



South Carolina Title III Multilingual Learner and Immigrant Children and Youth Program

Enrollment and Age-Appropriate Placement Scenarios

Scenario 1 – We received a new student in the fourth grade in Arizona (AZ) last year. The age-appropriate placement for this year would be grade 7. The previous school placed the student in the fourth grade after administering a baseline test in mathematics. The student struggled throughout the year and was on the retention list for the upcoming year. Before coming to AZ, the student was in Mexico but had no school records. What should we do now that the student is in South Carolina?

The student must be placed age-appropriately, so the student should be enrolled in the seventh grade. Since the student is coming from a non-WIDA state, the student will need to be screened using the WIDA Screener or WIDA Model for identification and placement.

Scenario 2 – A third grade student was enrolled in a district from August 2016 to December 2018 before returning to Guatemala. The student did not attend school for the remainder of the 2017–18 school year, nor did the student attend school during the 2018–19 school year. The student returned to my district for the 2019–20 school year. What grade should I place the student?

Based on the provided information, the student should be age-appropriately placed in the sixth grade despite the student's interrupted education. Since this student could be considered a student with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE), the student may be placed one grade below age-appropriate placement after the Multilingual Learner Program Team (MLPT) has agreed on a determination. The MLPT team should include the MLP teacher, parent/guardian, administrator, content teacher(s), etc., who are all essential stakeholders in determining the student's best interest. After the team has discussed all options, the parent/guardian ultimately makes the final decision. These conversations should be documented and kept in the student's file.

Scenario 3 – High schools in a district encourage students to enroll in an Adult Education program rather than enroll in high school.

Although Adult Education is a viable option for some students age 17 and over, students must have the opportunity to enroll in high school if they choose. The Title III program office strongly suggests the LEA work closely with the Adult Education program to determine a solution to these concerns and ensure that students and families know their rights and options when enrolling in South Carolina public schools. The Title III program offices suggest considering the following guidelines and reminders when determining proper enrollment procedures:



South Carolina Title III Multilingual Learner and Immigrant Children and Youth Program

- Contact and collaborate with the district's Adult Education Director to ensure agreement. Furthermore, communicate all procedures with the secondary schools to provide the same equitable enrollment processes that occur locally if a family happens to enroll at a local school or a Welcome Center;
- Present all enrollment information and options to MLs and their families in a language they understand;
- Students aged 3–21 enrolling in South Carolina public schools must be allowed to do so at all grade levels. Adult Education is a viable option for some students age 17 and over, but students must fully understand that they have the right to enroll in public high school if they choose to do so. LEAs must not discourage MLs from enrolling in a South Carolina public high school. Please reference the memorandum that was released from the SCDE on March 2, 2021, for further ML enrollment information;
- The SCDE Title III program and Adult Education offices strongly recommend that the LEA create an 'enrollment option information sheet' or something similar to support students and families and ensure they understand their options thoroughly;
- The SCDE Title III program and Adult Education offices strongly recommend the LEA monitor the enrollment data to ensure an unusual increase of students enrolling in Adult Education does not occur unless appropriate and accurate; and
- The SCDE Title III program and Adult Education offices strongly recommend using the new procedures to inform parents/guardians of their own opportunities with Adult Education if that is of interest to them.

Scenario 4 – An 18-year-old student transfers to a South Carolina high school from Guatemala without transcripts. What is the appropriate placement for this child?

The district would be responsible for using their birth chart/age-appropriate placement guidance to determine the correct grade for this student (most likely grade 12). The student would be a grade level of 12, however, the 'Ninth-Grade Code' would be the current year's 'Ninth-Grade Code' as this is the student's first time in high school (9th grade). Although the student is in the 12th grade, they will need to take the necessary courses for graduation, which include courses in the 9th grade. Students should also have opportunities to interact with same-age peers throughout the school day (e.g., electives, lunch). The MLPT should convene to determine the student's schedule and courses to graduate within four years or through their 22nd birthday. However, if a student were to turn 22 during the school year, they must be allowed to complete the school year.

Given the complexity of particular enrollment and placement circumstances, it is challenging to outline every situation and outcome. For unique or specific ML enrollment and placement scenarios, please contact your state cohort contact.