

WDE FAQ

For ACCESS For ELLs Testing

What is ACCESS for ELLs?

ACCESS for ELLs is a secure, large-scale, English language proficiency assessment developed by the WIDA consortium. It is administered to Kindergarten through 12th-grade students who have been identified as Active ELs. It is given annually to monitor students' progress in acquiring academic English. ACCESS for ELLs is aligned with the WIDA English Language Development Standards and assesses each of the four language domains of Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing.

What is Alternate ACCESS for ELLs?

The WIDA consortium developed an assessment called the Alternate ACCESS for ELLs that can be administered to Active EL students who qualify to take Wyoming's alternate summative assessment, WY-ALT. These are a small number of students who have been designated by their IEP team as Student with the Most Significant Cognitive Disability (SMSCD). Active EL students who qualify for special education services and who take the WY-TOPP summative assessment, must take the ACCESS for ELLs.

When and How Will the ACCESS be Administered?

ACCESS and ALT-ACCESS are delivered each winter to all Active EL students through a combination of online and paper-based assessments. The testing window is typically late January through early March.

- The Kindergarten and Alternate ACCESS for ELLs assessments are only available in a paper-based form.
- WDE encourages districts to test online, except in situations in which individual students would be best served by paper testing, as outlined in an IEP or 504 plan.
- The ACCESS for ELLs summative assessment will continue to be available in both the online and the paper test format.

Who Can Administer the ACCESS?

Only trained Test Administrators (TA), who are certified employees for the district, may administer the ACCESS and ALT-ACCESS. It is the responsibility of each TA to maintain proof of training attendance per state policy. All TAs must complete the online WIDA Test Administrator (TA) Certification Course. All TAs must also sign and adhere to the State Administered Large Scale Security Agreement for K-12 and the WIDA Non-Disclosure Agreement.

Who Determines Eligibility for ACCESS?

District personnel are responsible for the identification of Active ELs through the WDE Identification Process which includes the Home Language Survey, a family interview, and the English Language Screener. All Active English Learners identified through this process are required to take the ACCESS assessment each year. Those students who are Active ELs and also designated as a Student with the Most Significant Cognitive Disability by an IEP team will take the Alternate ACCESS for ELLs test.

Can Districts Exempt Students From Statewide Assessments?

No. All students are required by federal and state law to participate in statewide assessments. This includes the English Language Proficiency Assessment for all Active EL students.

Can Parents Opt Their Child(ren) Out of Required Statewide Assessments?

No, opting out of state tests required by state statute is not allowed. In the spring of 2014, WDE requested an opinion from the Wyoming Attorney General's (AG) Office regarding parent opt-outs from state-mandated testing (e.g., WY-ALT, WY-TOPP, ACCESS, ALT-ACCESS, and ACT). The following is part of the AG's response:

"In summary, the State Board of Education is authorized to establish the statewide accountability system pursuant to state law, including the Wyoming Accountability in Education Act. It has promulgated rules that require districts to administer the relevant assessments to all students in the appropriate grade levels. These requirements are within the authority granted to the board by the legislature. Consequently, districts may not allow students or their parents to opt them out of the assessments provided by law."

How Are ACCESS Results Used?

Student scores from the ACCESS for ELLs assessment are used as school accountability measures for English Language Proficiency and Participation Rate. ACCESS scores are used to track whether Active EL students are making progress toward becoming English proficient and developing annual progress targets.

Where Can I Find the Practice Test for Students, Teachers, and Parents to Experience?

Students receive ample guided opportunities to try out [practice tests](#) provided at the bottom of the [DRC AMS login page](#) under the heading "Public Test Resources." These resources can also be helpful for newcomers who may need extra test practice, especially if they have not had much exposure to technology.

How Do I Get More Information on English Learner Supports?

To see past English Learner newsletters or to sign up to receive them, go to the [Resources to Strengthen Connections with English Learner families](#).

Where Can Parents Find More Information?

Parents can find information on the WIDA Parent Engagement page at <https://wida.wisc.edu/teach/learners/engagement>.