

**To: Members of the State Board of  
Education & Early Development**

**April 21, 2021**

**From: Michael Johnson, Commissioner**

**Agenda Item: 3**

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◆ **ISSUE**

The board is being asked to open a period of public comment on regulation changes regarding the assessment of English learners, including revised exit criteria for English learners and updated English language proficiency standards.

◆ **BACKGROUND**

- Exit criteria for English learners were last updated in 2017. Under the current exit criteria, Alaska is exiting approximately 2% of its English learners annually. Experts in the field note that rates should be closer to 10-15%.
- Alaska's exit criteria currently require a minimum of 4.5 overall composite proficiency level score for all domains (reading, writing, listening, and speaking), a minimum score of 4.0 for each domain, and a minimum score of 3.8 in writing. Students with IEPs or 504 plans that preclude their assessment in one or more domains have been unable to exit English learner services.
- Based on research, careful analyses of statewide data, and stakeholder feedback, the department is proposing new exit criteria. The new criteria include alternate scoring for students with disabilities.
- The department worked closely with the Council of Chief State School Officers, the Center for Assessment, our State Technical Advisory Committee, and the Colorado Department of Education to analyze the current exit criteria and make the recommendation for the new criteria of a 4.5 overall composite proficiency level and no additional domain requirements. The Technical Advisory Committee also recommended a method for calculating an alternate score for students with disabilities that includes redistributed weighting of the remaining tested domains.
- Stakeholders across the state were engaged for feedback, starting with the statewide English learner stakeholder group.
- Stakeholders were unanimously in support of the revised exit criteria and alternate scoring.
- Changes to the State Plan to reflect the proposed criteria were submitted to the US Department of Education in March 2020. The USED approved the revisions in August 2020.
- The current English learner proficiency standards are the *WIDA English Language Proficiency Standards, 2007 Edition, Prekindergarten through Grade 12*. The WIDA consortium has updated these standards in the revised 2020 edition.

- The updated standards, *WIDA English Language Development (ELD) Standards Framework, 2020 Edition: Kindergarten – Grade 12*, are available at <https://wida.wisc.edu/sites/default/files/resource/WIDA-ELD-Standards-Framework-2020.pdf>.
- Highlights of the 2020 edition of the English Language Development Standards include:
  - Four Big Ideas anchor the standards and are interwoven throughout the document-
    - Equity of opportunity and access
    - Integration of content and language
    - Collaboration among stakeholders
    - Functional approach to language development
  - A robust standards framework supports equity and provides a coherent approach to language development
  - Grade-level cluster materials represent the WIDA ELD Standards Framework in action
  - A sample collaborative planning process for content-language integration offers a jump-off point for curricular conversations
  - Six grade-level clusters (K, 1, 2-3, 4-5, 6-8, 9-12) and six proficiency levels correspond with those of ACCESS for ELLs Online
- What has not changed in the 2020 edition includes:
  - The five original standards statements remain the same, but are enhanced and clarified by new resources.
  - The [Can Do Philosophy](#) emphasizes the assets and potential of English learners.
  - Six levels of English Language Proficiency.
  - Six grade-level clusters (K, 1, 2-3, 4-5, 6-8, 9-12)
- Changes from the previous edition (2007):
  - Updated Key Language Uses previously included **Recount**, **Explain**, **Argue**, and **Discuss** have been expanded. **Recount** has been divided into **Inform** and **Narrate**. **Discuss** has been embedded throughout all Key Language Uses and **Explain** and **Argue** remain unchanged.
  - Language expectations identify what students *do* with language to meet academic content standards.
  - Language Functions and Features describe some specific ways to meet Language Expectations.
  - Annotated Language Samples illustrate Language Expectations and Language Functions and Features in the context of a grade-level test.
  - Proficiency Level Descriptors describe a continuum of language development for multilingual learners.

- A shift from using the term ‘English learner’ to ‘multilingual learner.’ WIDA has shifted to the term ‘multilingual learner’ in the standards. However, DEED will continue to stay consistent with federal language of ‘English learner’ when referring to the programs.
- The four language domains (Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing) are expanded into two broader modes of communication: Interpretive (listening, reading, *and viewing*) and Expressive (speaking, writing, *and representing*).
- Changes in this new version of the English language proficiency standards do not affect the alignment to the current English language proficiency assessment.
- The proposed regulations include other updates to the assessment of English learners based on federal requirements.
- The proposed regulations adopt by reference the department’s *Alternate Scoring Process Guide*, 2021 edition. The guide explains the alternate scoring process for English learners whose disability precludes assessment in one or more domains of the English language proficiency assessment.
- The proposed regulations and the Alternate Scoring Process Guide are located behind the work session cover memo for this item.
- Resources:
  - WIDA ELD Standards, 2020 Edition Kindergarten – Grade 12 informational flyer:  
<https://wida.wisc.edu/sites/default/files/Website/Teach/ELDstandards/WIDA-ELD-standards-framework-big-ideas-flyer.pdf>
  - WIDA ELD Standards Webpage:  
<https://wida.wisc.edu/teach/standards/eld>
- Deborah Riddle, Division Operations Manager, will be present to brief the board.

◆ **OPTIONS**

Open a period of public comment on the proposed regulations.

Amend the proposed regulations and open a period of public comment.

Seek more information.

◆ **ADMINISTRATION’S RECOMMENDATION**

Open a public comment period of thirty (30) days on the proposed regulations.

◆ **SUGGESTED MOTION**

I move the State Board of Education and Early Development open a period of public comment on the proposed amendment of 4 AAC 04.155 English language proficiency standards, 4 AAC 06.820 Participation, and 4 AAC 34.055 Plan of service.