



## Glassboro Public School District

### English as a Second Language (ESL) Student Grading Policy Grades K-12

#### Introduction

Due to the language proficiency and academic background of many English Language Learners (ELLs) in the Glassboro School District, numerous students are working well below grade level in English. Research has shown that grade retention because of language proficiency and academic background can have negative effects on students (Eastern Stream Center on Resources and Training, 1994, p.26). Schools must capitalize on the use of the primary language and flexible programming to facilitate EL acquisition of content knowledge while learning and improving their English (Rodríguez, Carrasquillo, and Lee 2020). Principals should ensure that teachers provide effective (experiential/engaging) instruction, individualized to each student's levels, and needs. This grading policy outlines effective ways to document and report student progress.

#### Considerations for ESL Grading Recommendations

- The goal of these recommendations is to increase the linguistic and academic abilities of students, set students up for success, and give them a positive feeling of achievement if they are working hard in class.
- ELL student proficiency levels range from 1-6, beginning at the non-verbal and word level, and incrementally progressing towards grade level proficiency. [Click here to view and utilize the “Can Do Descriptors”](#) for more information.
- These recommendations are for English language learners who are in classrooms where English is the predominant language.
- When determining at which level to place a student, consider level of proficiency, grade level expectations, native language skills, class placement, program structure, and other contributing factors.
- Each student is different. What may work with one student may not work with another student. That is why there is overlap in the proficiency level bands below.
- Content area teachers should work in consultation with ESL teachers to evaluate student performance.
- Research suggests that grade retention because of language proficiency and academic background can have negative effects on students (Eastern Stream Center on Resources and Training, 1994, p.26). Keep this in mind when grading English language learners.
- See “Overall Score” on the WIDA ACCESS for ELLs score report for a student's proficiency level (WIDA, 2012).

Students at WIDA proficiency levels <b>1.0 (entering) – 3.5 (developing)*</b>	Students at WIDA proficiency levels <b>2.0 (developing) – 5.5 (bridging)*</b>	Students at WIDA proficiency levels <b>3.5 (developing) – 6.0 (reaching)*</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A student is given a passing grade (P)</b> if he or she performs the following tasks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ is prepared for class with needed materials</li> <li>○ tries all the work assigned to him or her <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ uses reference materials (math dictionary, picture dictionary, vocabulary sheets, word walls, and/or bilingual dictionary)</li> <li>▪ attempts as much of an assignment as he or she can</li> <li>▪ completes portions of modified work</li> <li>▪ is attentive during instruction/ group work</li> <li>▪ copies notes when necessary</li> <li>▪ communicates needs and feelings verbally or non-verbally</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>A student is given a failing grade (F)</b> if he or she generally does not perform the above tasks.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A student is given standard grades for modified work.</b> Examples of modified work include, but are not limited to the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Assessments read aloud, extended time, language modifications, word banks, reducing problems or steps because of linguistic complexity, drawing pictures, completing graphic organizers, etc. (modifications should be a collaboration between the ESL and subject-area teacher).</li> <li>○ See grade level appropriate <a href="#">“Can Do Descriptors”</a> to determine what you should and should not expect from students as a result of their proficiency.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Individual grades can be added for class participation, note taking, and use of references to better reflect classroom effort in a student’s final grade.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A student is given standard grades for work that is mostly comparable to his or her peers.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Homework/class work assignments may be modified but <b>only the following test modifications can be made:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A student should be given 1 ½ time to complete their tests.</li> <li>▪ Bilingual dictionaries are given.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Note, “Pass/Fail grade due to language proficiency,” on report card.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Note, “Working with ESL test modifications,” on report card.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Note, “Test modifications limited to 1 ½ time and bilingual dictionary,” on report card.</li> </ul>

\* If a student falls within two of the categories, a teacher can use his or her judgment to decide which category best fits that student’s needs.

\* Passing grade would be input as 80, Failing grade would be input as a 59

#### References

- Eastern Stream Center on Resources and Training (ESCORT) (1994). Grade retention/ a common but misguided option. *Help! they don't speak English starter kit for administrators.* (pp. 26). Washington D.C.: United States Department of Education. Retrieved October 7, 2011, from ERIC.
- WIDA. (2012). 2012 *amplification of the English language development standards kindergarten - grade 12.* Madison, WI: The Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System.
- Rodriguez, D., Carrasquillo, A., Garcia, E., & Howitt, D. (2020, January 17). *Factors that challenge English learners and increase their dropout rates: recommendations from the field.* Fordham.edu. Retrieved October 8, 2021, from [https://www.fordham.edu/download/downloads/id/14636/factors\\_that\\_challenge\\_english\\_learners\\_and\\_increase\\_their\\_dropout\\_rates.pdf](https://www.fordham.edu/download/downloads/id/14636/factors_that_challenge_english_learners_and_increase_their_dropout_rates.pdf).

**Quick Reference:**

- If a student can earn a C or better, that grade stands.
- If the student is trying his/her best, but there are significant language barriers, consider using the pass/fail grading scale (59 failing, 80 passing). This must be approved by administration and communicated to the parents/guardians prior to report cards so they are aware of the expectation for their child(ren).
- A student with a WIDA score over 3 should never receive a pass/fail grade.
- A student may fail for reasons unrelated to language proficiency.
- The classroom teacher must scaffold instruction and assessment for ELLs in his/her classroom.
- Classroom/subject area teachers must communicate with the ESL teacher and scaffold instruction and assessment based on the ELL's WIDA proficiency level and the WIDA Can-Do Descriptors.