



Southeast Service Cooperative

Project Momentum: Year 4 Evaluation (2025-2026)

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May 2026



Executive summary

Project Momentum is an initiative of Southeast Service Cooperative (SSC), a nonprofit agency that aims to provide high quality opportunities, supports, and resources for educators providing instruction to multilingual learners in schools and districts across the state, with a focus on southeastern Minnesota. Project Momentum is funded under a National Professional Development (NPD) Program Grant. Wilder Research evaluated year 4 process and outcome measures for SSC's Project Momentum.

Project Momentum met year 4 GPRA requirements

As of May 8, 2026, Project Momentum has met and exceeded all requirements outlined in accordance with the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA). Additionally, Wilder Research finds evidence using the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (CFI) that key collaborating partners see Project Momentum and the work that they are doing in a highly favorable way.

Project Momentum's grant measures and targets

In addition to evaluating Project Momentum's compliance with the four project-specific measures of GPRA, as listed below, this report also explores explicit year 4 targets identified by SSC for Project Momentum during year 4 of the grant.

Below are the four GPRA measures for which SSC is evaluated, followed by any project specific goals and year 4 targets unique to Project Momentum:

- GPRA Measure 1: Project Momentum will meet at least 80% of each of its stated project-specific annual goals.
 - Goal A and year 4 target: Project Momentum will support five additional candidates in their licensure pathway program in the state of Minnesota with a specific program approval for Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) K-12.
 - Goal B and year 4 target: Project Momentum will develop two additional micro-credential courses that address specific needs of English Learner (EL) coordinators, other administrators, and education support professionals, as part of their existing series of micro-credential courses that are aligned to applicable state professional standards for various audiences.
 - Goal C and year 4 target: As part of a series of professional resources related to multilingual learners to support instructional leaders in Minnesota, Project Momentum will launch an additional three guidance documents supporting dissemination of evidence-based practices in the field of multilingual education.
 - Goal D and year 4 target: As part of an effort to build relationships and strengthen partnerships across Minnesota, Project Momentum will conduct four cross-functional partnership meetings.
 - Goal E and year 4 target: As part of its mission to establish a profile as a state leader in contemporary research, policy and practice related to multilingual learners in Minnesota, Project Momentum will submit two conference presentations.

- GPRA Measure 2: The number of pre-service program participants enrolled annually.
 - Not applicable; Project Momentum is not required to or currently supporting pre-service teacher licensure pathways.
- GPRA Measure 3: The unduplicated number of in-service program participants served annually.
 - Year 4 target: Project Momentum will serve 160 in-service program participants.
- GPRA Measure 4: The number of participants (under measures 2 and 3) who are making progress toward becoming State certified, licensed, or endorsed in EL instruction and the number of participants who have become State certified, licensed, or endorsed by the end of the five-year project period.
 - Year 4 target –Project Momentum will support five participants in making progress toward becoming licensed in EL instruction.

Research methods

To assess Project Momentum’s progress toward GPRA measures 1-4, Wilder Research engaged in a document review process. This included systematically examining existing materials and records to better understand Project Momentum’s identified program goals, implementation, context, and evidence of activities or outcomes. The evaluation team reviewed the GPRA measures as the original grant guidelines, Project Momentum’s agendas with minutes, website materials (including publicly available course catalogs, curriculum resources, and other guidance documents), a list of conference presentation submissions and acceptances, and article publications. Additionally, Wilder Research conducted a survey of Project Momentum’s collaborating partners using the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (CFI) to assess Project Momentum’s current strengths and future opportunities for improvement.

Findings

Project Momentum is exceeding all of its year 4 targets and, as of March 31, 2026, has served more than 4,700 unique educators through enrollment in its program. Program participants have come from 208 school districts in Minnesota as well as 28 additional states.

Recommendations

- Project Momentum should assess funding opportunities to ensure sustainability of their resources and supports to continue their program.
- Project Momentum should communicate their successes, next steps being taken related to sustainability, new evaluation findings, and upcoming professional development opportunities with their collaborating partners.

Next steps

Project Momentum will review feedback from educators and curriculum developers tasked with reviewing their curriculum overlay resources. Project Momentum will use this feedback to communicate their efforts and ensure program and resource sustainability during the upcoming year.

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GPRA measures 1-4: Project-specific goals and targets

Under the guidelines of the grant, grantees are given flexibility to decide how to identify appropriate annual project-specific goals and identify data that reflect this measure. For GPRA measure 1, there are five-specific goals for Project Momentum—listed as A-E below to avoid confusion with the overarching four GPRA measures.

GPRA measure 1: The percentage of project-specific annual goals the program has met

The year 4 target is to achieve 80% of intended outcomes on each stated project-specific goals (A-E).

Project Momentum **has exceeded all** year 4 project-specific targets related to its overarching program goals.

Goal A: Seek approval as a teacher preparation program and support licensure candidates

Project Momentum's year 4 target was to support five candidates toward ESL licensure. In November 2024, SSC received approval from Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board (PELSB) for Project Momentum to be a teacher preparation provider in the state of Minnesota, with specific approval for teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) K-12. Project Momentum began enrolling its first full cohort of candidates as part of the additional licensure program in January 2025.

Project Momentum **exceeded** its year 4 target by supporting 72 candidates, including 48 candidates who have already earned an ESL license through the Additional ESL Licensure Program, another 24 on track to complete this program by the end of year 4, and 12 who have earned an ESL license through the Licensure via Portfolio Pathway.

Goal B: Project Momentum will develop a series of micro-credential courses

Project Momentum's year 4 target was to develop two micro-credential courses to help address specific needs for EL coordinators, administrators, and education support professionals, while also collecting and incorporating participants quantitative and qualitative feedback on an ongoing basis for continuous improvement.

Project Momentum **exceeded** its year 4 target of developing two new micro-credential courses. During year 4, they developed the Integrating Language & Content Instruction series, comprised of four micro-credential courses. They are also set to offer the Multilingual Learners with Disabilities series, comprised of seven micro-credential courses, by the end of year 4. All courses are, listed below (Figure 1), and in the [Project Momentum Course Catalog](#).

1. Project Momentum courses

Course title
1. Applying the WIDA ELD Standards Framework to Content Areas
2. Assessing and Supporting Language Development with WIDA Tools
3. Assessment Accommodations for Multilingual Learners
4. Collaboration & Co-Teaching for Multilingual Learners
5. Culturally Responsive Communication in the Classroom
6. Culturally Responsive School, Family, and Community Partnerships
7. Effective Lesson Planning with Language and Content Objectives
8. Evidence-Based Literacy for Multilingual Learners
9. Genre-Based Pedagogy in the Elementary Classroom
10. Incorporating Linguistic Supports as an Education Support Professional
11. Integrating Language & Content with Curriculum Overlays (NEW Year 4 – four course series)
12. Language & Literacy for Experienced (Long-term) Multilingual Learners
13. Language & Literacy for Recently Arrived English Learners & SLIFE
14. Language Access for Multilingual Families
15. Learning in a Sociocultural Context
16. Multilingual Development
17. Multilingual Learners in Early Childhood Education
18. Multilingual Learner Leadership Micro-Credential
19. Multilingual Learners with Disabilities Micro-Credential (Coming August 2026 – seven course series)
20. Scaffolding Content Lessons for Multilingual Learners
21. Supporting Academic Language in the Classroom
22. Understanding WIDA Proficiency Levels
23. Who are Multilingual Learners in U.S. Schools?

Note: The existing courses prior to this grant year have typically been offered for two to three continuing education units (CEUs). The NEW Year 4 series of courses will be taken together as part of the series and consists of 20+ CEUs.

Goal C: Project Momentum will develop a series of professional resources

Project Momentum's year 4 target was to launch three additional guidance documents using a digital format and making them accessible on their website to support the dissemination of evidence-based practices in multilingual education.

Project Momentum **exceeded** its year 4 target by offering a total of eight **new** professional resources during year 4. These new evidence-based guidance documents are listed below (Figure 2) and on [Project Momentum's Resource Page](#).

2. List of digitally accessible, evidence-based guidance documents

Name of guidance document
1. Assessment Accommodations for Multilingual Learners
2. Asset-Based Grading for Multilingual Learners (NEW – Year 4)
3. Asset-Focused Student Profile Template
4. Content & Language Objectives Guide
5. Core Principles for Working with Multilingual Learners
6. Distance Learning for Multilingual Learners Guide
7. ELD Curriculum Overlays (80 resources by Aug 2026) (NEW – Year 4)
8. ELD Progress Report Template (NEW – Year 4)
9. English Learner Program Evaluation Tool
10. English Learners with Disabilities: Key Considerations
11. Extended Home Language Survey
12. FAQs: Multilingual Learners in Early Childhood Education Programs
13. Funding Worksheet for English Learner Programs
14. Inclusive Policy Review Worksheet
15. Individual Language Plan (ILP) Template
16. Integrated Unit Plan Template
17. Language Access Plan Template
18. Micro-Credential PLC Facilitator Guide
19. Minnesota English Learner Program Coordinator Handbook
20. Multicultural Calendar (2025-26)
21. Multilingual Learner Assessment Accessibility Checklist
22. Project Momentum Course Catalog
23. Project Momentum Micro-Credential Overview
24. Read Aloud Companion Library (16 resources) (NEW – Year 4)
25. Reframing Common Grading Concerns (NEW – Year 4)

2. List of digitally accessible, evidence-based guidance documents (continued)

Name of guidance document

- | |
|--|
| 26. Report Card Guidelines for MLs (NEW – Year 4) |
| 27. SMART Goals for Language Development (NEW – Year 4) |
| 28. Supporting Students During Great Lent (NEW – Year 4) |
| 29. Supporting Students During Ramadan |
| 30. Text Complexity Analysis Tool |
| 31. Translanguaging in the Classroom: Facts & Misconceptions |
| 32. WIDA Standards Exploration Guide |

Goal D: Project Momentum will build relationships and strengthen partnerships

Project Momentum's year 4 target was to conduct four cross-functional partnership meetings including staff within the State Education Agency (SEA), Local Education Agencies (LEAs), Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) and other professional and community organizations including LatinoLEAD.

Project Momentum **exceeded** its year 4 target by establishing quarterly meetings, along with other convenings, and attending more than a dozen meetings focused on supporting EL needs across the state. Meeting dates for these advisory meetings and other school and district meetings are listed in Figure 3, below.

3. Year 4 cross-functional partnership meetings

Partner	Meeting date
1. Minnesota Coalition of Alternative Teacher Preparation (MCATP)	9/11/2025
2. Rochester Public Schools	10/1/2025
3. Rochester Public Schools	10/4/2025
4. MCATP	10/9/2025
5. Advisory Board Meeting	10/21/2025
6. Rochester Public Schools	11/3/2025
7. MCATP	11/13/2025
8. MCATP	12/11/2025
9. Rochester Public Schools	1/9/2026
10. Advisory Board Meeting	1/202/2026
11. Rochester Public Schools	1/15/2026
12. Rochester Public Schools	1/30/2026
13. MCATP	2/12/2026
14. Minneapolis Public Schools	2/17/2026
15. Advisory Board Meeting	4/21/2026

Goal E: Project Momentum will establish and maintain a profile as a state leader related to multilingual learners in Minnesota

Project Momentum's year 4 target was to submit two conference presentations in service of communication, publication, and dissemination of their research to support the improvement of multilingual learner education.

Project Momentum **exceeded** its year 4 target by being accepted and presenting at eight conferences. The chronological list below documents Project Momentum's conference submissions, acceptances, and formal presentations, along with presentations at conference-adjacent convenings and a published article.

4. Year 4 conference presentations, other events, and publications

Katnik, K. (2026, June, accepted). *Introducing curriculum overlays for content and language integration*. Presentation to the Chief Council of State School Officers (CCSSO) EL Working Group, Austin, TX.

Katnik, K. (2026, June, accepted). *Strengthening Tier 1 instruction for multilingual learners with curriculum overlays*. Collaborative Minnesota Partnerships to Advance Student Success (COMPASS) Summer Institute, St. Paul, MN.

Russie, M., & Tabini, C. (2026, February). *Family, community, and student engagement*. Presentation at the Rochester Public Schools Professional Learning Day, Rochester, MN.

Karlsson, A., Katnik, K., Russie, M., & Tabini, C. (2026, February). *Reimagining teacher preparation for a multilingual future*. Presentation at the 55th NABE Annual International Bilingual Education Conference, Chicago, IL.

Robertson, K., Karlsson, A., Aziz, J., & Tabini, C. (2025, December). Multilingual family engagement in Minnesota. *MinneTESOL Journal*.

Russie, M. (2025, November). *K–12 ESL licensure panel*. Presentation at the Minnesota English Learner Education Conference, St. Paul, MN.

Karlsson, A., & Katnik, K. (2025, November). *Content-based language curriculum for English learners*. Presentation at the Minnesota English Learner Education Conference, St. Paul, MN.

Katnik, K., & Karlsson, A. (2025, November). *Program evaluation with purpose: Moving from mandate to meaning in EL program review*. Presentation at the Minnesota English Learner Education Conference, St. Paul, MN.

Katnik, K., & Karlsson, A. (2025, October). *A can-do approach to grading multilingual learners*. Presentation at the WIDA Conference, Seattle, WA.

Russie, M. (2025, October). *Planning tools to support multilingual learners*. Presentation at the Minnesota Education Association Annual Conference, Minneapolis, MN.

GPRA measure 2: The number of pre-service program participants enrolled annually

While GPRA measure 1 evaluates project specific goals and yearly targets, GPRA measure 2 refers to the number of pre-service participants enrolled each grant year.

Given that Project Momentum established that it would not enroll any pre-service participants for grant years 1-5. GPRA measure 2 **is not applicable** to Project Momentum's evaluation.

GPRA measure 3: The unduplicated number of in-service program participants served annually

GPRA measure 3 focuses on the unduplicated number of any in-service personnel served by the NPD program (e.g., paraprofessionals, teachers, and other school and district personnel). This means that individuals who are participating in multiple professional development opportunities are only counted as one participant served by Project Momentum. Project Momentum's year 4 target was to serve 160 unduplicated, in-service program participants.

Project Momentum **exceeded** its year 4 target as of March 31, 2026, having served more than 4,700 unique educators through enrollment in its program. Program participants have come from 208 school districts in Minnesota as well as 28 additional states. Additionally, Project Momentum partnered with the Colorado Department of Education and the Michigan Department of Education to allow Project Momentum courses to support license renewal requirements in their respective states. Figure 4 documents how many participants completed Project Momentum courses in year 4 in relation to cumulative course completion throughout the program.

5. Project Momentum course completions, year 4 and cumulative

Course Name	Completions Sept 1, 2025 to March 31, 2026 (Y4)	Cumulative completions through March 31, 2026 (Y1-Y4)
Applying the WIDA ELD Standards Framework to Content Areas	98	161
Assessing and Supporting Language Development with WIDA Tools	81	135
Assessment Accommodations for Multilingual Learners	101	213
Collaboration & Co-Teaching for Multilingual Learners	98	270
Culturally Responsive Communication in the Classroom	225	442
Culturally Responsive School, Family, and Community Partnerships	143	287
Effective Lesson Planning with Language and Content Objectives	123	188
Evidence-Based Literacy for Multilingual Learners	196	418
Genre-Based Pedagogy in the Elementary Classroom	52	85
Incorporating Linguistic Supports as an Education Support Professional	98	197
Language & Literacy for Experienced (Long-term) Multilingual Learners	49	93
Language & Literacy for Recently Arrived English Learners & SLIFE	57	117
Language Access for Multilingual Families	44	95
Learning in a Sociocultural Context	60	102
Multilingual Development	79	143
Multilingual Learners in Early Childhood Education	81	277
Scaffolding Content Lessons for Multilingual Learners	169	256
Supporting Academic Language in the Classroom	115	327
Understanding WIDA Proficiency Levels	64	110
Who are Multilingual Learners in U.S. Schools?	100	191
Empowering Educators of Multilingual Learners (CO)	289	548
Integrating Language & Content with Curriculum Overlays	18	18
Multilingual Learner Leadership Micro-Credential	25	66
Total completions	2365	4739

GPRA measure 4: The number of participants who are making progress.

GPRA measure 4 combines measures 2 and 3 and refers to the number of participants making progress toward becoming State certified, licensed, or endorsed in EL instruction by the end of grant year 5.

Progress toward year 5 target

Though only in year 4, Project Momentum has already **exceeded** its year 5 target to support five candidates toward becoming licensed in EL instruction. As of May 2026, 36 candidates have earned an ESL license with support from Project Momentum, and another 24 candidates are on track to do so by August 2026.

Partner collaboration feedback

Wilder conducted surveys using the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (CFI) to gather feedback from partners about year 4 of Project Momentum collaborative efforts. The CFI assesses how a partnership is doing using a series of research-based factors understood to be important for the success of collaborative projects. The original CFI was modified slightly by Wilder Research to fit the work of Project Momentum. Out of 26 SSC partners invited to participate in the survey, 62% (n=16) responded. The CFI utilizes a scale from one to five (1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree) to assess agreement or disagreement about collaboration.

Key CFI findings

Based on their responses to the CFI survey, partners viewed their collaboration with Project Momentum positively. Partners indicated a high level of agreement on 16 of 18 factors (an average rating of 4 or higher).

Strengths

The three most agreed upon strengths of Project Momentum during year 4, according to collaborating partners, are “skilled leadership” (4.8 average rating), “mutual respect, understanding, and trust” (4.8 average rating), and partners seeing collaboration as being in their self-interest” (4.7). Partners also agreed, though less strongly, that Project Momentum has “sufficient funds, staff, materials, and time” (3.5 average rating) and “established informal relationships and communication links” (3.9 average rating).

Open-ended positive feedback

Additionally, ten respondents provided optional open-ended feedback detailing their thoughts about the successes and benefits of Project Momentum. Several themes emerged related to increased capacity (n=6), strengthened collaboration (n=3), and benefits to students, families, and educators (n=3). The quotes below help illustrate these themes.

- Increased capacity and impact on multilingual learners, families, and educators

[Project Momentum] has helped strengthen connection, coordination, and shared learning across school districts. It has created space for meaningful collaboration, surfaced practical strategies, and supported more aligned efforts to better serve students, families, and communities.

- Strengthened collaboration and shared learning because of working with Project Momentum

The educators participating in Project Momentum come from vastly different school district demographics, budgets and locations; therefore, there is ample perspective being shared and collaborative learning happening.

- Availability of high-quality professional learning, resources, and deliverables because of Project Momentum

I can always rely on Project Momentum to develop and deliver high-quality, relevant, flexible, evidence-based deliverables. I feel confident promoting their offerings and materials to everyone in the English language development field.

Suggestions for improvement

Eight partners provided suggestions for how Project Momentum might improve. The themes that emerged highlight the importance of responsive professional development (n=3), sustainability despite funding challenges (n=3), and increasing Project Momentum's visibility and reach across the state (n=2). These themes are supported by the quotes below.

- Offer enhanced professional development for educators around implementation, including synchronous training

I would be curious how partnership could continue to...provide synchronous (virtual and in-person) versions of Project Momentum asynchronous trainings. The facilitator guides are really great... the asynchronous trainings are amazing, and [I'm] wondering if... they could be used along with coaching to tailor follow up support and gather data on school and student impact.

- Continue seeking funding to sustain the work in challenging times

I hope that Project Momentum can continue to prepare teachers for a most challenging role. Keep working to find solutions that make the programs sustainable through funding challenges and social/political changes that can derail the plan! I'm consistently impressed with the team's efforts to make it work when it feels like there is so much standing in the way.

- Increase efforts to enhance Project Momentum's visibility, impact, and outreach

Continue leaning into statewide partnerships – MDE, MSC, COMPASS. We have many gaps in opportunity and access in Minnesota. Project Momentum is well-positioned to support much of this need for teacher and leader training.

Conclusion

Project Momentum met and exceeded all the GPRA measures and year 4 targets based on SSC's Project Momentum documents and records, resource updates to the Project Momentum website (<https://www.sscprojectmomentum.org/home>), and published information (included throughout this report). Based on feedback from collaborating partners, Wilder Research recommends that Project Momentum assess their ability to continue their current work while considering reduced funding when the current grant concludes. Additionally, Wilder Research recommends that Project Momentum staff provide their partners with an end-of-year update to clearly communicate:

- Current and upcoming Project Momentum efforts to ensure future sustainability of these supports in the EL and multilingual field.
- Integration of feedback from Project Momentum participants and curriculum developers about how to increase Project Momentum's reach and schools' and districts' awareness of Project Momentum resources and support.
- Upcoming events and opportunities for educators and districts to receive professional development training.

Acknowledgments

The author would like to thank Edith Gozali-Lee for her support with this project, as well as Amanda Eggers, Ana Alba, Jacqueline Zhang and Jennifer Valorose for their support with this report.

Here for good.



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