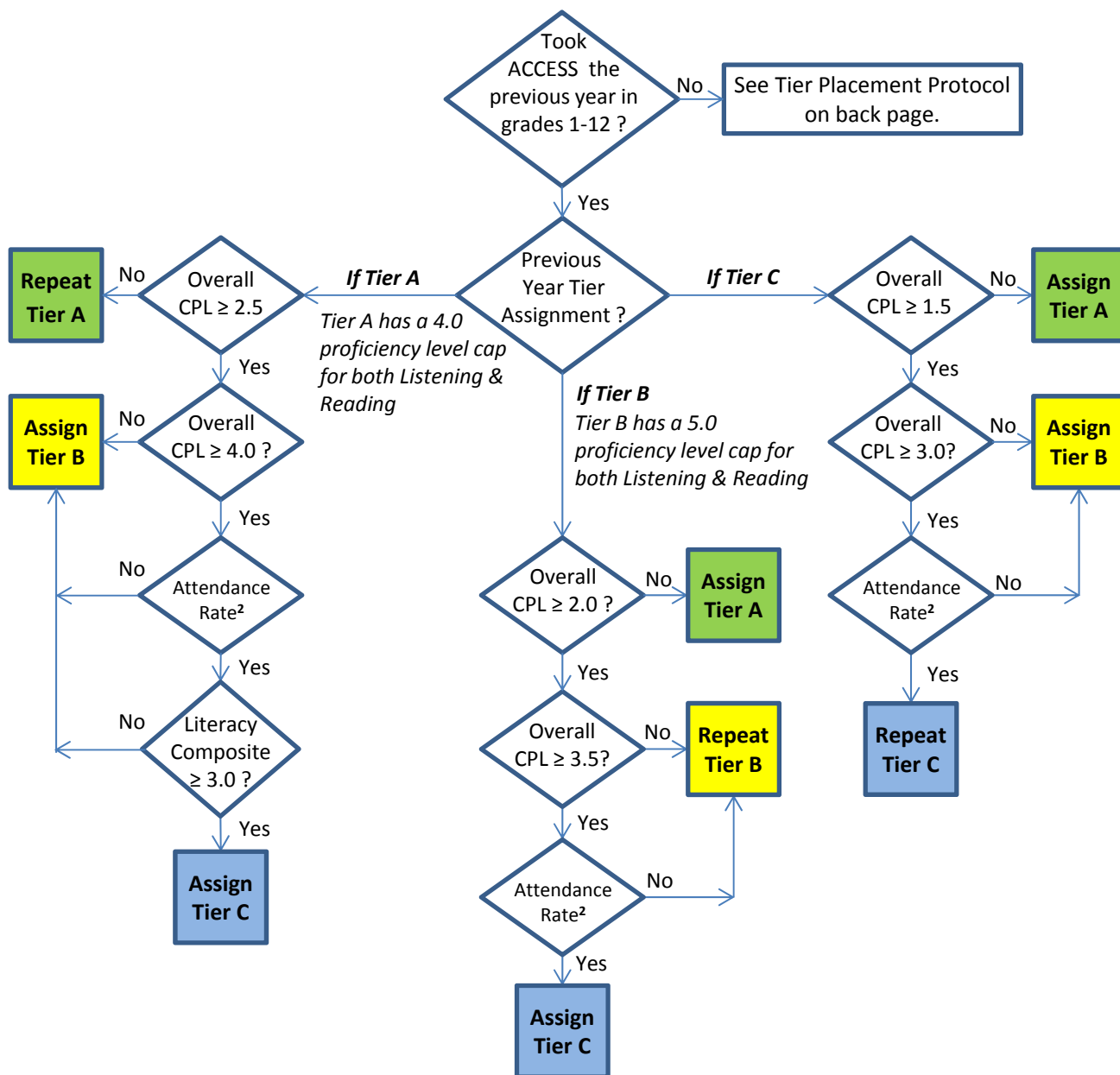


## Non-regulatory Guidelines<sup>1</sup> for Tier Assignments for the Annual ACCESS Assessment



<sup>1</sup>**Non-regulatory Guidelines:** These tier assignment guidelines are to help school personnel involved with the tier assignment process to make informed decisions. The Overall Composite Proficiency Levels (CPLs) identified in the flowchart are considered approximations, and should be used in combination with other student information when making tier assignments.

Selecting the appropriate ACCESS tier allows the most accurate measurement of the student’s English language proficiency. While it’s true that a proficiency level of 3.5 is equivalent across Tier A, B and C, using a tier that is too low, with a restricted range of item difficulty, results in the student answering most or all the questions correctly, limiting the student’s ability to show progress.

To illustrate, approximately 950 students were assigned the Tier A in 2012 who had already obtained an Overall CPL of 3.5 or higher in 2011. During that same period, 1,582 students who had reached an Overall CPL of 5.1 or higher were assigned to Tier B. Considering that Tier A is capped at 4.0 and Tier B is capped at 5.0 for both reading and listening, assigning those students to the next tier would have allowed them an opportunity to demonstrate higher English proficiency levels.

Because teachers are most familiar with student progress, it is recommended to include them in the tier assignment decisions.

<sup>2</sup>**Attendance Rate:** Student has been enrolled in a U.S. school since the beginning of the current school year and has fewer than ten absences that may negatively impact normal academic progress.

# Tier Placement Protocol for ACCESS for ELLs®



ACCESS for ELLs is divided into three tiers: A, B, and C. While the tiers overlap, each tier assesses a different range of language proficiency. Therefore, to ensure the best possible testing experience for each student and the most meaningful results, it is necessary to place each student into the tier that best matches his or her proficiency level.

The selection of a student’s tier is best made by his or her teachers, based on the information they have about the student’s language proficiency. Criteria may include the student’s progress in the classroom as well as test results from past administrations of ACCESS for ELLs, WIDA MODEL, and/or the W-APT.

It is important to note that students who take the Tier A assessment cannot score higher than a 4.0 proficiency level in the domains of Reading and Listening. Likewise, students who take the Tier B assessment cannot receive higher than 5.0 on Reading or Listening. For this reason, students who are nearing these proficiency levels should be assigned the next higher tier so that their ability to show progress in these domains is not limited.

Level 1 Entering	Level 2 Beginning	Level 3 Developing	Level 4 Expanding	Level 5 Bridging	Level 6 - Reaching
<p><b>TIER A</b> is most appropriate for English language learners who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have arrived in the U.S. or entered school in the U.S. within this academic school year without previous instruction in English, OR</li> <li>• currently receive literacy instruction ONLY in their native language, OR</li> <li>• have recently tested at the lowest level of English language proficiency</li> </ul>					
<p><b>TIER B</b> is most appropriate for English language learners who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have social language proficiency and some, but not extensive, academic language proficiency in English, OR</li> <li>• have acquired some literacy in English though have not yet reached grade level literacy</li> </ul>					
<p><b>TIER C</b> is most appropriate for English language learners who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• are approaching grade level in literacy and academic language proficiency in the core content areas, OR</li> <li>• will likely meet the state’s exit criteria for support services by the end of the academic year</li> </ul>					