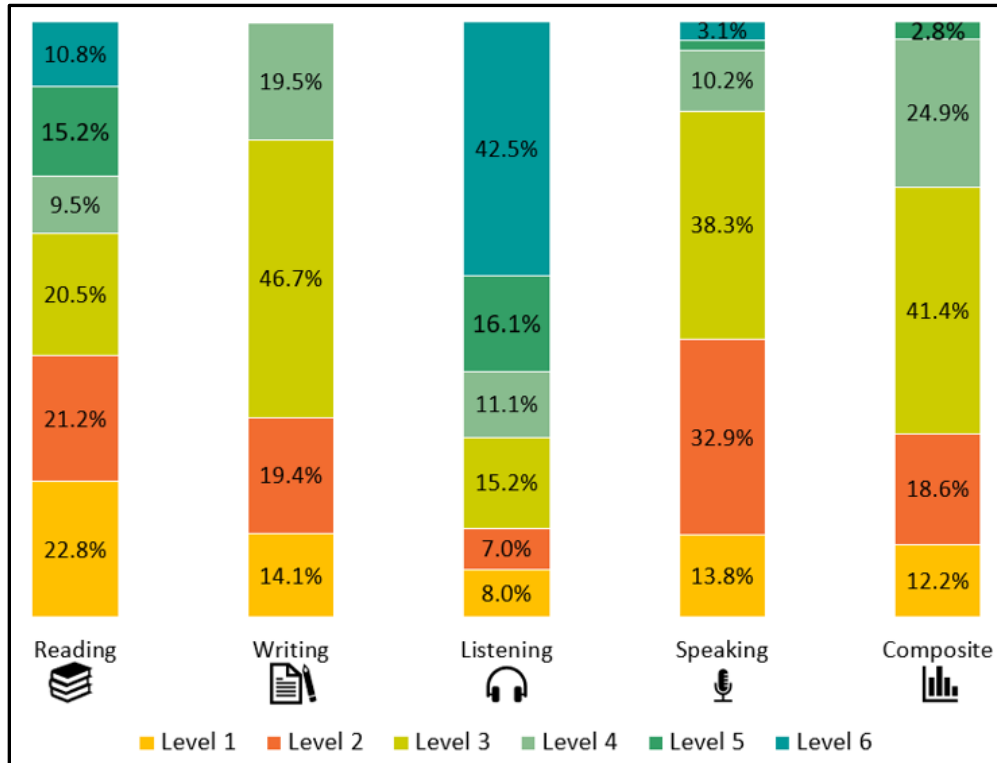
Sometimes stacked bar charts can make it difficult to visually determine where the differences in achievement level distributions are located. Using individual bars for each proficiency level can allow for easier comparisons of relative performance in each domain. However, with four domains, there would be at least 24 bars (four domains each with six proficiency levels) if presented on one graph. Therefore, creating several graphs with a subset of the information (sometimes referred to as small multiples) may be an appropriate alternative. The following graphic provides an example of how to show the first three levels.
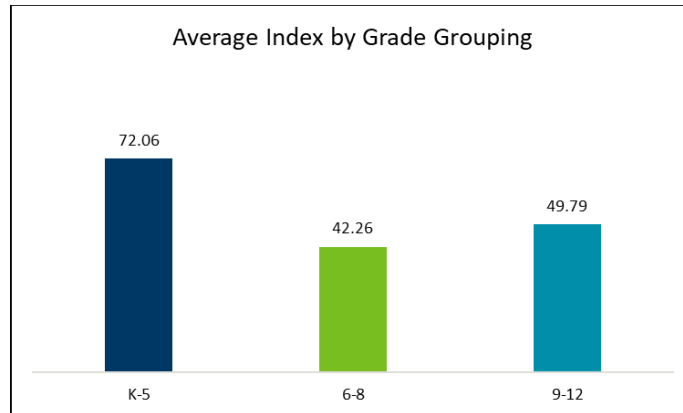
Progress Toward English Language Proficiency Graphs

There are two types of data reported for the Progress Toward English Language Proficiency indicator: the average index and the percentage of students meeting targets. The two types of data provide different types of information, both of which may be useful.

The average index illustrates the extent to which students are meeting the state-determined targets. Because the average index allows for partial credit, it is possible to tell whether, in general, students are on track to be proficient within their timeline. The percentage of students meeting targets creates a dichotomy between students who are on track or not on track and may be misleading as to whether the school or district is generally doing well making progress with their students. A school or district may have no students meeting their targets and therefore a low (zero) percentage who are meeting targets, but all of the students are very close to meeting the target, and would thus have a high index. Because no "extra" credit is given to students who have exceeded their targets, the index is generally more informative than the percentage of students meeting targets.

While you can look at the change in the two summary measures over time, it is not recommended to do so. Given the nature of the model used for this calculation, both measures will likely be declining for the first several years of implementation. This is mostly due to the fact that all students were treated as having just started their timelines in 2017, regardless of the number of years they had previously been identified as an English learner.

Generally, the information is most informative for a single year of data and for comparing student groups. It is often useful to explore by grade level and by prior year proficiency level. Typically, the prior year proficiency information provides more actionable information than the initial proficiency level.

Average Index by Grade Grouping

72.06	42.26	49.79
K-5	6-8	9-12

Typically, what information can be found by exploring the Progress Toward English Language Proficiency data should reinforce the information already found by examining the overall composite and domain-level data.

***Guiding Questions***

- Does your school/district's data look similar to the state overall?
    - If not, in what way(s) is it different?
    - What may explain why you are seeing a difference?
- Are there certain student groups that may impact why you look more or less similar to the state?
- Are there any patterns in the students getting close to meeting, meeting, or exceeding their targets?
    - Are students in certain grade levels more likely to meet their targets?
    - Do prior year proficiency levels seem to impact the likelihood that students meet their targets?
    - Are there students who are receiving zeroes because their timelines have finished?
        - If so, what are the commonalities of these students?
- What other factors not considered in the model (initial grade, proficiency level, and student with limited or interrupted formal education [SLIFE] status) may be important to consider when interpreting your data?
    - Are certain language groups more proficient in their home language?
- Are students being provided opportunities to interact academically with their non-EL peers?

Growth Graphs

Growth graphs can be used to explore changes in composite or domain-level data. Line graphs are typically the best choice for displaying longitudinal data. Stacked bars or individual bars, such as those illustrated above in the Overall Composite Graphs and Domain Level Graphs sections, may also be helpful.

When looking at proficiency level changes over time, placing all six lines on one graph can lead to a graph that is difficult to look at and interpret. Therefore, creating line graphs for each proficiency level and displaying the data as several small graphs, or small multiples, can better display the change in the distributions over time. The following graphic provides an example of how to show the first three levels.

Note: Due to COVID-19, caution should be taken when considering any trends including the years 2020 and 2021. You may want to consider starting trend lines with 2022 moving forward.
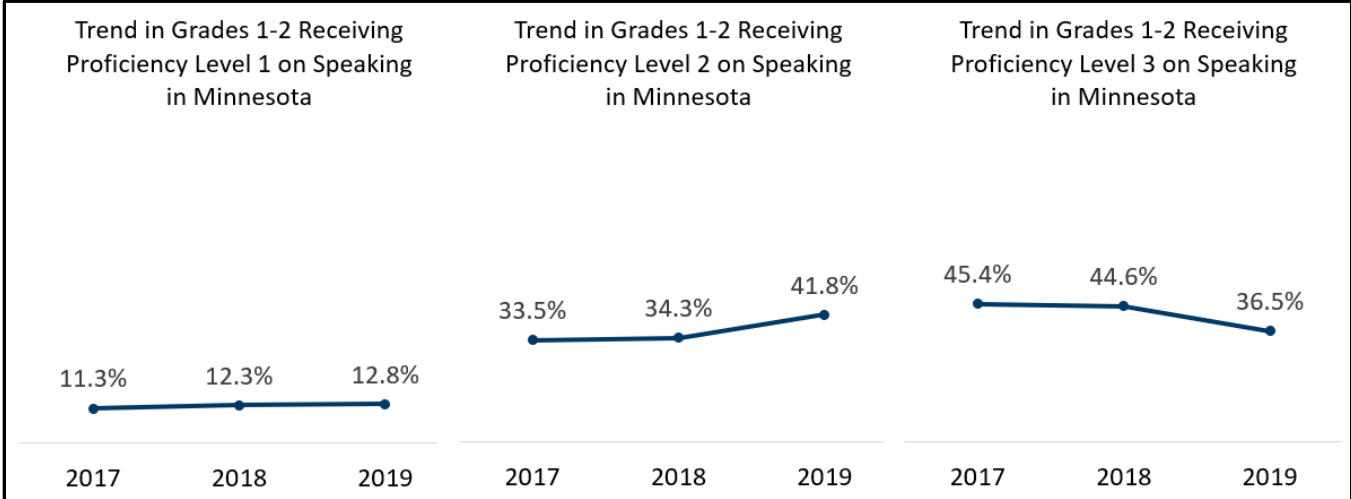
Average scale score graphs can be generated to look at differences in student groups or over time, but should not be compared across composites or domains. The proficiency levels represented by each scale score differ by domain, and the relative weight of each domain differs in each composite. Therefore, an average score that is higher in one composite may actually reflect a lower proficiency level in the other composite being compared. If creating multiple average scale score graphs, it is not recommended to present the data side-by-side in a small multiple format, as that may encourage comparisons which are not appropriate.

Guiding Questions

- Have you considered how students being exited from English learner status each year may impact the trend data?
- In which areas are you seeing the most improvement over time?
    - Is the improvement different by school, grade level, or student characteristics?
- In which areas are you seeing little to no change over time?
    - Are there any groups that are improving in this area?
        - If so, what might explain their improvement while the overall trend is in stagnation?
- What types of changes to instructional practices and supports have been made that might help explain the change over time observed?
- What other evidence have you gathered related to student performance across time?
    - Does this evidence tell a similar story of student performance?
        - If not, what may explain the observed differences?
    - Does the evidence add to your understanding of how students are performing?
    - What additional evidence do you think would be helpful to gather?

Data Visualization Options for Individual Student Data

The type of visualization selected for looking at individual data needs to take into consideration two key factors: the primary audience for the data and the question the visualization is meant to help answer. Because the questions that are most important to consider at the individual level are different than those explored at the summary level, different visualizations than those used to effectively display group data should be considered.

STUDENT PRIVACY REMINDER

Ensure individual student-level data is **only** shared with individuals who have a specific legitimate educational interest in knowing the information.

Schools should share student data on as limited a basis as possible to serve the needs of the students while also protecting their rights and privacy.

When looking at individual student data for making student-level decisions, data for at least three years should be examined together. In addition to the state assessment information, other state and local data should be considered to provide a holistic picture of the student. If a student has fewer than three years of data available, the other state and local data should be more heavily considered in making student-level decisions.

One graphical option for looking at change over time for the overall composite at an individual level is to use a dot plot. A dot plot can visualize how the student is performing over time relative to reaching proficiency. This graph is appropriate for use with all students, as the ultimate goal for all students is to become proficient and be exited from English language

programming. It allows a user to quickly determine whether the student is progressing and to get a good idea of the trajectory the student is on for when they will likely reach proficiency.
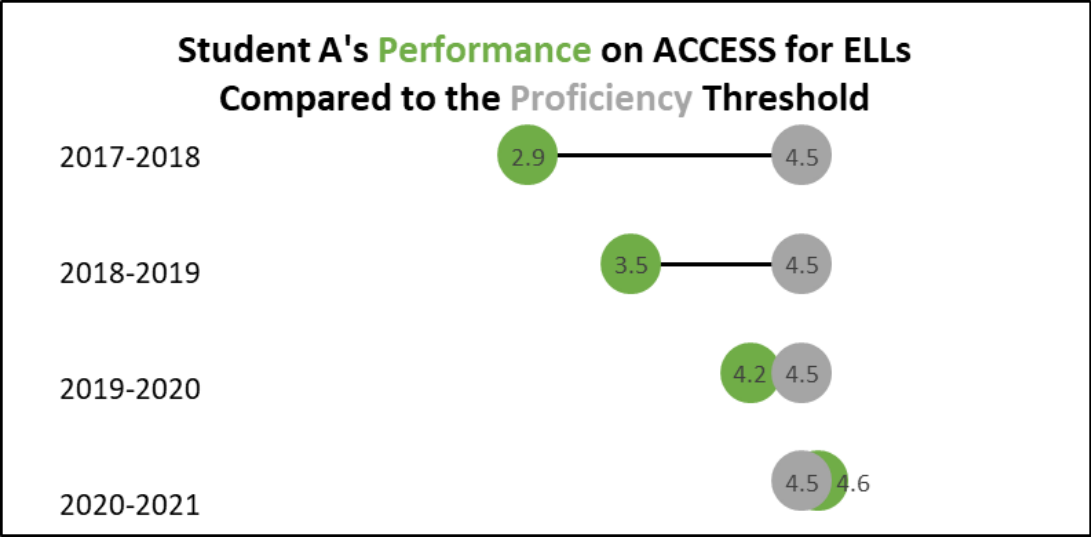
This graph could also be displayed with the oldest years at the bottom or with the years across the vertical axis if that is preferred or better for the space available for creating a visual. If your school or district has established other targets or goals for the various composites or at the domain level, this type of graph can also be used to monitor how students are performing relative to the threshold set at the local level.

For the majority of people, a line graph is a familiar way to look at data over time. Like the dot plot showing growth and the proficiency threshold, a line graph allows you to generally see whether the student is improving their English language proficiency over time.
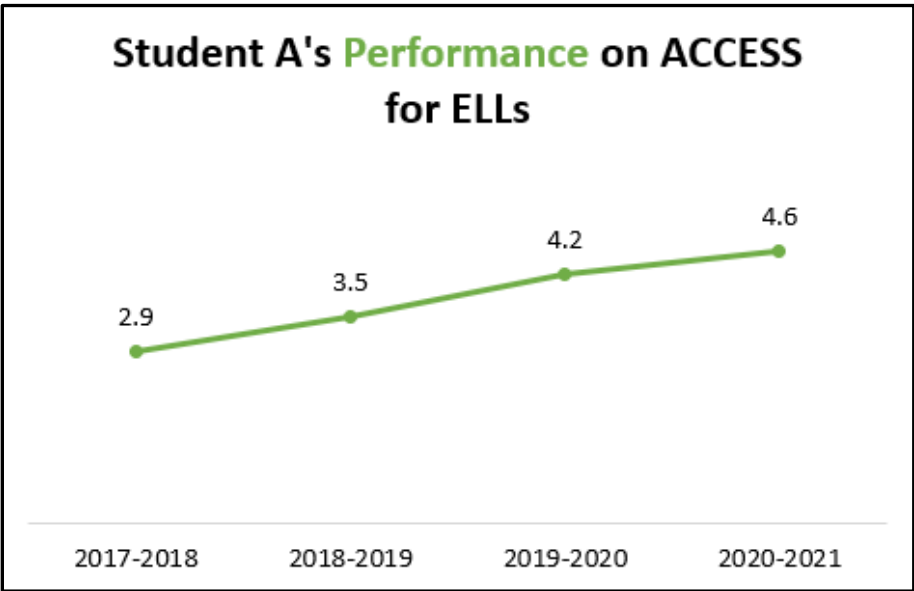
If interested in visually displaying how close the student is to reaching a target threshold, an additional line can be added to this graph. If the lines tend to overlap, the dot plot may be a better visualization to show how similar the trajectories are each year for the student.

Guiding Questions

- How might you change these visualizations to provide meaningful information if looking at domain-level growth?
- What additional information is needed when making instructional decisions for individual students?
- How might you visually combine data together to tell a cohesive story about a student?

References and Additional Resources

Resource	Location
2012 Amplification of the WIDA English Language Development Standards	WIDA (wida.wisc.edu) > Resource Library
2020 Statewide Assessment Reporting Guidance Due to COVID-19	MDE (education.mn.gov) > Districts, Schools and Educators > Teaching and Learning > Statewide Testing > District Resources > Archive (on the right side of the page under the image)
Statewide Assessment Reporting Guidance	MDE (education.mn.gov) > Districts, Schools and Educators > Teaching and Learning > Statewide Testing > District Resources > Archive (on the right side of the page under the image)
ACCESS for ELLs Interpretive Guide for Score Reports	WIDA > Assess > ACCESS for ELLs Scores and Reports
Alternate ACCESS Interpretive Guide for Score Reports	WIDA > Assess > Alternate ACCESS for ELLs > Alternate ACCESS for ELLs Scores and Reports
English Learner Education	MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > Teaching and Learning > English Learner Education
MDE Assessment Secure Reports User Guides	MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > Business and Finance > Data Submissions > Assessment Secure Reports
MDE Secure Reports	MDE > Data Center > Secure Reports
North Star Accountability Indicators	MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > School Achievement > School and District Accountability > Accountability Indicators
Performance Definitions – Expressive Domains	WIDA > Resource Library
Performance Definitions – Receptive Domains	WIDA > Resource Library
Sample School Frequency Report	WIDA > Assess > ACCESS > ACCESS for ELLs Scores and Reports

Resource	Location
Sample Individual Student Results (ISR)	MDE > Assess > ACCESS > ACCESS for ELLs Scores and Reports
Sample Student Roster Report	WIDA > Assess > ACCESS > ACCESS for ELLs Scores and Reports
WIDA Can Do Philosophy	WIDA > Resource Library
WIDA Can Do Descriptors	WIDA > Teach > Understanding What Students Can Do > Can Do Descriptors
WIDA English Language Development Standards Framework, 2020 Edition	WIDA > Teach > Teaching with Standards > ELD Standards Framework
WIDA Guiding Principles of Language Development	WIDA > Resource Library
WIDA Speaking Scoring Scale Grades 1–12	WIDA > Resource Library
WIDA Standards Framework and its Theoretical Foundations	WIDA > Resource Library
WIDA Writing Scoring Scale Grades 1–12	WIDA > Resource Library

Appendix A – Student Profile

This appendix provides a full-size example on the first page and a template that can be used for creating student profiles, as referenced in the Student Profile section above.

Sumaya Ahmed

Assets

Generally strong home language proficiency.

Motivated to learn and asks a lot of questions.

Accommodations/Supports

Parents need oral translations in Somali of all materials sent home.

Student works best in small group settings.

Student Characteristics

Grade: 5

Home Language(s):

Somali

Home Language Proficiency:

Fluent in listening, speaking and reading, but struggles with writing.

Additional Support Status

☐ Individualized Education Plan (IEP)

☐ 504 Plan

☒ No IEP or 504

Language Instruction Education Program Type:

☐ Content-Based ELD Instruction

☐ Developmental Bilingual

☒ Dual Language

☐ Heritage Language Instruction

☐ Newcomer Program

☐ Transitional Bilingual

☐ Two Way Immersion

☐ Other

State Assessment Data

2022 Assessment Data

Domain	Proficiency Level
Composite	3.4
Listening	4.7
Reading	3.3
Speaking	2.2
Writing	3.8

Trend Data

Domain	2018	2019	2020
Composite	1.4	2.3	3.4
Listening	2.5	3.4	4.7
Reading	1.9	2.5	3.3
Speaking	1.5	2.0	2.2
Writing	1.1	2.5	3.8

Local Assessment Data

Test Name: ABCDE

Language Assessed: English

Domain	Achievement	Progress
Literacy	Meeting Expectations	Average
Oral	Below Expectations	Below Average
Listening	Exceeding Expectations	Above Average
Reading	Meeting Expectations	Average
Speaking	Below Expectations	Below Average
Writing	Meeting Expectations	Above Average

[Insert Student Name]

[Insert student photo]

Assets

[Insert asset 1]

[Insert asset 2]

Accommodations/Supports

[Insert accommodation/support 1]

[Insert accommodation/support 2]

Student Characteristics

Grade: [Insert grade]

Home Language(s):

[Insert language(s)]

Home Language Proficiency:

[Insert home language proficiency information]

Additional Support Status

☐ Individualized Education Plan (IEP)

☐ 504 Plan

☐ No IEP or 504

Language Instruction Education Program Type:

☐ Content-Based ELD Instruction

☐ Developmental Bilingual

☐ Dual Language

☐ Heritage Language Instruction

☐ Newcomer Program

☐ Transitional Bilingual

☐ Two Way Immersion

☐ Other

State Assessment Data

[Insert Year] Assessment Data

Domain	Proficiency Level
Composite	[Insert]
Listening	[Insert]
Reading	[Insert]
Speaking	[Insert]
Writing	[Insert]

Trend Data

Domain	[Year]	[Year]	[Year]
Composite	[Insert]	[Insert]	[Insert]
Listening	[Insert]	[Insert]	[Insert]
Reading	[Insert]	[Insert]	[Insert]
Speaking	[Insert]	[Insert]	[Insert]
Writing	[Insert]	[Insert]	[Insert]

Local Assessment Data

Test Name: [Insert assessment name]

Language Assessed: [Insert language]

Domain	Achievement	Progress
Literacy	[Insert]	[Insert]
Oral	[Insert]	[Insert]
Listening	[Insert]	[Insert]
Reading	[Insert]	[Insert]
Speaking	[Insert]	[Insert]
Writing	[Insert]	[Insert]

Appendix B – Test Results Summary

Using Test Results Summary

Test Results Summary can be found in the [Assessment Secure Reports](link) (MDE > Data Center > Secure Reports).To begin after logging in, choose the following dropdowns:

1. Students Included – select **All Tested**
2. Test – select **ACCESS for ELLs**
3. Subject – select composite or the domain of interest

You will need to run this report for each subject individually to gather data for all domains and composites and for multiple years to gather trend information.

If interested in looking at the data by some student groups, you can select them from the dropdown options or the category boxes. You can select grade clusters by holding down CTRL as you select all grades in the cluster from the grade option. If you are interested in looking at multiple student groups in the Category box, you can also hold down CTRL as you select more than one group.
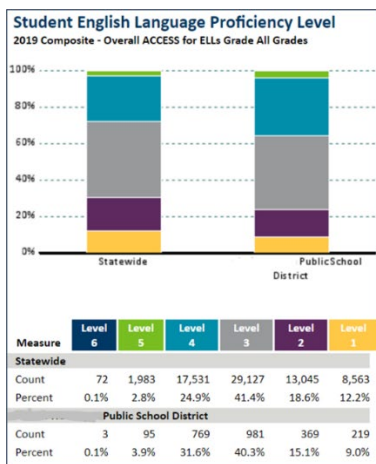

To gather achievement level data, use the proficiency level graph/table (for the composite graphs, only look at the overall composite data) or export the aggregated data to Excel (by selecting a download format for the Page Content - xls). The information will appear on the Achievement Composite - Overall tab.

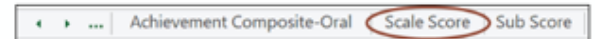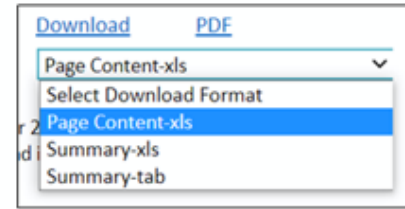To gather average scale score data, use the Scale Scores table or export the aggregated data to Excel (by selecting a download format for the Page Content - xls). The information will appear on the Scale Score tab.

Scale Scores

2022 Composite ACCESS for ELLs Grade All Grades

Organization	Grade	Mean Scale Score	Standard Deviation	Total Number Tested
Statewide	KG	210.69	59.04	7,808
Statewide	01	265.86	32.91	7,802
Statewide	02	295.33	31.75	7,747
Statewide	03	312.02	33.62	7,720
Statewide	04	344.27	33.46	7,290
Statewide	05	351.71	33.19	5,737
Statewide	06	334.68	29.51	4,340
Statewide	07	341.46	31.43	3,923
Statewide	08	351.04	34.57	4,261
Statewide	09	354.36	34.45	4,433
Statewide	10	365.42	31.65	3,606
Statewide	11	368.72	32.18	3,086
Statewide	12	367.73	31.30	2,442

Download   PDF

Page Content-xls   ⌄
Select Download Format
Page Content-xls
Summary-xls
Summary-tab

◄ ► ...   Achievement Composite-Oral   Scale Score   Sub Score

Appendix C – District and School Student Results (DSR/SSR) File

Using the District and School Student Results (DSR/SSR) File

The District and School Student Results (DSR & SSR) data can be found in the [Assessment Secure Reports](#) (MDE > Data Center > Secure Reports). After logging in, select **ACCESS for ELLs** in the Test dropdown and download the file. You will need to run this report for multiple years to gather trend information.

Preparing the File for Analysis

Occasionally, students who are not indicated as an English learner (EL) in the Minnesota Automated Reporting Student System (MARSS) take ACCESS. These students will appear in the analysis file with the EnglishLearnerFlag column indicating N. Before beginning any analyses, you should review all students who were not indicated as EL to determine if they should be included in your analysis of ELs.

Recode Some Variables

While the majority of demographic data is provided in categories that are already usable, others are better recoded for analyses. In general, test score data may need recoding, although the scale score data is best left as is.

Demographic Variables Ready for Analysis

Grade – KG = kindergarten; 01–12 correspond with grades 1–12

TestingSchoolNumber – School number assigned by MDE

Gender – F = Female; M = Male

Special Education Flag – N = Not receiving special education services; Y = Receiving special education services

FRP Eligible Flag – N = Not eligible for free or reduced-price meals; Y = Eligible for free or reduced-price meals

Migrant Flag – N = Student is not migratory; Y = Student is migratory

SLIFE Flag – N = Student does not have limited or interrupted formal education; Y = Student is identified as having limited or interrupted formal education

Homeless Flag – N = Student has not experienced homelessness this year; Y = Student has experienced homelessness this year

Recently Arrived English Learner Flag – N = Student is not a recently arrived English learner; Y = Student is a recently arrived English learner

Active Duty Parent Flag – N = Student does not have a parent on active duty in the military; Y = Student has a parent on active duty in the military

Federal Race/Ethnicity Code – A = Asian; B = Black or African American; H = Hispanic or Latino; I = American Indian or Alaska Native; M = Two or more races; P = Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander; W = White

State Race/Ethnicity Code – A = Asian; B = Black or African American; H = Hispanic or Latino; I = American Indian or Alaska Native; M = Two or more races; O = Other Indigenous Peoples; P = Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander; W = White

Demographic Variables That May Need Recoding for Analysis

If you choose to recode any variables, it is best to leave the original information alone and to create a new column or use a blank column so that you do not lose any information as it was provided. Also, be sure to name any variables that have been altered with a name that will help you remember what the data represents.

Primary Disability Code – Because there are 14 different disability codes and the indication of a 504 plan is also included in this variable, you should consider if combining groups of disabilities will lead to more interpretable or actionable information.

Language Code – Because there are over 400 language codes in use, it may be helpful to collapse language codes together. For example, there are three different codes for the Karen language and dialects that may be appropriate to combine. Alternatively, it may be beneficial to keep large language groups separate for analysis (in Minnesota, these are most typically language codes 020 – Hmong, 045 – Spanish, and 069 – Somali), while combining other less common languages together to consider how student experiences are different based on the prominence of the language group.

ADM97 – This variable represents the amount of average daily membership a student has generated in Minnesota public schools through the end of the school year of the assessment. The average daily membership is typically 1.0 for a student who is enrolled for a complete year. Because this variable is reported in decimals, it may be useful to recode the data to truncate in order to learn the number of full years the student has been enrolled in Minnesota public schools. Alternatively, you may want to group ADMs together (e.g., <1 year, 1–<3 years, 3–<5 years, >=5 years) in a way meaningful to your district or school's context. There are several ways this can be done using formulas in Excel, one of which is using the IF function.

ACCESS Test Score Variables Ready for Analysis

Score1 – The scale score for the domain or overall composite

Score1Characteristic – This variable is only populated on the composite row. N = Student is not proficient; Y = Student is proficient

Score3 – This variable is only populated on the composite row. It is the scale score for the comprehension composite.

Score4 – This variable is only populated on the composite row. It is the scale score for the oral composite.

Score5 – This variable is only populated on the composite row. It is the scale score for the literacy composite.

ACCESS Test Score Variables That May Need Recoding for Analysis

PriorYearAssessmentAndGrade – Provides the name of the English language proficiency assessment and grade level taken in the year immediately prior (for 2023 DSR/SSR, provides the 2022 information). If this row is blank, there was no 2022 English language proficiency assessment test record. Because the test name and grade are combined into one field, it may be beneficial to split the variable into one for the test name and one for the grade.

PriorYearScoreOrTestCode – If the student had a valid score in the year immediately prior, the data provides the student's domain or overall scale score. If the student did not receive a valid score, the student's test code is included. Because this field is mostly useful for calculating change in scale scores over time, you may want to remove the test codes from the field and ensure the field allows numeric calculations.

PriorYearAchievementLevel – The proficiency level for the year before; provides the decimal for the domain or overall composite. It may be helpful to group this variable into other categories.
   a. Into proficiency levels (PLs): 1.0–1.9 is PL1, 2.0–2.9 is PL2, 3.0–3.9 is PL3, 4.0–4.9 is PL4, 5.0–5.9 is PL5, and 6.0 is PL6.
   b. Into high proficiency or low: Any PL 5.0 or higher for listening, any PL 3.5 or higher for reading and writing, any PL 4.0 or higher for speaking.
   c. Into beginning, intermediate, or advanced: For domain level, 1.0–2.9 is beginning, 3.0–4.9 is intermediate, and 5.0 or higher is advanced. For the overall composite, 1.0–2.4 is beginning, 2.5–4.4 is intermediate, and 4.5 or higher is advanced.

TestCode – There are several test codes that do not result in any test results (any test code that is not a valid score [VS]). If you have questions related to patterns of students with non-valid scores, it may make sense to recode the non-valid scores into meaningful groups. Otherwise, simply recoding this variable into VS and non-VS may be sufficient for analysis.

AchievementLevel – The proficiency level, with decimal for the domain or overall composite. It may be helpful to group this variable into other categories.
   a. Into proficiency levels (PLs): 1.0–1.9 is PL1, 2.0–2.9 is PL2, 3.0–3.9 is PL 3, 4.0–4.9 is PL4, 5.0–5.9 is PL5 and 6.0 is PL6.
   b. Into high proficiency or low: Any PL 5.0 or higher for listening, any PL 3.5 or higher for reading and writing, any PL 4.0 or higher for speaking.
   c. Into beginning, intermediate or advanced: For domain-level, 1.0–2.9 is beginning, 3.0–4.9 is intermediate, and 5.0 or higher is advanced. For the overall composite, 1.0–2.4 is beginning, 2.5–4.4 is intermediate, 4.5 or higher is advanced.

Score6 – This variable is only populated on the composite row. It is the proficiency level for the comprehension composite. It may be helpful to recode this variable into proficiency levels (PLs): 1.0–1.9 is PL1, 2.0–2.9 is PL2, 3.0–3.9 is PL3, 4.0–4.9 is PL4, 5.0–5.9 is PL5, and 6.0 is PL6.

Score7 – This variable is only populated on the composite row. It is the proficiency level for the oral composite. It may be helpful to recode this variable into proficiency levels (PLs): 1.0–1.9 is PL1, 2.0–2.9 is PL2, 3.0–3.9 is PL3, 4.0–4.9 is PL4, 5.0–5.9 is PL5, and 6.0 is PL6.

Score8 – This variable is only populated on the composite row. It is the proficiency level for the literacy composite. It may be helpful to recode this variable into proficiency levels (PLs): 1.0–1.9 is PL1, 2.0–2.9 is PL2, 3.0–3.9 is PL3, 4.0–4.9 is PL4, 5.0–5.9 is PL5, and 6.0 is PL6.

Complete Analyses

1. Once you have reviewed the students who were not identified as English learners (ELs), remove students who were not ELs from analyses.
2. Because only students with valid scores result in a scale score or a proficiency level, make sure to only include valid scores (Test Code = VS).
3. Because analyses need to be conducted by domain or by composite separately, make sure you are using the subject variable to differentiate and not accidentally combining all together.
4. Complete analyses by grouping achievement levels, prior achievement levels, and scale score changes as needed to answer questions of interest.
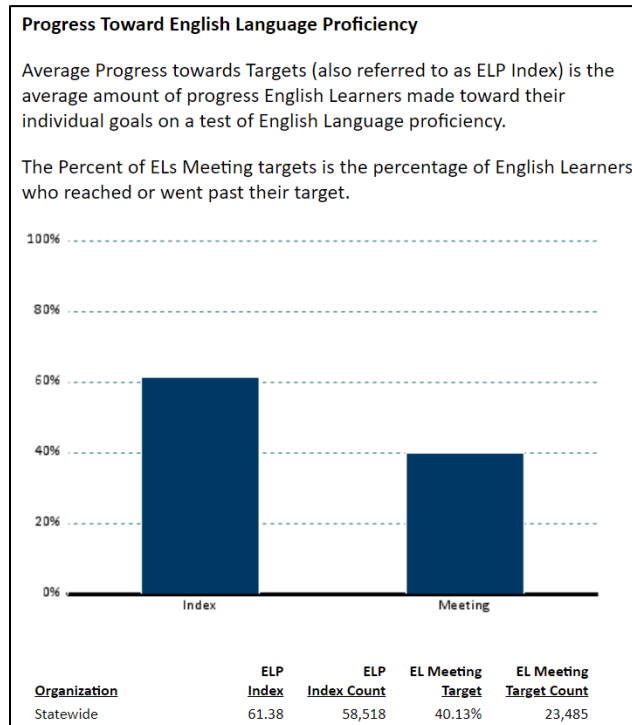
Appendix D – North Star Report

Using North Star Report

The North Star Report can be found in the [Accountability Secure Reports](#) (MDE > Data Center > Secure Reports). After logging in, select **No** in the Overall Average of Groups option in the dropdown and do not select a Race/Ethnicity or Category. You will need to run this report for multiple years (not using the three-year average option) to gather trend information.

If interested in looking at the data by student groups, you will need to use the Progress Toward English Language Proficiency Roster, and you may need to merge the information with other available data (such as the data from the DSR/SSR).

Both the average index and percent of students meeting their targets are provided in the Progress Toward English Language Proficiency graph.

Progress Toward English Language Proficiency

Average Progress towards Targets (also referred to as ELP Index) is the average amount of progress English Learners made toward their individual goals on a test of English Language proficiency.

The Percent of ELs Meeting targets is the percentage of English Learners who reached or went past their target.

Organization	ELP Index	ELP Index Count	EL Meeting Target	EL Meeting Target Count
Statewide	61.38	58,518	40.13%	23,485

Appendix E – Progress Toward English Language Proficiency Roster

Using Progress Toward English Language Proficiency Roster

The Progress Toward English Language Proficiency Roster can be found in the [Accountability Secure Reports](link) (MDE > Data Center > Secure Reports). After logging in, select the year(s) of interest. You will need to run this report for multiple years to gather trend information.

Preparing the File for Analysis

Often, students who are not included in the Progress Toward English Language Proficiency accountability calculation still have data included in this file. Depending on the purpose of your analysis, you may want to remove the students who are not part of the calculations from your analysis. There is a variable within the file, AccountabilityCriteriaMet, that can be filtered to include only students who are part of the accountability calculation. Students with a Y in this column are included, while students with an N are not included. Usually, the specific reason that the student is not included in the accountability calculations can be determined by looking at the SignificantGap, EnrolledDuringAccountabilityWindow, ADMCriteriaMet, and Dec15CriteriaMet columns. A student who is indicated as having a significant gap (SignificantGap=Y) or was not enrolled during the accountability window (EnrolledDuringAccountabilityWindow=N) or was not enrolled for at least half the academic year (ADMCriteriaMet=N) or was not enrolled on or before December 15th (Dec15CriteriaMet=N) is not included in the accountability calculations.

In this file, it is important to note that each student will appear at least twice, once with a district-level record (school number is 000) and for at least one school (school number is not 000). The accountability index and whether the student met their target will be the same regardless of whether school or district is selected, but which students get included may differ at the two levels if the student was enrolled in more than one school in the district during the school year. When analyzing, you will need to limit the records for the level of analysis of interest. For North Star, only school-level data is used.

Recode Some Variables

While the majority of data is provided in categories that are already usable, others are better recoded for analyses.

Variables Ready for Analysis

Grade – KG = kindergarten; 01–12 correspond with grades 1–12

TestName – Since all English learners are included in the accountability calculation, both ACCESS for ELLs (ACCESS) and Alternate ACCESS for ELLs (ALTACCESS) are included in this file. Because Alternate ACCESS has different calculations, you may want to perform analyses including all students and by each assessment separately.

ScaleScore – The student's current year overall composite scale score

ProficientFlag – An indication of whether the student was proficient in the year (Y) or not (N). A student who is proficient will meet their target and get full (100) index points.

PriorYearScaleScore – The student's previous scale score that is used for calculation of their change in scale scores and for determining whether the student met their target or not

SLIFEFlag – Indication of whether the student is currently identified as a student with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFEFlag=Y) or not (SLIFEFlag=N). Students who are identified as SLIFE are given an additional year in their timelines.

EnrolledPreviouslySLIFE – Indication of whether the student was previously identified as a student with limited or interrupted formal education (ErolledPreviouslySLIFEFlag=Y) or not (EnrolledPreviouslySLIFEFlag=N). Students who were previously identified as SLIFE are given an additional year in their timelines.

InitialProficiencyCategory – The proficiency category used to set the student's timeline

InitialGrade – The grade the student was in during the initial year and used for setting the student's timeline

TotalYearsInTimeline – The number of years in the student's accountability timeline to reach proficiency

YearInTimeline – Numeric representation of how many years the student is in their timeline for reaching proficiency. In their first year as an English learner, the year will be represented as a 1.

MetTarget – Indication of whether the student met their proficiency level target for the year (MetTarget=Y) or not (MetTarget=N)

Variables That May Need Recoding for Analysis

ReportCode – There are several test codes that do not result in any test results (any test code that is not a valid score [VS]). Students who do not receive a valid composite score will receive 0 index points and will not be considered as meeting their targets. Recoding this variable into VS and non-VS will allow you to complete analyses that show whether the students who are not completing the test are having an impact on the summaries for your school or district. There are several ways this can be done using formulas in Excel, one of which is using the IF function.

ProficiencyLevel – The proficiency level for the current year; provides the decimal for the domain or overall composite. It may be helpful to group this variable into other categories.
   a. Into proficiency levels (PLs): 1.0–1.9 is PL1, 2.0–2.9 is PL2, 3.0–3.9 is PL3, 4.0–4.9 is PL4, 5.0–5.9 is PL5, and 6.0 is PL6.
   b. Into beginning, intermediate, or advanced: For the overall composite, 1.0–2.4 is beginning, 2.5–4.4 is intermediate, and 4.5 or higher is advanced.

YearOfPriorTest – The year of the prior test being used to determine whether the student met their target. For most students, this will be one year prior. However, for some students, it may be their initial year if they did not receive a valid score in the year prior. To explore differences in how students perform with a gap in testing, it may be helpful to recode students to indicate whether the previous year was one year prior or not for the determination of targets. There are several ways this can be done using formulas in Excel, one of which is using the IF function.

PriorYearAchievementLevel – The proficiency level for the year before; provides the decimal for the overall composite. It may be helpful to group this variable into other categories.
   a. Into proficiency levels (PLs): 1.0–1.9 is PL1, 2.0–2.9 is PL2, 3.0–3.9 is PL3, 4.0–4.9 is PL4, 5.0–5.9 is PL5, and 6.0 is PL6.
   b. Into beginning, intermediate, or advanced: For the overall composite, 1.0–2.4 is beginning, 2.5–4.4 is intermediate, and 4.5 or higher is advanced.

AccountabilityIndex – The percentage of scale score point change expected versus what was observed (ChangeInScaleScore/TargetChangeInScaleScore). Students with a negative change receive 0, and students whose observed change was higher than their target receive 100. For some analyses, it may be helpful to recode this variable into categories. Generally, it may be helpful to explore how many students were close to meeting their target, even if they did not actually reach their target. How "close" is close is a local decision, but one option would be to recode to indicate whether students were well below their target (AccountabilityIndex <50), below target (AccountabilityIndex of 50 to <80), close to meeting target (AccountabilityIndex of 80 to <100), and meeting target (AccountabilityIndex of 100).

Variables That May Need to Be Added for Analysis

There are relatively few student demographics included in this file. Other demographics that you may want to include from other sources are: gender, special education status, free or reduced-price meal status, migrant status, homeless status, recently arrived English learner status, active duty parent status, race/ethnicity, primary disability code, primary home language, and length of enrollment.

Complete Analyses

1. Ensure that only students who you are interested in including in your analysis are selected.

   a. This means first choosing whether you want to analyze at the school or district level.
   b. This may also mean choosing only students who were included in the accountability calculation, only students who had a valid test score, only students taking ACCESS, or some combination of the variable considerations discussed above.

2. Complete analyses by exploring whether students met their target, how close they were to meeting their target, and if these results differed by grade or prior achievement level and other student characteristics.

Appendix F – Proficiency Levels and Average Daily Membership

Proficiency Levels by Domain and Average Daily Membership (ADM)

Typical performance by domain is difficult to determine for students newer to Minnesota public schools because there is more variability in their initial levels of proficiency. Similarly, typical performance by domain is also difficult to determine for students who have been in Minnesota public schools for longer periods of time and are still identified as an English learner. However, students who have been in Minnesota between three and six years are generally more consistent in how they perform. In the table provided below, average proficiency levels for students based on their ADM are provided for 2022 data. When considering all students who have an ADM of 3.0 or higher, expectations of at least 5.0 on listening, 3.0 on speaking, and 3.5 on reading and writing are generally reasonable. If students have not reached these levels, exploration at the individual level to determine what, if any, additional supports the student needs in the language domain should be completed.

Total ADM	Listening Average Proficiency Level	Reading Average Proficiency Level	Speaking Average Proficiency Level	Writing Average Proficiency Level
3.0 – 3.9	4.7	3.6	3.1	3.2
4.0 – 4.9	5.4	3.8	3.4	3.5
5.0 – 5.9	5.4	3.8	3.3	3.5

Appendix G – Long Term English Learners

Long Term English Learners (LTELs)

There is no common definition of a long term English learner (LTEL) used nationally or in Minnesota. However, it is common to hear the group described as students who have been receiving English learner services for five or more years, although some definitions will extend that time to six or seven years. To further complicate the matter, it is often very difficult for districts to determine which students would meet the criteria to be a long term English learner, even after that criteria has been established.

Identification of LTELs

The District and School Student Results file (DSR/SSR) provides a variable that may be useful in identifying long term English learners: ADM97. The variable represents the amount of average daily membership a student has generated in Minnesota public schools through the end of the school year of the assessment. The average daily membership is typically 1.0 for a student who is enrolled for a complete year. Therefore, students with ADM97 of 5.0 or higher are students who have been enrolled for five or more years. However, having an ADM97 of 5.0 or higher does not indicate whether that includes early childhood time in Minnesota, whether the 5.0 is five whole and/or consecutive years or several partial years non-consecutively, and whether the student was identified and receiving English learner services for all five years. Therefore, this variable should not be used for identification of long term English learners on its own, but it will likely provide a useful starting point for work in identifying students who may be long term English learners.

Questions to Consider

As you are considering English learners in your school or district to determine if they are LTELs, some questions to ask before including a student in the LTEL group are:

- Which definition of LTEL do you think would be best to consider (five, six, or seven years of EL services or something else)?
- Is the student in grade 5 or higher (typically, students in lower grades will not have had English learner services for five or more years)?
- For students with ADM97 less than 5.0 (or 6.0 or 7.0 depending on your decision for definition), were they served in another state that should be included in your totals for the student but cannot be included in the Minnesota total?
- For students with ADM97 at or above 5.0 (or 6.0 or 7.0 depending on your decision for definition), have they been identified as English learners for that long? Were they also receiving EL services?
- For students with ADM97 at or above 5.0 (or 6.0 or 7.0 depending on your decision for definition), have they consistently been attending school over the last several years? Have they been enrolled in your school or district consistently?

Analysis of LTEL Group

While you may not be able to answer every question for the group of potential LTELs, once you have identified the group of students who, to the best of your knowledge, meet the criteria you have determined for being an LTEL, it is important to consider this as a distinct student group.

Questions to Consider

- At which proficiency levels are your LTELs performing for the overall composite and in each domain?
- What type of change over time are you seeing in student proficiency levels? Are the students continuing to grow, but at a slower rate than their peers who have been reclassified? Or are they plateauing or going backwards in proficiency levels?
- Does the distribution of proficiency levels look different than those of your students in the same grades and schools who are not LTELs?
- Which courses are students who are identified as LTELs enrolled in? Are they in courses that align with their proficiency levels (e.g., students who are at an intermediate level of proficiency are not in newcomer classes)?
- What are family engagement strategies you have used that reached the families of the students identified as LTEL? If there are none, what can you do to authentically engage with those families?