



**STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA**  
**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Superintendents  
ESEA Title III MLP Coordinators  
District Test Coordinator – ELL  
District Test Coordinator – Primary  
District Test Coordinator – Alt  
Report Card/Accountability Coordinators  
PowerSchool IT Contacts  
Principals

**FROM:** Dr. Sarah Longshore  
Director, Office of Federal and State Accountability

**DATE:** June 27, 2023

**RE:** Multilingual Learner English Proficiency or Reclassification Criterion Proposal

The South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) is proposing an amendment to the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Consolidated State Plan to update the English proficiency or reclassification criteria, often referred to as the ‘exit’ criteria for multilingual learners (MLs). Currently, these proficiency criteria are a composite score of 4.4+ and a 4.0+ on all four domains (i.e., Listening, Reading, Writing, and Speaking) on the annual English language proficiency (ELP) assessment, WIDA ACCESS. As outlined below, the proposed changes are being submitted to the U.S. Department of Education (USED) for approval. The current proficiency criteria remain in effect while federal approval of this request is pending.

After conducting many stakeholder workgroups, reviewing internal and external feedback, and analyzing essential data points regarding MLs, the SCDE has determined that a change in the proficiency criteria will positively impact MLs. An overall score will showcase students’ progress in English language acquisition and more accurately represent grade level proficiency. Additionally, MLs who meet the proficiency criteria will continue to receive monitoring services for four additional years to ensure that premature exit from the MLP does not occur and that students receive needed language support and accommodations.

If approved, the proposed ELP proficiency criteria will be effective with the 2023-24 (2024) administration of the yearly ELP assessment and moving forward, but not retroactive to previous ELP assessment administrations before 2024. The new proficiency criteria, if approved, will remove the individual domain requirements. Students will, therefore, meet the proficiency criterion by scoring a composite score of 4.4+ on the ELP assessments, both the annual summative ELP assessment and the ELP screeners.

If the proposed ELP proficiency criteria are approved by USED, the ML identification score criterion will be updated to reflect these changes. These changes will only apply to students who take the WIDA Screener (second semester of kindergarten through grade 12) for the first time for initial identification on or after the official start date. The SCDE will announce the official start date when applicable. Any students previously identified for the program will continue to take WIDA ACCESS until they have met the new proficiency criterion.

The Title III Coordinator meetings in July will reiterate this information, provide any applicable updates, and allow time for discussion and support.

It is imperative that all current proficiency criteria and Title III/MLP procedures remain in place until the SCDE announces official approval. Not providing mandatory ML services for these students under the current federal and state guidelines would violate the Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974.

For more information or questions, please contact Susan Murphy in the Office of Federal and State Accountability at [SMurphy@ed.sc.gov](mailto:SMurphy@ed.sc.gov) or 803-734-1601.