

TECHNICAL DOCUMENTATION FOR WISCONSIN AMENDMENTS TO THE *CONSOLIDATED STATE APPLICATION* FOR TITLE III ESEA: ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY ANNUAL MEASURABLE ACHIEVEMENT OBJECTIVES

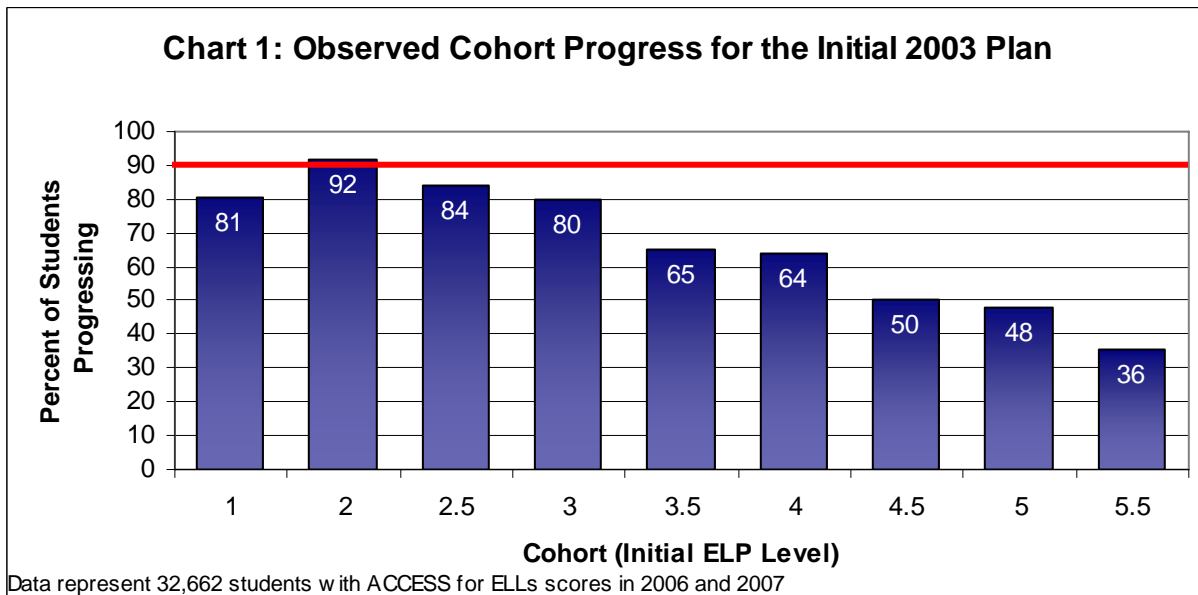
Wisconsin plans to use new cohorts and targets for Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAO) 1 Progress and 2 Exiting in Title III accountability. This document explains the planned changes and gives reasons for the changes.

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Initial 2003 Plan

In Wisconsin's initial accountability plan for progress and exiting for English Language Learner (ELL) students, students were expected to progress one English Language Proficiency (ELP) level in one year at ELP Level 1. Thereafter, students were expected to move one-half of an ELP level, until exiting to ELP Level 6 (formerly ELL). A goal was set for 90% of the students in each of these cohorts in a district to attain these expectations. These presumptions could not be empirically tested at the state level until this year, when student-level ELP test score data (32,662 matched students) became available for school years 2006 and 2007. The results are surprising (see Chart 1 below).



At the state level, the only cohort that attained the initial expectation was the ELP Level 2 cohort (92% of the students progressed one-half of an ELP level). All other cohorts had fewer students attaining the growth expectations (36 to 84%). The empirical data demonstrates how the 90% bar also becomes less realistic as the initial ELP level increases: only about one-third of students at ELP Level 5.5 are able to gain the one-half ELP level increase. This pattern is theoretically a result of students' rate of language acquisition that is greatest in the early stages and slows more and more as they approach proficiency.

In addition to seeing that growth in English proficiency slows as students become more proficient, the data also demonstrate that students in earlier grades have greater gains than those in later grades. This is not simply a

function of students in later grades being more proficient than their earlier counterparts, for even at equal initial ELP levels, students in upper grades under-perform the younger students in terms of rate of acquisition of language proficiency (see the Table 1 below).

Grade Level		Initial ELP Level (2006)				
(2006)	(2007)	1	2	3	4	5
K	1	1.3	1.4	1.2	-	-
1	2	0.9	1.0	0.8	0.9	0.3
2	3	0.8	0.6	0.5	0.4	0.0
3	4	1.0	1.2	1.0	1.0	0.5
4	5	0.7	0.9	0.6	0.6	0.3
5	6	0.5	0.5	0.2	0.0	-0.2
6	7	0.6	0.8	0.6	0.5	0.2
7	8	0.5	0.6	0.3	0.2	0.0
8	9	0.5	0.6	0.3	0.2	-0.1
9	10	0.6	0.9	0.7	0.5	0.2
10	11	0.5	0.8	0.5	0.3	0.0
11	12	0.5	0.5	0.3	0.1	-0.3

Key

Large gains

Medium gains

Small gains

Overall, the greatest gains (highlighted in green) are notably in the lower grades. The lowest gains (highlighted in red) are in the upper ELP levels of the higher grades. Note that in Table 1 initial ELP levels refer to a range of levels from the level stated to just below the next integer ELP level (i.e., ELP Level 1 contains 1.0 to 1.9, ELP Level 2 contains 2.0 to 2.9, etc.).

Thus true cohort data reveals that Wisconsin’s initial plan for ELL progress and exiting criteria was unrealistically stringent. This is evidenced firstly by diminishing gains in progress at higher ELP levels and secondly by diminishing gains in progress at higher grade levels. For these reasons, Wisconsin plans to change its cohort definitions and growth targets to better reflect the realities of student language acquisition.

Revised Progress Cohorts

Wisconsin DPI presented these data on June 5, 2007 to a stakeholder group of Wisconsin ELL educators and administrative professionals, representing the vast majority of the Wisconsin ELL student population. After noting the discoveries mentioned above, they recommended the cohorts be divided by both grade level and initial ELP level. As they recommended, Wisconsin plans to use six cohorts for the purposes of assessing progress.

Table 2 below shows the six cohorts as revised:

Cohort	Year 1		Year 2	
	Grade Levels	ELP Levels	Grade Levels	ELP Levels
1	K-2	1-2	1-3	1-6
2	3-8	1-2	4-9	1-6
3	9-11	1-2	10-12	1-6
4	K-2	3-4	1-3	1-6
5	3-8	3-4	4-9	1-6
6	9-11	3-4	10-12	1-6

The first cohort is comprised of students in Kindergarten through second grade who are at ELP Levels 1 to 2 in the first year of testing. These students will then be in first to third grades at the second year of testing and their ELP Levels will range from 1 to 6. The second cohort students are in third through eighth grade at ELP Levels 1 to 2 in the first year of testing. The third cohort students are in ninth to eleventh grade at ELP Levels 1 to 2 in

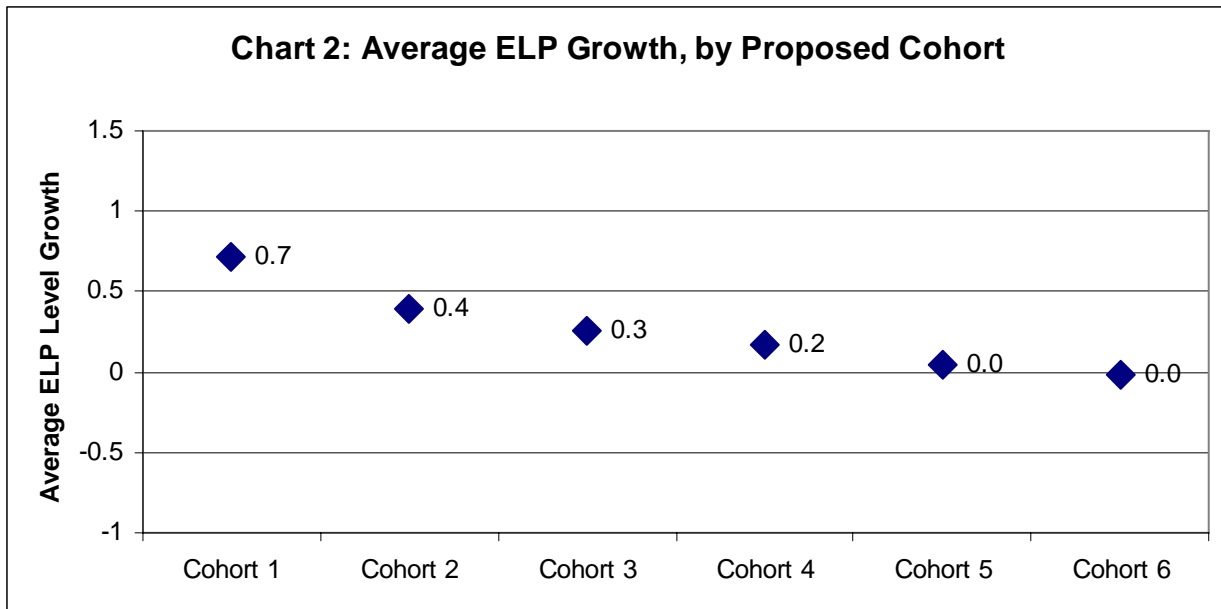
the first year of testing (they will be in 10-12th grades in the second year). Cohorts four to six are initially at ELP Levels 3 - 4 (instead of one and two with the counterpart ranges: grades K-2, 3-8, and 9-12).

Students in ELP Level 5 are part of the exiting calculation for AMAO #2. Thus all students are a part of either progress or exiting criteria. To illustrate the inclusion of all ELL students refer to Table 3.

Grade	English Language Proficiency Level (first year of testing)					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
K	Cohort 1		Cohort 4		Exiting	Former ELL
1						
2						
3	Cohort 2		Cohort 5			
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9	Cohort 3		Cohort 6			
10						
11						
12						

Progress Targets

In order to create realistic yet rigorous targets, Wisconsin has evaluated the average ELP growth for each of these cohorts building on the empirical data presented in Tables 1 and 2:



Note the fairly linear pattern of diminishing rate of progress from cohort one to six. Thus Wisconsin expectations ought to be highest for cohort one (grades K-2, ELP Levels 1-2) and lowest for cohort six (grades 9-12, ELP Levels 3-4). In addition, it is inappropriate to set the expected growth at zero, even though that is the observed average growth of cohort six. A rigorous target for cohort six would be the average growth of the same age students at the lower ELP levels – that is a growth of 0.3 ELP levels. Likewise for cohort one, Wisconsin raises the bar some by setting the expected growth at 0.8 ELP levels. A linear interpolation of these end points thus

produces the following expectations for the six cohorts (see Table 4 below):

Cohort Grade Range	Initial ELP Level	
	1 - 2	3 - 4
Grades K-2	0.8	0.5
Grades 3-8	0.7	0.4
Grades 9-12	0.6	0.3

Any student starting in Kindergarten at level 1.0 who meets these expectations would exit before graduating. Students beginning at higher ELP levels would be expected to exit prior to graduation even at higher grade levels. Since these growth expectations are based on averages, Wisconsin concludes that districts or consortia that progress at least half of their students according to these expectations are making adequate progress. Only the cohorts with sufficient number of students to produce reliable determinations will be used to calculate adequate progress.

Exiting

Students at ELP Level 5 are nearing exiting status. ELL students who attain an ELP Level 6 on the *ACCESS for ELLs*® test exit ELL status, becoming “formerly ELL” students. In order to set an appropriate target for the exiting rate, we again first view the observed rate:

ELP Level 2006	ELP Level 2007	Number of Students	Percent
5	5 or less	2,508	80.3%
5	6	614	19.7%
Total		3,122	

It is noteworthy that Wisconsin’s high standard for exiting level (ELP Level 6) reduces the portion of students able to obtain exit status. A lower ELP exit level (such as other states have) would allow a greater percentage of the students to exit (e.g., an exit Level of 5 would produce a 40% exit rate). Therefore, setting a target of 20% for an exit rate is a rigorous rate for Wisconsin.

An issue found with only using Level 5 students in the calculation of the exiting rate is that some students are able to attain ELP Level 6 in year two when they started with a ELP Level lower than 5 in year one. Thus the fastest exiting students can be lost in the formula. In order to include all students that exit in the exiting formula, Wisconsin plans to change the exiting formula from:

$$\frac{(\text{Level 6 students in year two who were Level 5 in year 1})}{(\text{Level 5 students in year 1})}$$

to:

$$\frac{(\text{Level 6 students in year two})}{(\text{Level 5 students in year 1} + \text{Level 6 students in year two who were lower than Level 5 in year one})}$$

Wisconsin plans to apply a revised exit target of 20% and an enhanced exiting formula to include all students that exit.