



# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

## DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



### New Flexibility for English Learners District Test Coordinator and Administrator Information

In its recent application for renewal of ESEA Flexibility (i.e., the “waiver”), the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) received additional flexibilities with respect to “recently arrived” English learners (ELs) in tested grades. “Recently arrived” ELs are those students whose initial entry date in a U.S. school is less than two years (i.e., 24 months) prior to test administration.

The new EL flexibility granted to Connecticut requires that “recently arrived” ELs be assessed in all content areas. However, student scores in Year 1 will serve as a baseline measure that will not be included in a school’s academic achievement (status) measure for accountability purposes. Instead, Connecticut will use the baseline score of “recently arrived” ELs in Year 1 to determine growth in Year 2. Growth in Year 2 will be an important component of school accountability calculations, and for a second time, achievement status for “recently arrived” ELs in their second year will not be included in school accountability calculations. In Year 3, status **AND** growth will be included in school accountability calculations. This change requires that all “recently arrived” ELs test in all content areas annually so that baseline performance can be established.

**Regardless of time in a U.S. school all ELs are counted toward meeting each school’s 95 percent participation requirement in all tested areas.**

In summary, the EL flexibility allows us to extend the time that ELs can be considered “recently arrived.” In the old system, an EL was considered “recently arrived” for only 12 months. The new system allows us to carry the “recently arrived” designation for 24 months. This is a critical shift because our new flexibility allows us to exclude scores of “recently arrived” ELs from the achievement status measure of the school accountability system. In the old system, we excluded scores for one test administration, but now, we exclude for two test administrations, giving students more time to demonstrate what they know and can do.

#### 1. What is the rationale for the new flexibility?

This approach includes all of our ELs in the system and delays the incorporation of scores of recently arrived ELs in the achievement status measure until the third year, but rightly values growth over time in the second year. All of these students will continue to be counted toward meeting the 95 percent participation requirement in all subjects.

**2. How is the new flexibility for ELs different from what was previously practiced?**

Prior to 2015-16	Beginning in 2015-16
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connecticut policy allowed an exemption from the English language arts portion of statewide assessments for any English Learner (EL) enrolled for the first time in a U.S. school for fewer than 12 calendar months when the testing window began.</li> <li>• Recently arrived ELs participated in the state English proficiency test, the state mathematics assessment and the state science assessment.</li> <li>• Recently arrived EL student scores were not included in the accountability determinations for any subject in the first year.</li> <li>• Recently arrived EL students were counted toward meeting the 95 percent participation requirement in mathematics and science.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connecticut’s ESEA flexibility requires all recently arrived ELs to participate in <b>all</b> content areas of the state assessment: English language arts/literacy and mathematics in Grades 3-8 and 11; and science in Grades 5, 8 and 10.</li> <li>• Recently arrived ELs must participate in the state English proficiency test.</li> <li>• Recently arrived EL student scores will be included in the accountability system in the following ways:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Year 1—Baseline score established, but school’s achievement status calculations unaffected.</li> <li>○ Year 2—Growth measure established when comparing Year 2 scores to baseline. Growth included in school accountability calculations, but achievement status calculations unaffected.</li> <li>○ Year 3—Student scores used in school’s academic achievement (status) measure and the school’s growth measure.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Recently arrived EL students will be included in participation calculations for meeting the 95 percent participation requirement in <b>all</b> subjects beginning in Year 1.</li> </ul>

**3. How is recently arrived EL status defined?**

A student is identified as a recently arrived EL for two state test administrations within 24 months from the first registration in the Public School Information System (PSIS).

**4. How will PSIS capture this change?**

During the testing window adjustment period, the PSIS registration file will reflect two fields related to ELs. One field is for EL status and the other is for recently arrived EL status. Districts will have to confirm this information.

**5. What are the implications of the new flexibility provisions for EL students and schools and districts?**

- EL students in Grades 3-8 and 11 must be tested in both English language arts, and mathematics regardless of when they enter the United States.
- Recently arrived EL students' results will not be included in the school and district academic achievement measure of Connecticut's accountability system for the student's first two years. (Indicator 1)
- The exclusion of a student's score from achievement status calculations (Indicator 1) will be extended to a period of two years.
- Year 1 scores will be used to establish a baseline against which growth will be measured in the student's second year and included in the accountability system (Indicator 2).
- EL students' growth will be measured and reported from the first year to the second year in ELA and mathematics.
- In the student's third year, ELA and mathematics scores will be included in school achievement status measure (Indicator 1) and the longitudinal academic growth measure (Indicator 2) of the accountability system.
- Recently arrived EL student results will not be included in the school and district academic achievement measure, but the results will be used to measure growth from the student's first year to the student's second year.

**6. What if a student spends some time in a U.S. school, returns for an extended time to their home country and then comes back to the U.S.? Is this student a recently arrived English learner?**

For CSDE accountability purposes, a student may only be identified as a recently arrived English learner **one time** (for two years). For example, Student A enters a U.S. school for the first time in Kindergarten. Student A returns to his home country for Grades 1 and 2. Student A then returns to Connecticut for Grade 3. This student's results on the Smarter Balanced Assessment or the Connecticut Alternate Assessment will count toward the school's accountability.

**7. What if a student enters a U.S. school for the first time in Kindergarten? Will the student be considered a recently arrived English learner when they are tested on the Smarter Balanced Assessment or the Connecticut Alternate Assessment in Grade 3?**

No, the student will not be considered a recently arrived English learner when they are tested in Grade 3 because the student will have been in a U.S. school for longer than 2 years.

**8. What if a student enters in the middle of the school year? How is the student’s “recently arrived” status calculated?**

The beginning of Year 1 of a student’s “recently arrived EL” status begins whenever the student is entered into the Public School Information System (PSIS) by the district during the school year and continues until the end of that school year. For instance, if a recently arrived EL student entered a U.S. school for the first time on September 1, 2015, his or her “Year 1 recently arrived EL” status would remain until the last day of school in June 2016. Similarly, if a recently arrived EL student entered a U.S. school for the first time on February 15, 2016, his or her “Year 1 recently arrived English learner” status would remain until the last day of school in June 2016.

**9. What if a student enters in June 2016 during the state testing window?**

The student’s “Year 1 recently arrived EL” status would remain until the last day of school in June 2016.

**10. What are the implications of the new flexibility provisions for EL students What if a student enters in June 2016 after the state testing window?**

If a student enters after the end of the state testing window (for example June 11, 2016) then the end of the student’s “Year 1 recently arrived EL” status would remain until the last day of school in **June 2017**.

**11. What are the implications of the new flexibility provisions for EL students in Grade 11? Are they now required to take the statewide assessment or is there an exemption for them?**

Grade 11 students identified as English learners (EL), must participate in statewide assessments in all content areas. If these students are recently arrived their results will not count for accountability purposes, but they will be counted toward participation rate.

**12. Who can I contact for more information?**

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