

Note on Contextualizing English Language Proficiency Growth (ELP) Data from WIDA *ACCESS for ELLs*' 2022 Score Results

Many variables could have had an impact on how the 2022 *ACCESS for ELLs* score results relate to previous and subsequent score results. One of these variables is the number of English learner (EL) students tested in 2020, 2021, and 2022 varied widely. For example, Georgia tested fewer ELs in 2021 than in 2020 and 2022. Other variables include remote learning and testing challenges in the 2021-2022 school year which may have affected test score results in ways that have not yet been analyzed.¹ The *National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment* (www.nciea.org) characterizes the deceleration in student language learning from the 2020 to 2021 as a “COVID-19 pandemic *headwind*”.² This is manifested in two ways in the language assessment data across the nation - a decrease in velocity (lower rates of ELP growth) and a decrease in learning academic English (lower levels of ELP). Nevertheless, this “pandemic related” variable affected student scores differently at different grade levels. For instance, the median English language proficiency (ELP) growth rate for middle and high school students administered the 2021 *ACCESS for ELLs* in Georgia seemed less affected by the pandemic as that of EL students in the elementary grades. Given that it takes younger ELs less time to develop grade-level English proficiency than older ELs, the negative impact of the pandemic on elementary student’s opportunity to develop academic English is not surprising. Educators will want to consider 2022 scores carefully. Recovery efforts in schools can include a careful analysis of individual student’s *ACCESS 2022* SGPs showing English language proficiency growth from the 2021 to the 2022 *ACCESS for ELLs* test administrations.

¹ *WIDA ACCESS for ELLs Interpretive Guide for Score Reports Grades K-12 (Spring 2022)* Understanding Student Scores, p. 10.

² Georgia WIDA ACCESS SGP Calculation 2021: *Growth & Pandemic Impact* Presentation (February 2022) Center for Assessment.

