



Gifted Identification

ACCESS for ELLs

ACCESS for ELLs is a suite of English language proficiency assessments for students who have been identified as English language learners (ELLs). The assessments are grounded in the WIDA English Language Development (ELD) Standards and given annually to all NEP/LEP K-12 English learners in Colorado. The scores from ACCESS can be a powerful tool to include within the body of evidence for gifted identification of English learners.

English language proficiency is a measure of the language students use in their interactions with peers and teachers in both instructional and social settings. Language and cognition develop over multiple years, and the path of each individual varies depending on many factors, including age, educational experiences, and personality.

The ACCESS Overall composite score is the most comprehensive indicator of performance in language acquisition and may be used as qualifying evidence for gifted identification. The ACCESS Literacy composite score (reading and writing) may also serve as qualifying evidence. While individual domain scores cannot be used for qualification, they are useful as a component of the body of evidence to support programming for a student's strength area(s).

ACCESS scores may be used as qualifying evidence on a performance assessment through any one of the following:

- 1) **Accelerated Acquisition Rate:** If a student increases his or her Overall or Literacy composite score by twice the expected annual progress in one year; or
- 2) **Accelerated EL Trajectory:** If a student exits the EL program at an accelerated pace (e.g., 3 years vs. 6 years from newcomer to monitor status); or
- 3) **Growth Percentiles:** If a student demonstrates growth at the 95th percentile or above in any year, and that growth is part of a trend of sustained excellence.

Frequently Asked Questions

What pathways can be used for identification?

Per ECEA Rules, English Learners may be identified in the area of General Intellectual Ability [12.01(16)(a)(i) and 12.01(16)(a)(ii)] or Specific Academic Aptitude-World Language [12.01(16)(b)(i) and 12.01(16)(b)(ii)], by demonstrating an accelerated language acquisition rate as measured by:

- a) showing twice the expected annual progress in one year, as indicated by the ACCESS Overall and/or Literacy (reading and writing) composite score(s); or
- b) exiting the EL program in approximately half the time as measured by CDE's standard trajectory (e.g., 3

years vs 6 years from newcomer to monitor status); or

c) showing annual growth at the 95th percentile or above in any year, and that growth is part of a trend of sustained excellence.

What is the recommended process for using ACCESS Growth Percentiles?

When using ACCESS Growth Percentiles, the recommendation is to consider two or more consecutive years of growth percentile data to capture language development trends. Growth at the 85th percentile or above is considered significant and should be included in the body of evidence. Then, if a student shows annual growth at the 95th percentile or above in any year, and that growth is part of a trend of sustained excellence, this would be considered qualifying data for gifted identification in General Intellectual Ability or Specific Academic Aptitude-World Language.

Why are the skills of listening and speaking excluded as qualifying data?

For a majority of English learners, listening is typically the first skill to develop rapidly in the language acquisition process. As a result, many students tend to score at a high level in the listening domain. In the speaking domain, the pace of development may vary considerably depending on the quality of instruction and opportunities for practice. For these reasons, the listening and/or speaking scores are not reliable measures for the purpose of gifted identification.

Can individual domains be used to qualify a student?

No. While individual domain scores do not currently constitute a qualifying piece of evidence, they may be useful as a component of the body of evidence to support programming for a student's strength area(s).

How can students learning languages other than English also qualify for gifted identification?

Accelerated Acquisition Rate: Per ECEA Rules 12.01(16)(a)(i) and 12.01(16)(a)(ii), students learning any language may be identified in the area of General Intellectual Ability by demonstrating an exceptional capability and/or potential as indicated by twice the expected annual progress in one year through either an overall composite score (all four domains) or a literacy composite score (reading and writing).

Exceptional Achievement: Per ECEA Rules 12.01(16)(b)(i) and 12.01(16)(b)(ii), students learning any language may be identified in the area of Specific Academic Aptitude-World Language by demonstrating an exceptional capability or potential as indicated by either of the following:

- a) an increase of twice the expected annual progress in one year through an overall composite score (all four domains) or a literacy composite score (reading and writing); or
- b) scoring at or above the 95th percentile or in the advanced range on a criterion or norm referenced language assessment (see the CDE Matrix of Commonly Used Measures).

How does this guidance align with the Seal of Biliteracy?

For a World Language identification, it is recommended that those districts who have adopted the Seal of Biliteracy consider using that data to further develop a qualifying body of evidence.

Where can I find more information regarding gifted identification law in Colorado?

The Exceptional Children's Educational Act (ECEA) Rules can be found on the Colorado Department of Education, Office of Gifted Education website under the Laws and Regulations tab.

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/gt/lawsregs>