

[Improving Achievement Level Labels Study](#)

Notes from study:

Bottom tier language is very positive. This is a good shift for kids to not feel like failures and gives them hope that they can move up in tiers.

More growth mindset language needed. Most stakeholders were in agreement regarding positive language.

Parents want clear and concise language, but not too fluffy.

Purpose to give information to parents about how students are performing in the moment rather than next steps.

Information needs to be readily available to parents and also a subheading or descriptor about what is going on.

Review the following states' policy level performance level descriptors.

- What language resonates with you?
- What language provides a clear explanation of student achievement?
- What language should be avoided?

- In terms of organization, what seemed accessible to all stakeholders?
- What are the implications to students?

State	Notes
North Carolina	<p>NC has four performance levels. Negatives: Language is unclear especially to parents and probably to educators. Too many kids seem to be lumped together. Level 3 is odd—meets state but not CCR. Overall impression, group does not like this model.</p> <p>Language is positive (yay)—but not precise (boo). “Not proficient” label is the only one that the group considered clear and concise.</p> <p>Anything vague should be avoided and using seemingly synonyms for different levels is not helpful</p> <p>Positives: The chart at the top provided good organization. Also good that it was located at the top so stakeholder wouldn’t have to hunt.</p> <p>Students probably wouldn’t understand where they were at on the scale.</p>
Florida	<p>FL has five performance levels Have to scroll to page 9 to see any descriptors. Level 1 label is inadequate—YUCK; Page 11 gives a score and shows a breakdown of descriptors—this is a positive. Descriptors are good and clear to parents—but not the labels. Like that it links to the next grade level.</p> <p>FL has five levels. Separates out those who are doing what they need to do. 1-2 are below. Levels 3-5 are on grade level and above. Level 3 is described as needing additional supports to be successful.</p> <p>Reporting by standards is also a positive of language that resonates for both parents and educators. How likely they are to need support for the next grade level—Page 14. Descriptions don’t have a negative connotation, but don’t like the titles (too negative)</p>

	<p>Language to be avoided–Inadequate Top three label word choices are OK Too much reading to get to the point. Maybe start with a chart or similar at the beginning of the document (see page 9) Prefer chart to be left/right horizontal rather than vertical if only going to have one year of data. Do like breakdown of benchmark to standard.</p>
<p>Louisiana</p>	<p>2 Moderate level text vs more complicated text for higher level Substantial vs moderate level supports may be needed Below level seems a little negative Unsatisfactory is not good.</p> <p>Nearly and partially are so close- Level 2 and 3- were same language</p> <p>Like the preciseness of the next level of PLDs</p>
<p>Oklahoma</p>	<p>2 Liked it looking like a proficiency scale where it really defines what each level indicates and what it takes to score at each level</p> <p>Basic and below basic seem negative. Basic is not a good description of the actual skills a student can demonstrate. Below basic they didn't even define. They just claim not even basic.</p> <p>The group favors a statement that says what a student can do and do know. They also like the level that really defines specific skills. Policy level descriptors really inform this description.</p> <p>MAP testing says "students are ready" for Rather than what they cannot do.</p>

<p>Oregon</p>	<p>3 4 levels Similar to Aspire Does Not Met, Nearly Meets, Meets, Exceeds Benchmarks clearly defined. Descriptors provide mastery descriptions. Yet - providing hope, we aren't giving up. Nearly meets - a little ambiguous, confusing to EL parents. Would rather see approaching. For students, short descriptors preferred. Definitions required to understand the difference in levels.</p>
<p>Connecticut</p>	<p>3 4 Levels Exceeds the Achievement Level, Meets the Achievement Level, Approaching the Achievement Level, Does Not Meet the Achievement Level Titles sound better, more motivating, like bolded parts. Parents - helpful to see the continued information about student progress, the word support parents would expect to know what that looks like and where it comes from, Teachers - Table is helpful, bulleted list would be better, a lot to read, and digest, condensing would be helpful,</p>
<p>Texas</p>	<p>4 4 Levels</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Masters Grade Level ● Meets Grade Level ● Approaches Grade Level ● Did Not Meet Grade Level <p>Masters grade level provides a clear explanation to the top level "Master" not only met, but mastered the skill. Ready for the next grade level. Will need to define what "Master" means</p> <p>"Did not" meets grade level sounds negative. The lower is too negative. Use other language to make it better to understand, but to communicate correctly</p> <p>Once dig a little deeper, not well defined</p>

	Did our students learn enough to go onto grade level and succeed, not did they meet grade level.
Alabama	<p>4 Four Performance Levels</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 4 (highest performance) • Level 3 • Level 2 • Level 1 (lowest performance) <p>Not defined, can give a lot of misconceptions</p> <p>Makes parents go search to see what the levels mean. Not parent friendly Useful information for education, but not for parents. Can be frustrating to the parents.</p>

Notes for Arkansas to Consider:

Report out Notes

NC stood out as being unclear. Were there four levels or five?? Very confusing. Levels 4-5 lumped too many students together. The labels were positive—but no precision and almost synonyms of each other. Positive, but almost too positive because couldn't distinguish among labels. Did like their organization—easy to locate and read although language unclear.

FL—Way too much reading. Don't like some of the labels especially inadequate and below satisfactory. Top level labels were much better. Descriptors were good. They are clear to parents to know what students need to know to reach next level.

Four levels vs five— How would the public perceive this? Would top students in level 2 now bump up to level 3? Would there be enough of a difference between levels 4 and 5 if there were 5 levels?

Liked stating what students can do. And want parents to easily access and understand document.

From an accountability lens, how do we give schools credit when we want more precision with larger buckets? Where the cut actually goes will take place later during standard setting. The definitions in the PLD will give guidance to the standard setting process.

OK–Had four levels. They used the label below basic which is too negative and didn't have a descriptor of what this means. Liked when it stated what students can do in the document–this is good for parents. Students are ready for... (liked this language).

LA- Five levels. There level two and three were divided between “nearly” and “partially” Group couldn't tell the difference between the two groups–not clear. There bottom level was unsatisfactory– also negative.

What are words that are we could use that are more positive for “bottom” labels?:

Developing, approaching, near goal,

OR– Four levels; Nearly meets might be a little confusing for EL students. Descriptors are clear but short

CT– Four levels– “Doesn't meet” is the label of lowest level. Document organized, but too wordy. Labels better than Oregon overall.

TX– Four levels–Did not meet is the label of lowest level. Not about Mastery of grade level but more about have students ready for next grade level. Could be confusing to parents that the language is focused on next grade and not how their child performed on current grade level.

What did student understand on current level that don't need to revisit next year.

AL– four levels. Didn't like the 1, 2,3,4 labels. Descriptions on each one but have to dig into each one for a parent. Very overwhelming.

Group thought 3 levels might be good. Parents can understand students performing under grade level, at grade level, or above grade level. If use 4 levels, we will need to really define what a 2 means.

Members

Abby McMillian -
Amber Holloway - Smackover
Angela Rose - Russellville - 3rd grade
Ashley Jones - F'ville
Autumn Trotter - Hope
Audrey Sites - Benton
Benny Brock - Cabot
Beth Hall - Beebe
Bethany Philpot - Searcy
BrockB -
Cassandra (Cassy) Melcher - ARVA
Chasity McNeary
Christi Schrauger -Springdale
Courtney Southerland - Emerson Taylor Bradley
Courtney Worthen
Dr. Rutledge -
Garrett Whitley
Hannah Schluterman - Paris
Jamie Burnett-Head Start

Jamie Burnett - Headstart
Jessica Saum - Cabot
Kali Miller
Kerry Smith - Conway
Kelly Ross -
Kristal Leach
Laurie Baldrige -
Lennett Thrasher - AAEA
Leslye Morse - Dyslexia - Bentonville
Lindsey Bohler - Sheridan
Misty Doyle - Jonesboro
Misty Lindsey
Rosalind Ellis
Ryan Halbert
Ryan Riley - Hector
Vanessa Hall - Nettleton
Wanda Williams - Bearden
Whitney Phillips - Marked Tree