

From: Division of English Language Learning, Illinois State Board of Education

Date: June 27, 2013

Re: New “proficiency” definition for identifying English Learners, notification pursuant to 23 Illinois Administrative Code 228.25(b)(2)

In order to better align measurements of academic achievement with English language acquisition, the Illinois State Board of Education has adopted a modified definition of English language proficiency for students in Illinois schools. Effective January 1, 2014, a student must obtain an overall **composite proficiency level of 5.0 as well as a reading proficiency level of 4.2 and a writing proficiency level of 4.2** on the ACCESS for ELLs to be considered English language proficient. Any student that does not achieve the minimum composite, reading, and writing criteria is considered an English learner (EL) student and remains eligible for TBE/TPI services. Students who meet or exceed these proficiency levels may be transitioned from the TBE/TPI program as allowed under Part 228 of the Illinois Administrative Code.

Transitioning decisions for kindergarten students must only be made using the **accountability scores** provided on the ACCESS for ELL[®] English Language Proficiency Test Kindergarten Teacher Report. This would be the first set of domain scores provided on the Kindergarten Teacher Report.

For the initial identification of ELs utilizing the WIDA W-APT or MODEL screeners, the composite literacy level¹ of 4.2 should be used in lieu of the individual reading and writing, in accordance with the following:

- Children entering the first semester of kindergarten must score at least a 5.0 composite oral proficiency level on the WIDA MODEL to be considered English language proficient. A student who scores below this proficiency level is considered an English learner (EL) and is eligible for TBE/TPI services.
- Children entering the second semester of kindergarten or the first semester of 1st grade must score an overall **composite proficiency level of 5.0 as well as a literacy composite level of 4.2** on the WIDA MODEL to be considered English language proficient. A student who scores below either of these minimum proficiency levels is considered EL and is eligible for TBE/TPI services.
- Children entering the second semester of 1st grade through 12th grade must achieve an overall **composite proficiency level of 5.0 as well as a literacy composite level of 4.2** on the W-APT to be considered English language proficient. A student who scores below either of these minimum proficiency levels is considered EL and is eligible for TBE/TPI services.

¹ Scores obtained from W-APT or K MODEL are precise enough to provide decimal proficiency level estimates only for composite proficiency levels and not for each individual domain. These tests are shorter than ACCESS and they are reliable for the level of discrimination indicated.

The modified English proficiency definition pertains to all new students who are screened for English proficiency with the WIDA MODEL or the W-APT, and any student participating in the annual ACCESS for ELLs test administration *after* January 1, 2014. Therefore, students must meet or exceed the modified proficiency levels on their 2014 ACCESS for ELLs test in order to be transitioned from a TBE/TPI program at the end of the 2013-2014 school year.

Please note: The modified proficiency levels are not to be applied retroactively and **DO NOT** apply to students who were transitioned from a TBE/TPI program based on the previous state approved proficiency levels prior to January 1, 2014. Previously transitioned students do not need to be re-tested. Similarly, eligibility/program placement decisions made prior to January 1, 2014 based on the previous state-approved proficiency levels are not to be reversed during this 2013-2014 transition school year.

If you have any questions about these new criteria, please contact the Division of English Language Learning at (312) 814-3850.