



## ESSA IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE

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### ESSA Subcommittee Meeting – Standards, Assessment, and ELL

**Date, Time:** Thursday, September 15, 2016, 1:30 p.m.-4:30 p.m.

**Location:** 135 South Union Street, Suite 215

**ALSDE Facilitator:** Sandy Ledwell, Facilitator

**Members Present:** Matt Akin, Pamela Fossett, Frank Chestnut, Krissie Allen, Walter Gonsoulin

**Members Absent:** Frank Chestnut

**Summary:** The committee addressed the English Language Learner (ELL/EL) key state indicators. Matthew Weyer, education policy specialist from the National Conference of State Legislatures, presented on provisions for English learners as well as exiting criteria for ELs. Additionally, experts from the ALSDE presented current practices and accountability measures that are in place. Alabama is a member of the WiDA consortium and has standards/criteria in place that meet ESSA guidelines.

**Next Meeting:** Wednesday, October 5, 2016, 10 a.m. with the Accountability work group, 135 South Union Street, Suite 215

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## Detailed Notes

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*All notes below are comments with committee members and the ALSDE facilitator.*

Handout:

- ❖ Proposal for Changes to ELL Testing Requirements with ESSA—State Level
- ❖ Proposal for Changes to ELL Testing Requirements with ESSA—Russellville City
- ❖ Proposal for Changes to ELL Testing Requirements with ESSA

### Alabama's ELL policies—Cyndi Townley and Dely Roberts – ASLDE staff

- Alabama was one of first 8 WiDA states. Now there are 38.
- Alabama has criteria for ELL—meets criteria for ESSA.
- Handout: Support for English Learners in the state.
  - This includes an explanations of the English Language Proficiency Standards and WiDA.
- WiDA is used to test K-12.
  - No pre-kindergarten tests are used in Alabama, but can get them from WiDA.
  - Pre-k in Alabama is not found in every school, so assessment is difficult.
- Discussion of the evaluation criteria used to identify ELLs:
  - Every student enrolled completes a Home Language Survey. Indicates what Language is spoken in the home.
  - If needed, WiDA screening tools are used to determine placement. Because of an agreement with WiDA, Alabama can only use the two available WiDA instruments.
  - After screening and determining the services that are needed, there is a meeting to develop a plan for the student and services are served. Student progress is monitored by annual assessments ACCESS (the test administered to EL students in Alabama) for ELLs 2.0. Once the student has taken the assessment, teachers have better information to meet students' needs.
  - Currently, the exit criteria for ELLs in Alabama is a composite score of 4.8. The cutoff score will be re-evaluated this year.
  - Upon exiting, ESSA allows monitoring for 4 years (now called FLEP, Formerly Limited English Proficient). Students will take Aspire, WorkKeys, etc.
  - For students with cognitive difficulties, there is an alternate ACCESS (those would be AAA students)—approximately 250 students in 2015-16 school year.
- Cyndi talked group through WIDA book, *The English Language Development Standards Kindergarten-Grade 12*.
  - Now the state is using the 2012 version to align with College and Career Ready Standards.
  - Alabama is an English only state—we only teach in English, but have accommodations for students who do not speak English. Districts work hard to ensure communication with EL families.



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*WiDA book discussion continued...*

Review of specific areas in the book:

- P. 6-7: Academic vocabulary
  - P. 8-9: Can-do statements
  - P. 10: Language
  - P. 15: Guiding question, What do we want children to know? Accommodations are made for students to learn.
- Dely described how the state plans to help teachers accommodate ELL students in individual subjects.
    - Teachers are welcome to attend professional development.
    - There are 5 EL coaches around the state who assist districts with their individual needs.
    - Professional development sessions are publicized on the ALSDE website.
    - Districts are also sent emails with memos that contain information about sessions.
    - Over 33 sessions were offered last year with approximately 2000 participants.

### **Key Decisions: English Language Learners (ELLs)**

***1. States will need to develop and implement uniform statewide criteria and procedures for entrance into and exit out of EL status. The procedures must include assessing all potential ELs for their English proficiency within 30 days of enrollment.***

- It was noted that the Alabama plan appears to be a good one.
- Facilitator noted that the exit is based on ARMT assessments/WIDA suggestions.
- WIDA said 4.8 was best for placement.
  - That decision is being reassessed and most likely will be higher in future years.
  - ELL students must take all state assessments if not in their first year of ELL status.
  - Cannot make exceptions due to NCLB/ESSA.
  - ESSA is giving a little bit of leeway by allowing years 3-4 for FLEP.
- State assessments are only offered in the English language.
- Rebecca Mims noted that some tests are not valid if not administered in English.
  - She is on a Blue Ribbon Panel at the national level to work on some of these issues.
  - College faculty are also on this panel and are working to determine which testing instruments in languages other than English might be accepted for college entrance.
- The Standards work group will meet with Accountability because some of the decisions will overlap.
  - Looking at n counts—20 for most assessments.
  - N count of 10 for ACCESS. The number of students reported for accountability purposes. (EL Students)
- ACT Aspire may be available in Spanish.
- For use, an assessment would have to be approved for reliability/validity.



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- Alabama uses 10 days instead of 30 to identify students earlier.
  - It was suggested that we should put 30 days in the plan to allow the state flexibility to identify students earlier if they wish.
  - Subcommittee member made recommendation to continue to follow the plan which should speak to 30 days instead of 10. Other members agreed. It was noted that 10 was better for sense of urgency.

***2. State may need to review its English language proficiency (ELP) standards to ensure that they are in alignment with the new requirement under ESSA that ELP standards address different proficiency levels, which was not a requirement under NCLB. States must determine if their ELP standards meet this requirement and revise them if they do not.***

- Alabama meets the requirement. The subcommittee was in agreement and no discussion was requested.
- Alabama handles this by offering assistance in teaching academic vocabulary.
- The 4.8 score for ACCESS indicated that the student is between bridging (4) and expanding (5), but closer to expanding.

**Addressing #2E regarding alternate assessments for students with significant cognitive deficiencies:**

***2e. States will have to determine whether they will adopt alternative assessments for students with significant cognitive disabilities or modify such assessments if a State already has them in place. States are also required to determine how they will do additional oversight over local educational agencies which administer these assessments should they be assessing more than 1% of their total student population via these assessments.***

- Alabama Alternative Assessment is currently used.
- In the past, students kept portfolios.
- The typical guide is 1% of total testing population taking AAA.
  - This is computed at the state level. Some districts go over 1% and some under—this is an Individual Education Plan (IEP) decision, and population determines percentage. The districts must have justification at their level if over 1%. This justification is not required for the assessment, but may be part of reporting to Accountability.
  - The requirement is 1% of total testing population. For EL, this is dependent upon where the student lives, and the state cannot dictate where someone chooses to live.



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- Accommodations are made for all types of students—those who cannot speak, have visual impairments, are not mobile, need manipulatives, etc.
  - Assessment items are created for these extended standards. Items are designed to be engaging and to meet a variety Depth of Knowledge (cognitive) levels.
  - The action item is the 1% of population tested with the alternate assessment. The language needs clarification. 1% of which population?
    - Members noted the need to define oversight.
    - Oversight might mean helping a district make the appropriate decision regarding the assessment students would take.

**Next Steps:**

- Committee is to determine:
  - Is there an alternative assessment in place? Do we give alternate assessments to special education, EL students?
  - What will the state provide to prove that we are not testing more than 1% of the population with the alternate assessment?
- The committee was asked to review the handout concerning Title I and Title II Funding and how the funds are broken down as it relates to this subcommittee's section of ESSA prior to the next meeting.

