



## Memorandum

**TO:** WIDA Local Education Agency Leaders and Staff  
**FROM:** WIDA Assessment and Client Relations  
**DATE:** June 28, 2017  
**SUBJECT:** ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 Scores

As you may be aware, student scores on ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 have changed in 2017 to incorporate more rigor. This memo offers a summary of the impact of the score changes along with a list of resources that explain the situation. It may help guide your response as you communicate the changes and make decisions about English language learners' education based on test results and other information.

### Summary and impact of the changes

To meet the language demands of college and career ready state standards, WIDA raised the bar for language proficiency in 2016–17. Students needed to demonstrate higher language skills to achieve the same scores on ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 this year. As a result, some students' scores decreased in 2017; this was particularly notable in the Speaking domain. In some places, fewer students may exit program support this year than in past years.

In addition, Consortium member states voted to make one more change in 2016-17: a small percentage of students (about 1%) did not receive Speaking or Overall scores if their level of engagement with the test did not meet new criteria for attemptedness. This criteria is being revisited for 2017-18.

For more information about these changes, please see the following webpages and documents:

- 2017 Score Changes based on Standard Setting: [www.wida.us/proficiency](http://www.wida.us/proficiency)
- [ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 Speaking Test Scores in 2016-17](#)
- [Attemptedness Criteria FAQ](#)

Some suggested actions for you to consider:

- Review all resources at [www.wida.us/proficiency](http://www.wida.us/proficiency) to consider how they could assist you in communicating about the changes now and throughout 2017-18. If you're in a leadership role serving ELLs, you might start with the [Local Education Agency Outreach Plan & Checklist](#).



- Make sure your colleagues are aware of the score changes and how they impact their work.
- Work with your team to formulate plans for communicating about test scores and student progress to parents/family members and students themselves.
- Stay focused on delivering high quality language development programming that acknowledges student strengths and areas of focus, informed by test results and validated by daily observations about students.
- Analyze data in accordance with WIDA’s and your SEA’s guidance for use of 2017 ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 scores. As a result of the 2017 score changes and other issues described above, comparing student ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 scores from 2016 to 2017 may be challenging and conclusions drawn about students’ growth may be misleading. In short, WIDA advises you to consider 2017 a new baseline for growth measurement on ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 and suggests that you NOT make high-stakes decisions about students or teachers using growth measures in 2017. For more information on data analysis and accountability, please contact your state education agency.
- Evaluate whether you will need to consider any adjustments to your program model and/or resourcing as a result of the score changes.
- Prepare students and Test Administrators for next year’s ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 testing. You might decide to share the “Getting Students Ready for Testing” flyers at [www.wida.us/accessprep](http://www.wida.us/accessprep) with teachers who work with English language learners, or consider meeting with your team of Test Administrators to discuss proctoring strategies for maximizing students’ level of engagement and ability to do their best.
- Save the date: WIDA will be offering two webinars entitled “Using 2017 ACCESS for ELLs Results in the New School Year” on the following dates and times:
  - [Sept. 7, 11am – 12pm CT](#)
  - [Sept. 20, 2 – 3pm CT](#)

Thank you for your commitment to serving English language learners. WIDA acknowledges that shifts as large as what we have just experienced in ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 scores can be jarring to established systems and practices, so we are doing our best to support educators through the changes. We would appreciate any feedback and are here to answer your questions; please email [help@wida.us](mailto:help@wida.us) or call us toll free: 1-866-276-7735.