

## Glossary

**ACCESS for ELLs®** assessments are secure large-scale English language proficiency assessments given annually to Kindergarten through 12th graders who are identified as Multilingual learners (NEP or LEP). ACCESS for ELLs® results provide educators and parents with information about their child's English language proficiency level in the language domains of Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing. This assessment aligns with the [CELP standards](#).

### **Alternate assessment**

The IEP Team determines how individual students participate in assessment programs, not whether they participate. Federal law clearly includes all students in assessment and accountability. Since instruction drives assessment, it is the instructional standard that determines assessment. If evidence of a significant cognitive disability is documented, then the IEP Team will consider the educational impact of the disability to determine the appropriate academic standard for instruction.

- The IEP Team may choose grade-level instructional standards with/without appropriate accommodations. In that case, the student will participate in grade-level classroom/district/state assessment with or without accommodations. However, if there are compelling indications that the student should receive instruction based on alternate standards and take alternate assessments, those factors must be documented in the IEP.
- OR: If the body of evidence supports the existence of a significant cognitive disability, the student may receive instruction based on alternate academic achievement standards and will participate in alternate classroom/district/state assessment.

Not all students who have a cognitive disability will require instruction based on alternate standards and take alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards. For more information, see the [CDE's Alternate Assessment Participation Guidelines](#).

### **CMAS**

The Colorado Measures of Academic Success, known as CMAS, are the state's common measurement of students' progress at the end of the school year in English language arts, math, and science. Students in grades three through eight take the CMAS

tests in math and English language arts. Students in fifth, eighth, and 11th grades take the CMAS science assessments.

### **Composite Scores**

Composite Scores on standardized assessments are overall scores that combine results from multiple sections or subjects of a test into a single number. These scores provide a summary of a student's performance across different areas of the assessment.

For example, if a standardized test measures math, reading, and science skills, the composite score is calculated by averaging or summing the scores from each section. It gives a big-picture view of how well the student performed on the entire test, rather than focusing on one specific subject.

Composite scores are useful for:

- Comparing overall performance between students.
- Identifying trends in strengths and weaknesses across subjects.
- Meeting admission or qualification requirements where a single score is used.

For 9th-grade students, composite scores are often used in tests like the ACT, SAT, or other school assessments to evaluate readiness for higher education or track academic progress.

### **Criterion-Referenced**

Informal or formal assessments that compare a student's reading skills to a set of skills (criterion) that are identified as needed for mastery.

### **CSLA (Colorado Spanish Language Assessment)**

Third and fourth-grade students who meet the eligibility criteria are able to participate in Colorado Spanish Language Arts (CSLA), the accommodated form of the CMAS English Language Arts/Literacy (ELA) assessment. Colorado School Law C.R.S. §22-7-1006.3 (4) (II)(b), requires a Spanish Language Arts assessment for third and fourth grade. CSLA aligns with skills and concepts in the Colorado Academic Standards.

### **Culturally and Linguistically Responsive**

**Culturally and linguistically responsive** means teaching and testing in ways that respect and include students' different backgrounds, languages, and cultures. It helps

make sure all students feel valued and have a fair chance to learn and show what they know.

### **Curriculum-Based Measurement**

A criterion-referenced assessment that is tied to specific reading skills and can be used for screening and benchmarking purposes.

### **Domain Scores**

Domain Scores on standardized assessments are scores that show how well a student performed in specific areas or skill sets within a subject. These areas, called "domains," represent key parts of the subject being tested.

For example, in a 9th-grade standardized reading assessment, domain scores might include:

- **Vocabulary:** Understanding word meanings.
- **Reading Comprehension:** Understanding and analyzing passages.
- **Grammar and Usage:** Recognizing correct sentence structure.

Each domain score helps teachers and students see strengths and areas for improvement in specific skills, rather than just looking at an overall score.

Domain scores are useful for:

- Identifying which skills need more practice or support.
- Guiding instruction and lesson planning.
- Providing a detailed picture of student progress in specific areas of learning.

### **Evidence-Based**

The instruction or item described is based on reliable, trustworthy, and valid evidence and has demonstrated a record of success in adequately increasing students' academic competency across content areas.

### **Formative Assessment**

Formative assessment is a planned, ongoing process used by all students and teachers during learning and teaching to elicit and use evidence of student learning to improve student understanding of intended disciplinary learning outcomes and support students to become self-directed learners.

### **Like-Peer Comparative Data**

Like-Peer Comparative Data for Multilingual Learners refers to information that compares the performance, progress, or behavior of multilingual students to other students with similar characteristics. These characteristics may include factors such as:

- Language proficiency levels and scale scores
- Age or grade level (e.g., 9th grade).
- Years of English instruction or support.
- Educational background or previous schooling.

For example, if a school is assessing the reading skills of multilingual learners in 9th grade, like-peer comparative data might compare a student's reading level to other multilingual learners who are at the same English proficiency stage. This type of comparison ensures fairness because it considers the unique challenges and strengths of multilingual students, rather than comparing them to native English speakers or students with different educational experiences.

This data helps educators:

- Set realistic and equitable learning goals.
- Measure growth against peers with similar backgrounds.
- Tailor instruction to meet the specific needs of multilingual learners.

### **Local Normative Data (LND)**

Local Normative Data in the context of K-12 education refers to data that reflects the average or typical performance of students within a specific school, district, or region. It is used to compare an individual student's performance to their peers in the same local setting.

For example, if a school collects test scores in math for 9th graders, the average score of all the students at that school becomes part of the local normative data. Teachers and administrators can use this data to:

- Identify students who may need extra help.
- Measure the effectiveness of teaching strategies.
- Set realistic goals for improvement based on local trends.

Local normative data is especially useful because it considers the unique characteristics of a specific population, like socio-economic factors or curriculum differences, which might not be reflected in national or state averages.

### **Norm-Referenced**

Formal, standardized assessments that reference a student's reading skills and ability as compared to other students at the same grade or age level.

### **Mean values**

**Mean values** are the average scores on a test. To find the mean, you add up all the scores and divide by how many people took the test. It helps show how most students are doing overall.

### **Median**

**Median** is the middle score in a group of test scores. To find it, you put all the scores in order from lowest to highest, and the one in the middle is the median. It shows the score right in the center, so half the scores are higher and half are lower.

### **Multilingual Learners (MLs)**

See [CDE ML Dear Colleague Letter 2022](#).

### **Progress Monitoring**

The ongoing process of collecting and analyzing data from formal measures to determine student progress toward specific skills or general outcomes. Progress-monitoring is a general and special education process and a form of assessment. Data are used to plan instructional interventions, to determine if the intervention should continue or if the student has met the performance goal and an intervention can be discontinued.

### **PSAT**

Colorado's public school ninth- and 10th-graders take the PSAT, and 11th-graders take the SAT at no cost to the student. The PSAT and SAT focus on concepts and skills that matter for college and career readiness.

## **Qualitative data**

Qualitative research methods collect and analyze qualitative data, which are often expressed in words rather than numbers (encyclopedia of behavioral medicine).

## **Quantitative data**

Quantitative data are used when a researcher is trying to quantify a problem or address the "what" or "how many" aspects of a research question. It is data that can either be counted or compared on a numeric scale.

## **Reference Population**

A **reference population** is the group of people used to create the "norms" or average scores for a test. When a new person takes the test, their score is compared to this group to see how they did. It helps make the test fair and show what is typical or expected.

## **Reliability**

Reliability is how consistently a test provides a dependable, consistent measurement of a skill or ability. The same result should be achieved regardless of who administers the test.

## **Scientifically Based**

The instruction or item described is based on research that applies rigorous, systematic,

and objective procedures to obtain valid knowledge that is relevant to content and language instruction, and learning difficulties.

## **Sequential Bilinguals**

Sequential bilinguals are those who learn the second language after the first language is established. Sequential bilinguals usually speak their first language (L1) at home and their second language (L2) at school.

## **Simultaneous bilinguals**

Simultaneous bilinguals learn two languages, usually from birth. Both the first and second languages are introduced simultaneously or close together.

## Summative Assessments

Sometimes called outcome assessments. The most common type of summative assessments are standardized tests that are group administered. Typically given at the end of the school year.

## Tier 1 Supports

Universal Supports Core programming at Tier 1 includes academic, social, emotional, and behavioral curriculum, instruction, and supports aligned to grade-level standards and student needs. At Tier 1, educators use instructional strategies and practices shown to be effective for the student population and educational context. In effective Tier 1 systems, most students benefit from Tier 1 programming alone, and teachers use differentiation to ensure all students can access and benefit from core programming. Consistency in the use of evidence-based practices and supports is essential for collective efficacy at Tier 1. Effective Tier 1 ensures a positive school climate and conditions for learning. Targeted English Language Development instruction is part of Universal Tier 1 Instruction for MLs. [Read about the Multi-Level Prevention System.](#)

## Tier 2 Supports

Targeted Supports. At Tier 2, schools provide small group, standardized academic interventions or targeted behavioral or mental health supports using validated intervention programs. Teams select or design interventions and supports that have demonstrated positive effects for desired outcomes and are aligned with student needs. Tier 2 interventions and supports are delivered with fidelity at an appropriate duration and frequency to ensure students have increased opportunities for practice and corrective feedback. [Read about the Multi-Level Prevention System.](#)

## Tier 3 Supports

Intensive Supports or interventions that offer students highly individualized, systematic instruction in one or more areas of assessed needs. These interventions may be similar to Tier 2 interventions but are provided with a longer duration and/or increased intensity in order to accelerate student learning and meet the unique needs of students at the highest risk for failure. [Read about the Multi-Level Prevention System.](#)

## Universal Screening Assessment

An assessment that provides a quick sample of critical reading, math, science, or social studies skills that will inform the teacher if the student is on track for grade-level

competency by the end of the school year. A screening assessment is the first alert that a student may need extra help to make adequate progress during the year. \* It is sometimes referred to as a Benchmark assessment.

### **Validity**

Validity is the overarching concept that defines quality in educational measurement. It is the extent to which an assessment provides accurate information for making decisions about student learning and the adequacy and appropriateness of the use of assessment results for specific purposes. No single test is valid for all purposes.

[Expanded CDE Glossary of Terms.](#)