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March 16, 2023

MEMORANDUM

TO: Superintendents, Charter School Administrators, District Test Coordinators,
Directors of English Learner, Title III, and Bilingual Multicultural Education Programs

FROM: Mayra Valtierrez, Director of Language and Culture

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MV

RE: State Policy for English Learner Identification and Proficiency Criteria

The purpose of this memorandum is to communicate state policy for four important criteria related to the identification and English language proficiency (ELP) assessment of English Learner (EL) students:

- 1) **WIDA Screener for Kindergarten**
- 2) **WIDA Screener Online**
- 3) **ACCESS for ELLs**
- 4) **Alternate ACCESS for ELLs**

Please note that this memorandum serves as a follow-up to previously communicated information regarding *Requirements and Guidance for Identification of English Learners (ELs) Using the New Mexico Language Usage Survey (LUS) dated October 31, 2016*, and the Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Southwest Report: *Effects of Reclassifying English Learner Students on Student Achievement in New Mexico*, and replaces the *State Policy EL Identification, ELP Placement, and Exit Criteria Memorandum dated April 24, 2017*.

WIDA Screener for Kindergarten

Beginning with the 2021-2022 school year, New Mexico has implemented the WIDA Screener for Kindergarten as the ELP screener for students in kindergarten as part of the state's EL identification

process. Starting in school year (SY) 2023-2024, a WIDA Screener for Kindergarten oral language composite score (1st semester) or overall composite score (2nd semester) of 4.0 or lower identifies a student as an EL student, while an oral language composite score (1st semester) or overall composite score (2nd semester) of 4.5 or higher indicates a student is not an EL student and is thus, initial fluent English proficient (IFEP).

WIDA Screener Online

New Mexico implements the WIDA Screener Online as the ELP screener for grades 1-12 as part of the EL identification process. For EL students with disabilities or newcomers who require a paper-based assessment per their IEP or 504 Plan, a WIDA Screener paper version is available. Starting in SY 2023-2024 a WIDA Screener overall composite score of 4.0 or lower identifies a student as an EL student, while an overall composite score of 4.5 or higher indicates a student is not an EL student and is thus IFEP.

ACCESS for ELLs

Starting with the results of the SY 2022-2023 ACCESS for ELLs administration, New Mexico will move to a proficiency score for ACCESS for ELLs at the overall composite score of 4.7 or higher, which also serves as the proficiency criteria from EL status. At this ELP level, students are considered reclassified fluent English proficient (RFEP).

The NMPED collaborated with the REL Southwest who analyzed student-level data for SYs 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 for ACCESS for ELLs, English language arts, and mathematics assessments. On average, students in the study sample that scored 4.7 or higher performed above the statewide grade-level average in English language arts and mathematics.

Alternate ACCESS for ELLs

All students identified as EL must participate annually in an ELP assessment, regardless of disability category. The Alternate ACCESS for ELLs is an ELP assessment for students in grades 1-12 who are classified as EL students and have significant cognitive disabilities that prevent their meaningful participation in the ACCESS for ELLs assessment. These are students who take the Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM). New Mexico will maintain the proficiency score for Alternate ACCESS for ELLs at the overall composite score of P1 or higher.

Questions

If you have questions regarding EL identification, proficiency criteria, and EL programs, please contact the Language and Culture Division.

MV/kl

Enc. (1): State Policy for English Learner Identification and Proficiency Criteria One-Pager

cc: Dr. Arsenio Romero, Secretary of Education
Dr. Alexis Álvarez, Deputy Director, Bureau of Research, Evaluation, and Accountability
Gabriel Baca, Director - Student, School & Family Support Bureau
Deborah Dominguez-Clark, Special Education Division Director
Rebecca Reyes, Interim Assistant Secretary, Indian Education Division
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