SOUTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

MEMORANDUM

TO: District Superintendents
Federal Program Directors
ESEA Title III MLP Coordinators
PowerSchool IT Contacts
District Test Coordinators-ELL
Report Card/Accountability Coordinators
School Administrators
Multilingual Learner Teachers

FROM: Jewell Stanley
Director, Office of Federal and State Accountability

Vann Holden, PhD
Director, Office of Accountability and Research

Kristi D. Austin, PhD
Director, Office of Assessment and Standards

DATE: November 17, 2026

RE: Post WIDA ACCESS Standards Setting State Level Update

As communicated in the May 13, 2026, memorandum, WIDA standards setting was completed in July 2026 for WIDA ACCESS (Online and Paper) and WIDA ACCESS for Kindergarten. WIDA Alternate ACCESS completed standards setting in 2024. WIDA ACCESS Braille is still undergoing redesign and alignment with WIDA English Language Development Standards, 2020 Edition.

On October 19, 2026, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) received updated WIDA score reports reflecting the new standards. SCDE will provide districts updated files and supporting resources through ADTS during the week of November 30, 2026.

Districts may observe one of the following outcomes:

- A student now meets the South Carolina English proficiency criterion.
- A student no longer meets the South Carolina English proficiency criterion.
- A student continues to meet the South Carolina English proficiency criterion.
- A student's score changed, but the student remains ineligible for reclassification from the Multilingual Learner Program (MLP).

Districts should reclassify students who now meet the South Carolina English proficiency criterion based on the updated results. Any student with an Overall Composite Score of 4.4 or higher on either the original or updated report should be placed in M1 (First-Year Monitoring) status and will not be required to participate in future WIDA ACCESS administrations. Districts will need to update the student's coding in PowerSchool and notify parents/guardians of students who now meet the reclassification criteria.

To assist with parent/guardian notifications, the following letters have been created and translated into the top 16 languages.

- WIDA ACCESS Standard Setting for the Multilingual Learner Program (MLP) General Letter Reassign to New Class
- WIDA ACCESS Standard Setting for the Multilingual Learner Program (MLP) General Letter Remain in the Assigned Class

Links to the above notification letters and the state-offered translated versions will be shared via the Title III/MLP ListServ and linked in the **Multilingual Learner Program Guiding Principles**. If a family requires translation services for communications beyond the letters provided by the SCDE, the district is responsible for ensuring appropriate translation and language access support is provided.

For students whose updated scores would otherwise revoke their reclassification status, SCDE will honor the original score and maintain the student in "M1 - 1st Year Monitor" status. Districts may elect to return these students to services if deemed appropriate and should include parents or guardians in any such decision. Districts will follow guidelines outlined in the section entitled *Screening for Initially Unclassified Students and Those Requiring Reclassification* of the **Multilingual Learner Program Guiding Principles**.

It is imperative that all English proficiency score changes are accurately updated in PowerSchool, regardless of whether a student is reclassified, prior to the start of the WIDA

ACCESS testing window in January 2027. Ensuring these updates are completed in a timely manner will help guarantee that the correct students are identified for testing and prevent unnecessary testing of students who are no longer required to participate. This includes updating both the 'Current English Language Proficiency (ELP) Assessment Within One Calendar Year' box and the student's 'English Proficiency Level' field to ensure data accuracy and compliance with state and federal reporting requirements.

Information on WIDA Access Standards Setting will be included in upcoming professional development on school report cards. This professional development session will be part of the 2027 professional development series offered by the Office of Accountability and Research. Details on the full professional development schedule for district administrators will be distributed to accountability coordinators, district testing coordinators, PowerSchool leaders, and Information Technology Leaders in December 2026. District ESEA Title III MLP Coordinators will receive the information for the session on the Multilingual Learners' Progress indicator.

For questions, please contact the SCDE Title III/MLP team at **TitleIIIMLP@ed.sc.gov**. For questions related to ELP assessment administration, please contact Dr. Meghan Walters-Branham at **mgwalters@ed.sc.gov**. For questions related to accountability or school report cards, please contact Dr. Era Roberts at **earoberts@ed.sc.gov**.