



# **Updated North Dakota EL Program Reclassification Criteria**

Summer 2025

*This is not lowering the bar—it's meeting students where they are, supporting smart reclassification, and trusting our experts in the field.*

**Greetings North Dakota Educational Leaders,**

We are pleased to share important updates to North Dakota's English Learner (EL) Program reclassification criteria, designed to better meet students where they are—without lowering expectations. These changes reflect a thoughtful alignment between policy, practice, and the expertise of educators across our state.

**Key Updates Include:**

- **Revised Automatic Exit Score**
- **Alternate ACCESS Pathway**
- **Expanded Reclassification Options**

These criteria revisions are guided by our commitment to equity and clarity. We ensure that no student is overlooked and that reclassification reflects meaningful academic and language growth.

Additional details, guidance, comparisons with previous criteria, and sample procedures will be available on the [NDDPI EL Programs website](#).

If you have questions or would like support developing local protocols aligned with these updates, please contact our office at **[dpienglishlearners@nd.gov](mailto:dpienglishlearners@nd.gov)**.

Thank you for your continued partnership and dedication to North Dakota's multilingual learners.

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## Criteria

### Updated criteria for English Learner (EL) reclassification, including:

- **Automatic exit at Composite Proficiency Level (CPL) 4.5 with 3.5 in all domains (ACCESS)**
- **Automatic exit at CPL 4.0 for Alternate ACCESS students with significant cognitive disabilities**
- **New formal reclassification pathways** for near-proficient students, guided by team consensus and supporting documentation
- **Starts with 2025 WIDA ACCESS Scores (will not be retroactive)**

Comparison: Current vs. Updated Criteria		
Criteria Area	Current	Updated
<b>Standard Exit Score</b>	5.0 CPL + 3.5 in all domains	4.5 CPL + 3.5 in all domains
<b>Alt ACCESS Exit</b>	No defined exit criteria	4.0 CPL = automatic exit
<b>Reclassification Options</b>	Informal/limited process	5 defined pathways with documentation
<b>Screener Alignment</b>	Mirrors 5.0 CPL standard	Will require a revisit with the new CPL

## **North Dakota Reclassification (Exit) Criteria**

### **North Dakota reclassification (exit) criteria and procedures:**

- The annual ND English language proficiency (ELP) assessment (currently ACCESS for ELLs) is the valid and reliable assessment used to determine the English proficiency of ELs in North Dakota.
- English learners must attain one of the following criteria options to exit the EL Program as outlined on page 126 of the North Dakota ESSA Plan (2018).
  1. Minimum ELP composite score of 5.0 AND minimum ELLP score of 3.5 on each of the four subtests (listening, speaking, reading, writing).
  2. Alternate ACCESS
  3. Districts may approve to exit a student with disabilities if the EL team and IEP team (as applicable) including parents or guardians determine the student has plateaued in their growth and the evidence including EL and IEP team documentation shows the student would not further benefit from additional English Language Development instruction, but rather other services as appropriate.
    - a. Evidence of plateauing could include:
      - i. WIDA ACCESS scores: documenting proficiency and scale score over time;
      - ii. Expected trajectory of ELP growth: no significant progress for two or more years;
      - iii. NDA+ Interim or Summative scores: assessing academic achievement;
      - iv. District assessments: supporting the conclusion of plateau; AND/OR
      - v. Parent interview: adding insight into the student's progress and needs in multiple settings

Students meeting criteria #1 or #2 will automatically be reclassified by North Dakota Department of Public Instruction.

Students reclassifying through criteria #3 will require approval through NDDPI. A formal request and documentation will need to be submitted to the EL Programs office at NDDPI. Schools and districts should create a formal procedure to collect proof of student IEP team consensus on the request for reclassification and any relevant data before. Sample procedures are available on the [NDDPI EL Programs website](#).