

# Assessment Best Practices



**ACCESS**  
**for ELLs**  
2020-2021

This document is a guide to help districts plan for the 2021 WIDA ACCESS for ELLs administration. Use this information and guiding questions in conjunction with the Test Coordinators and Test Administration Manuals to help create and draft your plan for this year's test administration.

While districts adopt physical distancing practices in public spaces and schools adjust instructional practices to incorporate remote or hybrid learning, the WIDA ACCESS English language proficiency assessment must be completed in person.

After consultation with WIDA members, their technical advisory committee and testing vendor, WIDA came to the decision **not to offer remote ACCESS testing**. Factors considered included risks to item security, operational delivery, costly change management procedures and the validity and reliability of remote assessment administration.

Preparation should be started early so that your district can be as ready as possible when the testing window begins. Planning will ensure you have the equipment, supplies, training, and communication in place to keep everyone safe and healthy throughout this testing season.

<b>ACCESS CALENDAR</b>	
<b>Event</b>	<b>Date</b>
Test Setup in WIDA AMS	11/9/20 – 3/26/21
Receive Materials	12/7/20
Additional Materials Ordering	12/7/20 – 3/26/21
<b>TEST WINDOW</b>	<b>1/11/21 – 4/2/21</b>
Ship Materials To DRC By	4/9/21
Pre Data Validation	5/4/21 – 5/11/21
Receive Initial Reports	6/14/21
Post Data Validation	6/14/21 – 6/18/21
Final Reports	7/2/21

## Test Scheduling

Scheduling for ACCESS may look different from previous years. With social distancing guidelines in place, ensure the room used for testing is large enough that students can be seated at a distance from one another. Follow local guidance on desk or chair spacing. Test in small groups if necessary to maintain physical distance between students. As always, be sure all students can hear the test administrator and any recorded audio played during testing.

For individual test administrations, identify a testing room as large and practical as possible. For example, avoid testing in a small office.

If your school or district is currently offering remote instruction, test administrators might need special access to buildings. Plan ahead to ensure test administrators know the arrangements. Coordinate as necessary with school and district administrative staff, district IT staff, building security staff and janitorial service staff.

### Think About

- If the district shifted to remote or asynchronous learning, what is your plan to complete testing within the window?
- How many students can be tested safely at once?
- Will the schedule prioritize groups of students or grade levels earlier in the testing window rather than later?
- Will students need to test at times that may fall outside of regular school hours?
- Will students need to complete more than one domain when present?
- If scheduling a group of students at the same time, what will happen if a student scheduled for a group test is late?
- If students arrive to the testing location early, where will they wait?
- Will the district allow families to select their testing time/location?
- Will the district allow test administrators to test the student in the student home?
- Does the schedule allow time in between students/groups to sanitize materials/equipment?
- Will the schedule allow time for make-up testing?
- Is there a backup plan if the building planned for testing is closed?

## TRANSPORTATION

If students are participating in remote learning, they will need to come to the district to test. Districts need to make decisions on if they will be providing transportation for the student to and from the building or if they will rely on parents/guardians.

### Think About

- If the district is providing transportation for the student to and from the building, who needs to be contacted and how will that be setup?
- Are parents/guardians expected to bring students to the testing site?
- If parents/guardians bring the student to the testing site and they want to wait on-site while the student tests, where will they wait?
- If parents/guardians bring their student to the testing site and do not want to wait on-site, what is the protocol to contact them to provide the student a ride home?

## Health and Safety

When thinking about what testing will look like in the district, health and safety of both students and staff is the most important issue.

### Physical Testing Materials

Physical test materials can be inventoried immediately upon arrival. Boxes are packed by employees who participate in daily health screenings, and materials are not touched for several days during shipping. There is no need to quarantine test materials upon delivery.

When possible, avoid having test administrators share materials. Manuals as well as some test materials are available in the WIDA Secure Portal and can be printed as needed throughout your testing window. Materials available in the WIDA Secure Portal include:

- Test Administrator Manual
- District and School Test Coordinator Manual
- Accessibility and Accommodations Supplement
- Grades 4–12 Online Test Administrator Script

Some physical materials (Test Administrator Scripts, Speaking Test Booklets, and Alternate ACCESS Test Booklets) can be disassembled and put into sheet protectors or clear plastic bags that can be wiped down after each administration. Materials with security barcodes that were disassembled should be taken out of protection and the pages stapled together prior to returning them.

Other materials cannot be modified in anyway including student response books, writing books and braille books. **DO NOT MODIFY ANY TEST MATERIAL IN WHICH STUDENTS MARK ANSWERS THAT IS RETURNED FOR SCORING.**

### KINDERGARTEN MATERIALS

Some materials, like the activity board and cards used for kindergarten tests, can be wiped down as needed. Other kindergarten materials, such as the activity pages in the back of the storybook can be laminated or placed in clear plastic bags that can be wiped down after each administration.

Other tips around physical testing materials include:

- Allow Kindergarten students to point with their pencil to indicate answers, instead of using their hands.
- Have students bring their own pencils for testing or provide pencils that students can keep.
- Minimize close interaction by placing all testing materials on students' desks before they arrive. Have students leave materials on their desks when they finish testing.
- Avoid sharing materials. In situations where you or a student can turn pages in a booklet, allow the student to do so on their own. Alternatively, particularly with young students, keep the booklet to yourself and do not have the student assist with page turning. If you must write in a student test booklet, for example to transcribe a student response during a kindergarten or Alternate ACCESS for ELLs test, use scratch paper instead during test administration. After testing, update the booklet and securely destroy the scratch paper.

## Health And Safety (cont.)

### PARENT COMMUNICATION

Keep students and families informed of testing plans and procedures by communicating early and often with details of testing logistics, including what students should bring on testing day and what safety precautions the district is taking.

#### Think About

- What is your plan for ensuring families understand the purpose of the test, testing expectations, locations, date/time?
- What does communicating in a manner that provides families with meaningful access to information look like in your district?
  - Bilingual messaging, use of home language
  - Communication methods – phone, text, email, parent portal, website, etc.
- Having a communication plan for following-up to verify times/dates, transportation, rescheduling, etc.

### Safety Precautions

- When setting up a testing room, allow for as much space between students as possible.
- If possible, set up a clear divider between the student and the test administrator for Kindergarten and Alternate ACCESS.
- Use a projector to display test booklet pages and other materials that students do not need to touch.
- Provide face shields that test administrators can wear in addition to masks.
- Surfaces, writing utensils, technology, and—if possible—test materials should be sanitized before and after each test administration.
- Wash your hands before and after each test administration.
- Have students use hand sanitizer as they enter and exit the testing room.
- Have students continue to wear masks throughout testing, even during the Speaking test. Encourage students to speak loudly.

### TESTING AT A STUDENT'S HOME

In rare cases, a parent may refuse to allow their student to go to the district building, but may allow a test examiner to test the student at the home. Districts need to decide if this will be an option they offer to families.

#### Think About

- Will test administrators wear gloves, masks, or other face coverings? Who will provide them? What is the district policy on students and masks and face coverings?
- Does the district conduct temperature checks? If so, does the testing site need a thermometer?
- Who is responsible for cleaning frequently touched surfaces?
- Who is responsible for providing the cleaning materials?
- Where will cleaning materials be stored?

## Technology

Districts need to make sure that the devices being used for testing are configured and tested prior to testing day.

In many districts that offer remote instruction, students are using district issued hardware. If this same hardware is to be used for testing, then districts will need to plan to get the device ready for testing.

If students will test on shared devices, consider placing plastic wrap or another disposable barrier over keyboards or screens to provide a sanitary surface for each student.

Some electronics cannot be sanitized in the same way as testing surfaces. Districts will want to talk with IT staff about the best way to sanitize devices and headsets.

### TECH FOR TESTING AT A STUDENT'S HOME

DRC provides the ability to install both the COS Service Device and INSIGHT software onto a single Windows or MAC laptop that can be taken to a student home for testing. Instructions can be found on the WIDA-AMS or the DESE EL Assessment page.

### TEST ADMINISTRATORS

Some districts will require more testing sessions than normal, and therefore may require additional test examiners.

Ideally, the test examiner is the same person providing EL services to the student. For Kindergarten and Alternate ACCESS, DESE recommends the person administering the assessment is the same one providing services, as these tests are one-on-one.

For students in grades 1-12, the test administrator has to meet the following requirements:

#### Test Examiner Requirements

- A district employee
- Meets the requirements of a para-professional
- Completes ACCESS training in the WIDA Secure Portal

#### Think About

- Does the student have their own headset with microphone that they can use?
- Where will devices and headsets be stored when not in use?
- If a student is going to wear a mask during the speaking section, make sure that they can be understood using the microphone check feature at the beginning of the test.

## FAQ

**Q:** Why are we testing?

**A:** Current guidance from the US Department of Education requires states to give all statewide assessments.

**Q:** Can parents/guardians opt their students out of taking the ACCESS assessment?

**A:** District must assess all students that meet the requirement criteria for being an English Learner. The state must ensure that districts/schools are meeting their responsibilities to ensure all students are provided an opportunity to test and that the state must meet the participation rate for students statewide. There is no federal or state law regarding opting out of testing.

**Q:** A parent is unreachable or refuses to allow their student in to test on site. What do we do?

**A:** If the parent refuses, keep documentation on the situation and every effort made to schedule testing.

**Q:** Are there consequences if a parent refuses to allow their student to test?

**A:** Contact the MSIP Accountability group about consequences. They can be reached at 573-526-4886 or [accountabilitydata@dese.mo.gov](mailto:accountabilitydata@dese.mo.gov).

## Miscellaneous

- Be advised that the guidance in this document may be updated based on additional guidance from the US Department of Education and the Missouri State Board of Education.
- Bilingual staff, family liaisons and community outreach personnel will be valuable resources in connecting with families to ensure a smooth and safe test administration process. Districts need to be flexible in considering and adapting to the cultural and linguistic factors in communication and scheduling, including religious customs, gender-related norms, addressing people by proper names, regional gestures, etc.
- If testing is to occur in a building that is closed due to students participating in remote learning, work with district and building administration to determine if meals will be provided to students coming in for testing.

*Some information in this document comes from the WIDA document “Assessment Best Practices during COVID-19” and from information provided by the Illinois and Michigan Departments of Education.*

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