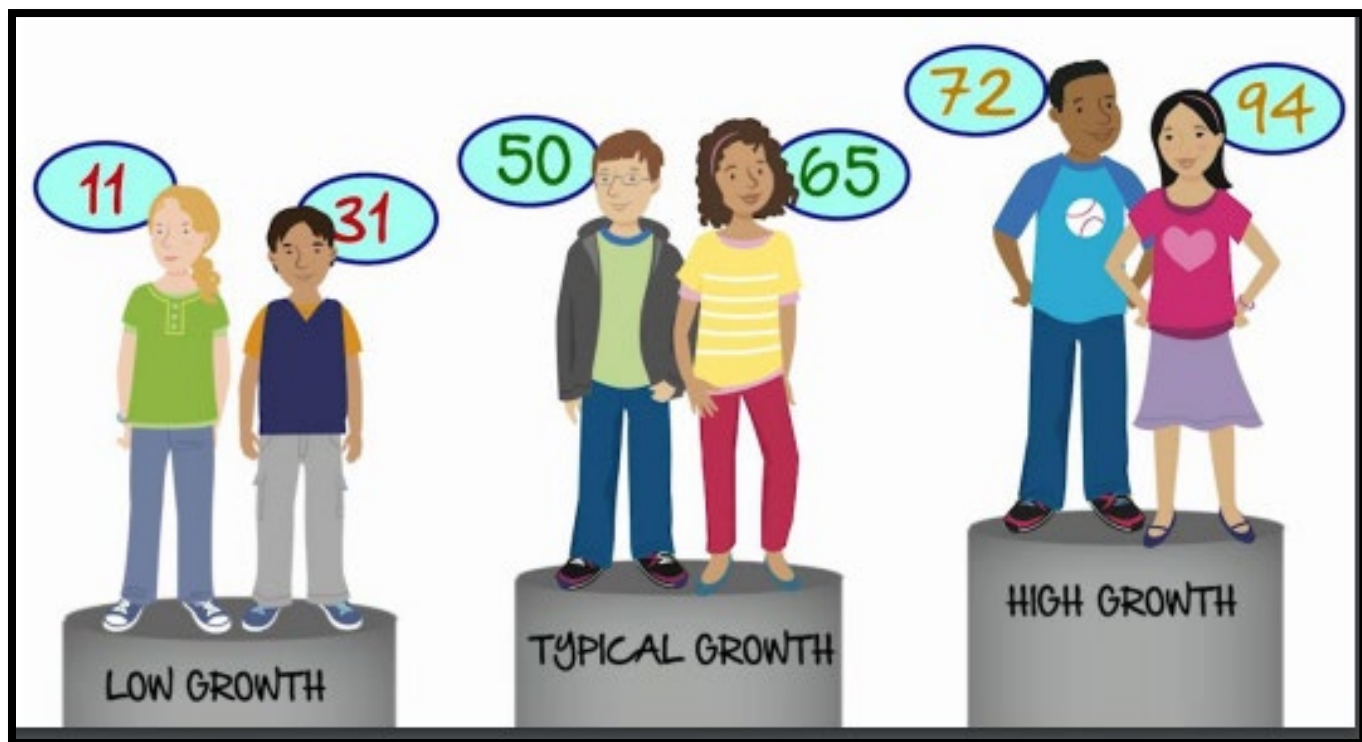


Overview of the Georgia Student Growth Model for English Language Proficiency

GSGM for ELP



What is the Georgia Student Growth Model for English Language Proficiency?

The *Georgia Student Growth Model for English Language Proficiency* (GSGM for ELP) is designed to provide students, parents, and educators with additional information regarding English learners' (ELs) development of English language proficiency (ELP) over time. Together, student's level of English proficiency measured at one moment-in-time and student's growth towards English proficiency from one year to the next provide a more comprehensive picture of EL students' language learning trajectory. We not only know what level of academic English proficiency students have reached, but we also know how much growth they have made to get there. For example, one student may be at a low level of English proficiency one year and then exhibit high growth to reach a higher level of language proficiency the next year. If this student's language growth continues at that high rate, the student could be on the path to becoming fully English proficient within a shorter time than the typical period. At the same time, students who have reached a higher level of English proficiency one year but exhibit low growth the following year may need language enrichment strategies or activities to keep pace with grade-level academic peers. The GSGM for ELP provides educators with accessible and actionable data and information for making individual student level decisions regarding language program design, implementation (e.g., delivery models), and instructional practices to ensure each EL student is on a personalized learning pathway towards developing the academic English required for success in content area standards. (See Overarching Priorities #4 & #8 in [2020-2024 Georgia On the Move GaDOE's Strategic Plan](#), p.13.)

Why Do We Calculate Students' Language Growth?

The GSGM for ELP provides information that can support realistic goals for achieving English proficiency. Reviewing multiple data indicators that include both students' level of English language proficiency at a moment-in-time as well as their growth towards that level can support educators' understanding of students' language needs within academic contexts. The level of English proficiency students exhibit now is relative to how quickly they got to this level from where they were last year. According to the WIDA Focus Bulletin (2013) *Focus on Language Growth*, students who enter English-only school environments at lower levels of English proficiency may need more time or faster ELP growth to reach the level of English proficiency needed to be successful in school.

What Methodology is Used for the GSGM for ELP?

In 2022, the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE), in collaboration with the National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment (NCIEA), began applying a growth model to English learner (EL) students' assessment results. Georgia's *Student Growth Model for English Language Proficiency* (GSGM for ELP) shows how much progress individual EL students have made between last year and this year as measured by the state's English language proficiency assessment, WIDA *ACCESS for ELLs*. The GSGM for ELP uses English learners' overall composite scale score as a measure of language growth from year to year. Currently, the GSGM for ELP is not providing growth reports for students administered the *Alternate ACCESS for ELLs*.

How and how often are ACCESS SGPs calculated?

SGP analyses on EL students' ACCESS for ELL's overall composite scale scores are annually conducted by GaDOE in collaboration with NCIEA. Georgia's ACCESS SGPs represent cohort-referenced consecutive-year growth using current scores and up to two prior scores, when

available. Cohort-referenced SGPs calculate student’s growth relative to other students from across Georgia with the same prior level of English proficiency in the same grade level. Growth percentiles range from 1-99, with lower percentiles indicating lower ELP growth and higher percentiles indicating higher ELP growth. The SGP helps educators understand whether growth is low, typical, or high compared to like peers.

How many years of ACCESS data are used to calculate SGPs?

Multiple consecutive years of data are necessary to analyze student ELP growth. Educators can consider the first year a student’s level of ELP is assessed on the *ACCESS for ELLs* as a baseline of language proficiency. Results from the second year can show growth from the first year. This two-year growth is reported for EL students as an ACCESS student growth percentile (SGP) with a one-year score projection. Educators familiar with WIDA ELP assessment and the *ACCESS for ELLs Interpretive Guide for Score Reports Grades K-12* understand that identifying trends in a student’s development of academic English requires at least two years of ELP growth data.

What are the levels of ACCESS Growth Percentiles?

Unlike the language domain and composite proficiency level results from the *ACCESS for ELLs* assessment, ACCESS student growth percentiles provide ELP growth context across two years of data when compared to English proficient peers in the same grade level. Acquiring academic English in school at the same time as a student is learning school content in English can be a challenging task. Some students may develop academic English faster than others. SGPs between the 66th-99th percentiles are characterized as high growth when compared to similar students. Other students may develop academic English at a slower pace, or their initial levels of English proficiency are already high, and they have less academic English to develop, so their growth may be lower. SGPs between 1st-34th percentiles are characterized as low growth when compared to similar students.

Low Growth	Typical Growth	High Growth
ACCESS SGP 1-34	ACCESS SGP 35-65	ACCESS SGP 66-99
A student who demonstrates low growth in English language proficiency generally will struggle to maintain or improve the level of academic achievement necessary for success in schools where English is the language of instruction and assessment.	A student who demonstrates typical growth in English language proficiency generally will maintain or improve the level of academic achievement necessary for success in schools where English is the language of instruction and assessment.	A student who demonstrates high growth in English language proficiency generally will improve the level of academic achievement necessary for success in schools where English is the language of instruction and assessment.

Can all English learners demonstrate all levels of ELP growth?

The nature of student growth percentiles ensures that all students – regardless of their prior levels of English language proficiency – can demonstrate all levels of growth. Student growth percentiles (SGPs) are determined by how much students have progressed in English proficiency as compared to like peers, i.e., Georgia students in the same grade level with a similar prior level of English proficiency. By measuring growth relative to similar peers, SGPs provide a proficiency peer norming group to ensure like students are compared to each other. This means that students who have reached higher levels of English proficiency are compared to EL students in the same

grade level and at the same higher level of English proficiency. Moreover, students at a lower level of English proficiency are compared to students in the same grade level at the same low level of English proficiency. For example, a student with an ACCESS growth at the 70th percentile will be categorized as exhibiting high growth relative to peers in their group. And a student who demonstrated an ACCESS growth at the 40th percentile will be categorized as exhibiting typical growth relative to their peers.

How is the GSGM for ELP used?

The core purpose of the GSGM for ELP is to provide students, parents, and educators with valuable, actionable information on individual EL student's development of English language proficiency across time. The addition of student ELP growth data to existing student ELP level data paints a more complete picture of EL students' language learning trajectory when acquiring an additional language for academic purposes. Students and parents can work with their teachers to better understand if they are developing English proficiency at a typical growth rate when compared to their peers, or if the student's low growth calls for additional language learning opportunities or maybe the student's high growth could be supported with enhanced and extended language enrichment opportunities.

Educators can use student language data from the *ACCESS for ELLs* Individual Student Report (ISR) and the GaDOE ACCESS Growth ISR in combination with various local benchmark and other data indicators to answer key questions about students' development of academic English in school:

1. At what level of English proficiency was the student according to last year's *ACCESS for ELLs* score results?
2. Given the student's current language proficiency growth, are there any language supports or enrichment we could implement to promote or enrich the student's academic English?
3. How are we going to provide for our EL students to develop high levels of academic English that will support their learning of the *Georgia Standards of Excellence* in our schools?

Educators can access detailed ACCESS SGP data for their students using the **Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) ELP Growth Model** tool. A visual display of individual students' ELP growth is available as a bubble plot. Permissions to access student-level data are limited to educators who have a need for such data. Designated staff can also download the student-level ACCESS Individual Student Growth Reports (ISRs) on each student's profile page under "Downloadable Results". The ACCESS SGP ISR is prepared for educators and parents to explain the growth of their students in English language proficiency as measured by the *ACCESS for ELLs* assessment. Spanish copies are sent directly to the System Testing Coordinator for parents who may need them, as applicable.



Note: ACCESS SGPs do not contribute to school and district *accountability in the College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI)* nor in the *Teacher and Leader Keys Effectiveness Systems (TKES and LKES)*. CCRPI uses English learners' progress toward English proficiency as measured by positive movement on the English Proficiency Performance Bands.

Understanding the Development of English Language Proficiency

As educators review students' academic English proficiency and growth data information, it is important to ensure a common understanding of foundational principles about language acquisition and growth as outlined in the WIDA annual *ACCESS for ELLs Interpretive Guide* and second language learners' research (Cook, Boals, & Lundberg, 2011):

- A student's foundation in a home or primary language that is not English is a good predictor of English language development in school. For example, a student with a strong literacy background in a home language is likely to acquire literacy in English at a quicker pace than a student with only beginning levels of home language literacy.
- The pace of language development is unique to each student. It is common for younger students and those at beginner proficiency levels to make progress more quickly than older students and those at more advanced proficiency levels.
- Students rarely acquire language proficiency across all four language domains at the same pace. Often, oral language skills (listening and speaking) develop faster than literacy skills (reading and writing). At the same time, receptive language skills (listening and reading) often develop faster than productive language skills (speaking and writing). Every student's language growth is different; it is not unusual for students to take longer to develop academic writing skills than any other language domain.
- A characteristic of second language learning growth patterns is *lower is faster, higher is slower*. For example, students in lower grade levels with lower English proficiency levels develop academic English at a faster pace than students in higher grade levels with higher levels of ELP. Consequently, it is not surprising to notice language growth rates decreasing as students' progress up to higher grade levels and English proficiency levels.

How can we learn more?

Currently, resources are available on the *Georgia Student Growth Model for English Language Proficiency* webpage at [GSGM for ELP](#). These are: this Overview document, a One-Pager, Key Questions, a Fact Sheet showing a sample ACCESS SGP Individual Student Report, and a Note on contextualizing ACCESS 2022 data considering the recent pandemic effects on assessment data. More resources will be made available as Georgia rolls-out its first year of GSGM for ELP.

For more information, contact ELPrograms@doe.k12.ga.us.

References:

2020-2024: *Georgia on the Move* Department of Education's Strategic Plan downloaded from <https://www.gadoe.org>.

Cook, H.G., Boals, T., & Lundberg, T (2011). Academic achievement for English learners: What can we reasonably expect? *Kappan*, 93(3), 66-69.

WIDA ACCESS for ELLs Interpretive Guide for Score Reports Grades K-12 (Spring 2022) Understanding Student Scores, p. 10.

WIDA Focus on Language Growth, June 2013, WCER, University of Wisconsin-Madison.