



State of Rhode Island
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Shepard Building
255 Westminister Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02903-3400

Angélica Infante-Green
Commissioner

Memo

To: Local Education Agency (LEA) Leaders, School Leaders, and Multilingual Learner (MLL) Directors & Coordinators

From: J David Sienko, Director, OSCAS (Office of Student, Community, and Academic Supports)

Date: August 2, 2024

Re: Revision to the Rhode Island's Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) State Plan

RIDE has revised the state's [Every Student Succeeds Act \(ESSA\) State Plan](#) and posted a draft amendment for public comment through **September 2, 2024, at 5:00pm** via email to ESSA@ride.ri.gov.

The State Plan amendment includes updates to our accountability system for the upcoming 2024 results, including to the English Language Proficiency (ELP) measure. As part of RIDE's ongoing strategy to improve outcomes for multilingual learners (MLLs), RIDE has substantially revised the ELP measure to more accurately reflect the trajectory of student language development and include the expanded exit criteria for MLLs previously shared with MLL Directors and Coordinators.

From 2010 to 2020, the percentage of MLL students in Rhode Island grew more than in any other state in the nation, and as of 2020, Rhode Island also has the 5th highest percentage of MLL students across all states (12.2%). This growth has impacted both urban and non-urban schools across the state. As part of our statewide strategy to support state and local improvement for MLLs and ensure equity for all students, RIDE has refocused these efforts in this year's ESSA State Plan amendment. For more information on RIDE's MLL improvement strategy please see our recent overview presentation to the Council on Elementary & Secondary Education - [Rhode Island's Strategy for Improving Outcomes for Multilingual Learners: Introductory Discussion](#).

RIDE is providing the following information to assist school and LEA leaders with planning for the 2024-25 school year. The following changes relate to Multilingual Learner programming:

1. RIDE is proposing a nonlinear model for calculating student progress, which will affect individual student growth targets in the RIDE Student Data Portal in addition to calculation of the accountability indicator;
2. RIDE is proposing to provide more opportunities for student progress to be captured in the state's ELP accountability measure;
3. As previously communicated, RIDE has expanded the MLL exit criteria to include students who reach a 4.5 to 4.7 on the ACCESS assessment who have also achieved a "meets" or "exceeds" proficiency level on the State ELA assessments; and
4. RIDE is proposing to include participation rate in the ELP accountability measure, in the same way it is included in the other assessment measures.

These changes are described further below.

1) New Individual Annual Growth Targets

After substantial modeling and analysis of Rhode Island's ACCESS data, and consultation with national experts, RIDE is proposing English language proficiency targets that better reflect the trajectory of our MLL students'

Telephone (401)222-4600 **Fax** (401)222-6178 **TTY** (800)745-5555 **Voice** (800)745-6575 **Website:** www.ride.ri.gov

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language development. Rhode Island will continue to set the number of years students have to reach proficiency based on their initial ACCESS proficiency level. However, now the state is introducing a nonlinear model for the annual targets. This nonlinear model expects students to progress by more in earlier years than in later years, which is in line with language acquisition research and trends in Rhode Island.

2) More Opportunities for Schools to Show Progress in the Accountability Measure

RIDE is also proposing adjusting the accountability measure in ways that provide greater opportunity to capture student progress. Now, schools will receive credit for the progress students make each year based on the new nonlinear model, regardless of whether students fell behind in prior years. For example, in the past schools could only receive partial credit for students who reached their attainment target after their target attainment year; now RIDE is proposing that schools be able to earn full credit for these students if they meet their annual targets. This adjustment was informed by feedback that RIDE received from school leaders, especially at the secondary levels.

3) Expanded MLL Exit Criteria

As previously shared with the MLL Directors and Coordinators, RIDE has expanded the MLL exit criteria, which is fully described in the updated [RIDE Identification Guidance for MLLs](#). The expanded exit criteria include the opportunity for MLL students to exit MLL status with a 4.5-4.7 on the ACCESS assessment and proficiency on a state ELA assessment, as well as Kindergarten students having the opportunity to exit for the first time.

4) Inclusion of Participation Rate in the Accountability Measure

Finally, RIDE is proposing to include participation rate in the ELP accountability measure in the same way it is included for other assessment measures in Rhode Island's accountability system. This represents our state's continued commitment to equity for MLL students by underscoring the importance of testing all MLL students on the ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS assessments each year and evaluating and supporting MLLs in making progress towards proficiency.

Planning for the 2024-25 School Year

Revising the state's MLL progress model means that new individual student ELP targets will need to be established and reported using the nonlinear model. In addition to the previously shared 2024 ACCESS results, the RIDE Student Data Portal will also include the 2024 ACCESS results before the end of August. Students' new 2024 and preliminary 2025 ELP targets will become available in the coming months. RIDE will communicate these targets' availability through the Commissioner's Field Memo and directly with the LEA MLL Directors and Coordinators as soon as they become available.

RIDE will schedule a Zoom meeting later in August for school leaders, MLL Directors, and data managers interested in learning more about these accountability changes, and how to use them to plan for the 2024-25 school year.