

Section 2: ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY LEVELS OF ILLINOIS ELL/LEP STUDENTS

Section 14C-3 of the School Code requires school districts to annually assess the English language proficiency, including aural comprehension (listening), speaking, reading, and writing skills, of all ELL/LEP students enrolled in public school districts until they achieve a “proficient” score on the statewide English language proficiency assessments. In addition to scores obtained on the statewide English language proficiency assessment, school districts may use any established district indicator(s) to determine the continuing need for these ELL/LEP students to receive bilingual education services.

Through its membership in the World-class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) consortium, Illinois adopted ACCESS for ELLs® as the new English language proficiency assessment in 2006. ACCESS for ELLs® is a large-scale test and is aligned with English language proficiency standards developed by WIDA. This test assesses four language domains: speaking, listening, reading, and writing, with scale scores ranging from 100 to 600 and proficiency levels ranging from 1.0 to 6.0. These proficiency levels describe the spectrum of a learner’s progression from knowing little to no English, to acquiring the English skills necessary to be successful in an English-only mainstream classroom without extra support. The final level is the exit stage for ELL status, designated as Level 6 (formerly ELL). (Source: “*Understanding the ACCESS for ELLs® Test*,” published by WIDA).

Level 1–Entering: pictorial or graphic representation of the language of the content areas; words, phrases, or chunks of language when presented with one-step commands, directions, WH-questions, or statements with visual and graphic support.

Level 2–Beginning: general language related to the content areas; phrases or short sentences; oral or written language with phonological, syntactic, or semantic errors that often impede the meaning of the communication when presented with one- to multiple-step commands, directions, questions, or a series of statements with visual and graphic support.

Level 3–Developing: general and some specific language of the content areas; expanded sentences in oral interaction or written paragraphs; oral or written language with phonological, syntactic, or semantic errors that may impede the communication but retain much of its meaning when presented with oral or written, narrative, or expository descriptions with occasional visual and graphic support.

Level 4–Expanding: specific and some technical language of the content areas; a variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity in oral discourse or multiple, related paragraphs; oral or written language with minimal phonological, syntactic, or semantic errors that do not impede the overall meaning of the communication when presented with oral or written connected discourse with occasional visual and graphic support.

Level 5–Bridging: the technical language of the content areas; a variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity in extended oral or written discourse, including stories, essays, or reports; oral or written language approaching comparability with that of English-proficient peers when presented with grade-level material.

Level 6–Reaching: descriptive of those ELLs/LEPs who have successfully moved through the entire second language acquisition continuum.

ACCESS for ELLs® replaced all local English language proficiency assessments used by school districts in previous years. For more information on WIDA-ACCESS: <http://www.wida.us/ACCESSForELLs/>.

As shown in Table 12, more ELL students in Illinois are proficient (proficient has been considered 4.0 level of proficiency or higher) in listening (about 65.9 percent) than in writing (14.0 percent).

Table 12. Number and Percentage of ELL/LEP Students Enrolled in Bilingual Education Programs, by ACCESS Proficiency Level and Domain: FY07

Proficiency Level*	Listening		Speaking		Reading		Writing		Composite	
	Number	Pct.	Number	Pct.	Number	Pct.	Number	Pct.	Number	Pct.
1	12,421	7.8	41,392	25.7	35,803	22.5	29,910	18.8	28,119	17.7
2	14,342	9.0	19,904	12.4	26,411	16.6	55,055	34.6	32,922	20.7
3	27,418	17.2	13,202	8.2	32,797	20.6	51,737	32.5	51,191	32.2
4	45,762	28.8	16,664	10.4	18,202	11.4	20,351	12.8	36,022	22.6
5	51,738	32.5	16,563	10.3	38,434	24.2	1,755	1.1	9,237	5.8
6	7,389	4.6	53,121	33.0	7,389	4.6	141	0.1	1,579	1.0
> = 4.0	104,889	65.9	86,348	53.7	64,025	40.3	22,247	14.0	46,838	29.4

*ISBE established a 4.0 proficiency level from composite scores as the minimum criterion for transitioning ELL/LEP students. Numbers include kindergarten students.

As shown in Table 13, the highest percentage of students achieving a composite proficiency level of 4 or greater was in grade cluster 3-5, while the lowest percentage was in grade cluster 1-2.

Table 13. Number and Percentage of ELL/LEP Students Enrolled in Bilingual Education Programs, by ACCESS Composite Proficiency Level and Grade Cluster: FY07

Composite Proficiency Level*	Grade Cluster								Total	
	1-2		3-5		6-8		9-12			
	Number	Pct.	Number	Pct.	Number	Pct.	Number	Pct.	Number	Pct.
1	4,911	10.5	1,925	4.0	2,107	9.2	2,457	15.7	11,400	8.5
2	11,680	24.9	6,530	13.5	4,415	19.3	4,312	27.6	26,937	20.2
3	19,453	41.4	16,642	34.5	7,834	34.3	4,556	29.2	48,485	36.3
4	9,389	20.0	17,316	35.9	6,233	27.3	3,084	19.7	36,022	27.0
5	1,375	2.9	4,909	10.2	1,987	8.7	966	6.2	9,237	6.9
6	180	0.4	870	1.8	277	1.2	252	1.6	1,579	1.2
Total	46,988	100.0	48,192	100.0	22,853	100.0	15,627	100.0	133,660	100.0
> = 4.0	10,944	23.3	23,095	47.9	8,497	37.2	4,302	27.5	46,838	35.0

*To allow for valid comparisons, kindergarten students were not included in this analysis because the maximum overall English language proficiency level that a student can receive on the kindergarten version of ACCESS for ELLs® is 3.7.

As shown in Table 14, ELL/LEP students who remained in bilingual programs for more than three years before exiting attained higher levels of English language proficiency and students enrolled in TPIs attained higher rates of proficiency than those enrolled in TBE programs.

Table 14. Number and Percentage of ELL/LEP Students Exiting Bilingual Education Programs, by ACCESS Composite Proficiency Level, Program Type, and Number of Years in the Program: FY07

Composite Proficiency Level*	TBE				TPI				Program Totals			
	<= Three Years		> Three Years		<= Three Years		> Three Years		TBE		TPI	
	Number	Pct.	Number	Pct.	Number	Pct.	Number	Pct.	Number	Pct.	Number	Pct.
1	313	8.3	81	1.8	121	3.5	15	1.5	394	4.8	136	3.1
2	476	12.6	278	6.3	240	7.0	53	5.2	754	9.2	293	6.6
3	879	23.2	823	18.7	632	18.5	172	16.9	1,702	20.8	804	18.1
4	1,401	37.0	1,942	44.2	1,368	40.0	414	40.6	3,343	40.8	1,782	40.1
5	615	16.2	1,076	24.5	805	23.5	285	27.9	1,691	20.7	1,090	24.5
6	106	2.8	198	4.5	258	7.5	81	7.9	304	3.7	339	7.6
Total	3,790	100.0	4,398	100.0	3,424	100.0	1,020	100.0	8,188	100.0	4,444	100.0
> = 4.0	2,122	56.0	3,216	73.1	2,431	71.0	780	76.5	5,338	65.2	3,211	72.3

*To allow for valid comparisons, kindergarten students were not included in this analysis because the maximum overall English language proficiency level that a student can receive on the kindergarten version of ACCESS for ELLs® is 3.7.

Chart 1. Percentage of ELL/LEP Students at 4.0 Proficiency Level, by Grade Cluster and Domain: FY07

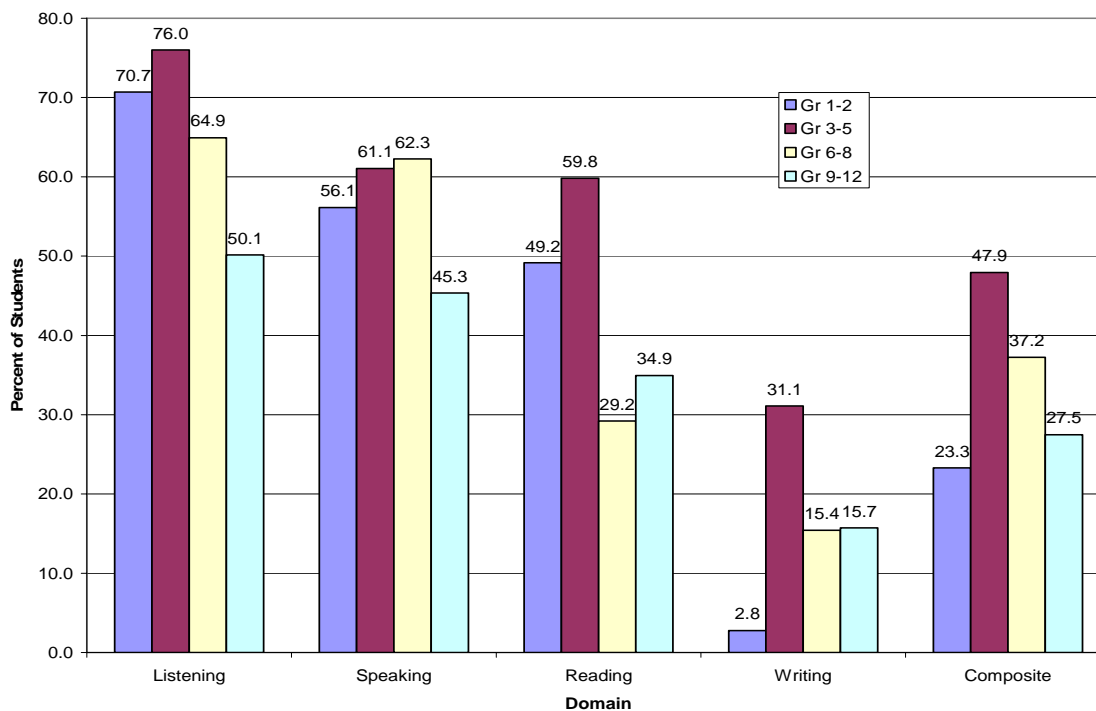
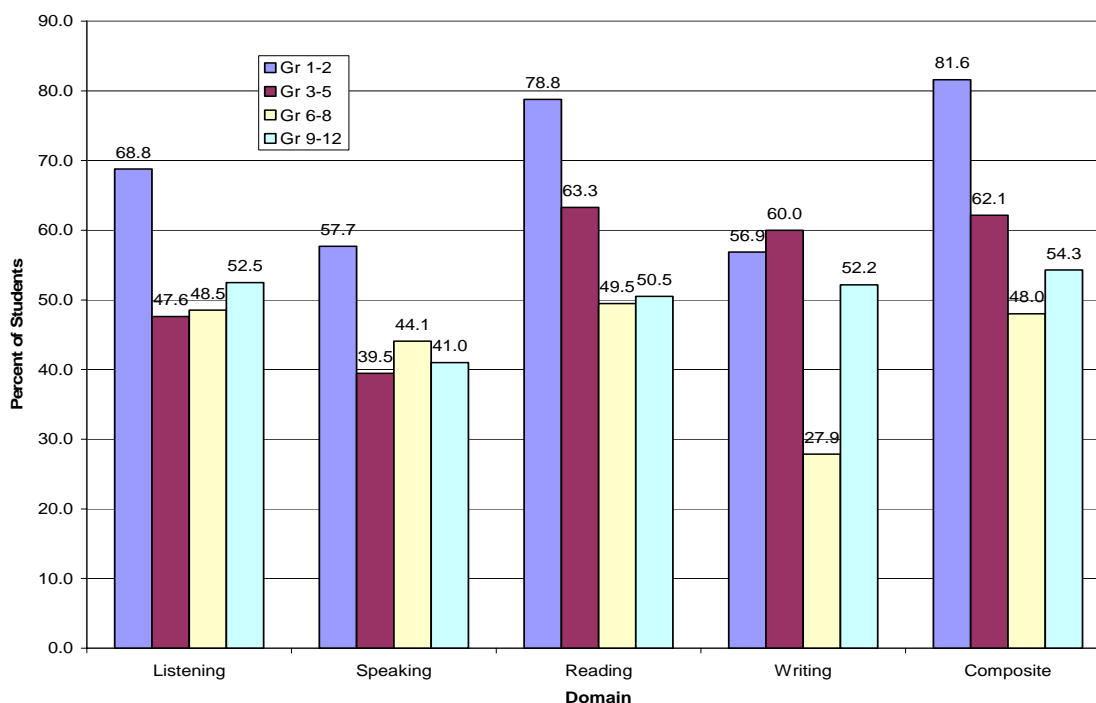


Chart 2. Percentage of ELL/LEP Students Making a 0.5 or More Increase in Proficiency Level from FY06, by Grade Cluster and Domain: FY07



ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY LEVELS OF ELL/LEP-TRANSITIONED STUDENTS

As shown in Table 15, only half (50.2 percent) of ELL/LEP students who were transitioned achieved proficiency levels of 4.0 or higher on their ACCESS for ELLs® composite scores and 40.8 percent of transitioned students were missing ACCESS for ELLs® scores. The highest number and percentage of transitioned ELL/LEP students achieved proficiency in listening, while the lowest number and percentage achieved proficiency in writing.

Table 15. Number and Percentage of ELL/LEP Students Transitioned or Mainstreamed, by ACCESS Proficiency Level and Domain: FY07

Proficiency Level	Listening		Speaking		Reading		Writing		Composite*	
	Number	Col Pct.	Number	Col Pct.	Number	Col Pct.	Number	Col Pct.	Number	Col Pct.
1	52	0.4	291	2.3	167	1.3	133	1.1	86	0.7
2	89	0.7	352	2.8	363	2.9	596	4.7	202	1.6
3	496	3.9	323	2.6	1,036	8.2	3,290	26.2	836	6.6
4	1,324	10.5	943	7.5	781	6.2	3,039	24.2	3,564	28.3
5	3,509	27.9	1,057	8.4	2,895	23.0	350	2.8	2,211	17.6
6	1,971	15.7	4,500	35.8	2,201	17.5	30	0.2	542	4.3
Valid Cases	7,441	59.2	7,466	59.4	7,443	59.2	7,438	59.2	7,441	59.2
Missing Scores	5,131	40.8	5,106	40.6	5,129	40.8	5,134	40.8	5,131	40.8
Total	12,572	100.0	12,572	100.0	12,572	100.0	12,572	100.0	12,572	100.0
> = 4.0	6,804	54.1	6,500	51.7	5,877	46.7	3,419	27.2	6,317	50.2

*Composite or overall scores are calculated only for students who completed all four domains.