



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

A Memo from the New Jersey Department of Education

Date: November 5, 2025

To: Local Educational Agency Leads, Directors of Approved Private Schools for Students with Disabilities

Route To: District Bilingual/English as a Second Language (ESL)/English Language Services (ELS) Leads, District Test Coordinators, District Special Education Administrators, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Project Coordinators, District Technology Coordinators, School Business Administrators

From: Jorden Schiff, Ed. D., Assistant Commissioner
Division of Teaching and Learning Services

2025-2026 WIDA ACCESS Assessment Administration Key Dates and Information

This memorandum provides local educational agencies (LEAs) and approved private schools for students with disabilities (APSSDs) with key dates and information for the 2025-2026 ACCESS English language proficiency assessment administration. The WIDA ACCESS suite includes WIDA ACCESS Online, WIDA ACCESS Paper, WIDA ACCESS for Kindergarten, and WIDA Alternate ACCESS.

ACCESS Administration Window

The 2025-2026 ACCESS test administration window is scheduled for **February 2, 2026, through March 27, 2026**. Make-up testing is scheduled for **March 30, 2026, through April 3, 2026**. Make-up testing may occur at any point throughout the administration window. However, the make-up window may not be used to schedule regular testing.

For additional key dates for the ACCESS assessment administration, please visit the [New Jersey WIDA webpage](#) and review the dates with the appropriate staff.

Who Must Complete the Assessment?

All students in kindergarten through grade 12 currently identified as multilingual learners (MLs) in accordance with [New Jersey's ML identification process](#) must participate in an English language proficiency assessment, including MLs whose parents have refused services. Most MLs will take the WIDA ACCESS Online, WIDA ACCESS Paper, or WIDA ACCESS for Kindergarten.

MLs with the most significant intellectual disabilities who meet the Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) participation criteria as reflected in their Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) will take the WIDA Alternate ACCESS assessment. Please refer to the [WIDA Alternate ACCESS participation criteria decision tree](#) and the DLM participation criteria available on the [New Jersey DLM webpage](#) under **Student Participation Resources**.

Assessment Participation and Exit Eligibility

LEAs may not exit an ML from ML status unless the student has demonstrated proficiency on a valid and reliable assessment (i.e., WIDA ACCESS Online, WIDA ACCESS Paper, WIDA ACCESS for Kindergarten, or WIDA Alternate ACCESS) that includes the four domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In addition, the WIDA MODEL Paper or Online may only be used mid-year for exit. Mid-year is defined as any time between October 1 to before the ACCESS testing window starts. Students also should be provided with the necessary accessibility features and accommodations they need to access the assessment and demonstrate what they know. The *ACCESS Accessibility and Accommodations Manual* posted on the [WIDA Resources](#) webpage provides information about accessibility features and accommodations available for ACCESS testing.

There is an assessment exception, in rare cases, for an ML with a disability whose disability makes it impossible to be assessed in a particular domain because there are no appropriate accommodations for assessing the student in that domain. Before making the determination to exempt an ML with a disability from a particular domain because there is no appropriate accommodation for assessing the student in that domain, the following resources need to be reviewed:

- *ACCESS Accessibility and Accommodations Manual*;
- *ACCESS District and School Test Coordinator Manual* available in the [WIDA Secure Portal](#);
- *New Jersey WIDA ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS District Test Coordinator Training* which will be posted on the [New Jersey WIDA webpage](#) under **2025-2026 New Jersey State Specific Resources** once available; and
- Is the Multilingual Learner Eligible for an Alternate Composite Score? section of the [Exiting a Student from Multilingual Learner Status webpage](#).

Overall composite scores will be automatically calculated for students who complete at least two domains. For any impacted domain(s), the appropriate *Do Not Score Code: Deferred Special Education/504 (SPD)* must be applied in WIDA AMS. Once applied, the overall composite score will appear on the student's Individual Student Report (ISR). Please refer to the [ACCESS District and School Test Coordinator Manual](#) for additional guidance on the use of Do Not Score Codes. If a student is only able to complete one domain due to documented accommodations, contact the Office of Supplemental Education Programs at ML@doe.nj.gov.

Should additional guidance be required, please contact:

- The Office of Assessments for guidance and support related to test administration considerations; and
- The Office of Supplemental Educational Programs for guidance and support related to exit procedures.

State Accountability and Reporting

Results from ACCESS test administrations are used in the calculation of school and district performance on the Progress toward English Language Proficiency (ELP) indicator in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) school accountability system. To ensure accurate data, LEAs must

complete all required fields during New Jersey Statewide Longitudinal Education Data System (NJSLEDS) student assessment registration submission (SARS), including verifying accurate data for their students who attend APSSDs. For students who were not included in the NJ SLEDS SARS and must be entered manually into the [WIDA Assessment Management System \(AMS\)](#), please refer to the *New Jersey State Specific Directions* document which will be posted on the [New Jersey WIDA webpage](#) under **2025-2026 New Jersey State Specific Resources** once available.

Pre-Reporting Data Validation Window

A pre-reporting data validation window is available to LEAs and APSSDs from **May 1, 2026, through May 13, 2026**. LEAs and APSSDs must review their data in [WIDA AMS](#) during the pre-reporting data validation window to ensure:

- All required fields are accurate and up to date; and
- Any necessary data corrections (e.g., combining split records) have been made.

The data in WIDA AMS following this validation window will be used to generate individual student reports, and for accountability and state reporting purposes. Each LEA and APSSD is responsible for correcting student data during the pre-reporting data validation window to mitigate student reporting issues (e.g., missing overall score due to split records).

Importantly, the pre-reporting data validation period will be the **only** window in which LEAs and APSSDs can review and update ACCESS data.

WIDA AMS and WIDA Secure Portal User Accounts

Reviewing and updating user accounts in [WIDA AMS](#) and the [WIDA Secure Portal](#) regularly is essential to the security and confidentiality of sensitive information, such as students' personally identifiable information. LEAs and APSSDs must designate appropriate district-level staff in WIDA AMS and the WIDA Secure Portal to serve as the District Test Coordinator and the District Technology Coordinator. If any changes to the primary District Test Coordinator need to be made, this must be communicated to the Office of Assessments as soon as possible so the necessary changes can be made in WIDA AMS and the WIDA Secure Portal. District Test Coordinators are required to inactivate the accounts of individuals who no longer work in the LEA or APSSD. Individual school-level coordinators (such as principals, vice-principals, etc.) may be assigned the School Test Coordinator role.

Note: District and school coordinator roles in WIDA AMS and the WIDA Secure Portal may only be held by administrator-level staff. These roles **may not** be assigned to teachers, support staff, or non-professional staff. Please review the staff listed in both portals and make edits as necessary.

District Test Coordinator Responsibilities

Each year, NJDOE provides a District Test Coordinator training for WIDA ACCESS test administration. District Test Coordinators are expected to:

- Review the New Jersey WIDA ACCESS District Test Coordinator Training slide deck;
- Conduct annual training for all school test coordinators and teachers administering WIDA ACCESS assessments;

- Oversee and ensure the proper implementation of the assessments;
- Serve as the point of contact for school test coordinators and teachers, as needed; and
- Work with technology coordinators and local data managers as needed.

The New Jersey WIDA ACCESS District Test Coordinator Training 2025-2026 will be posted on the [New Jersey WIDA webpage](#) under **2025-2026 New Jersey State Specific Resources** once available. The training will include all required information to be used for local annual training of district and school staff who are involved in the administration of the WIDA ACCESS for ELLs suite.

ACCESS Test Administrator Requirements

To be an ACCESS test administrator, educators must meet the following requirements:

- Be certified New Jersey educators with a long-term district contract (per diem and short-term substitute teachers are not eligible to be test administrators);
- Be annually trained by their District Test Coordinator on WIDA ACCESS assessment administration, including on test security, New Jersey-specific policies, and WIDA assessment resources (e.g., user and training manuals);
- Have passed relevant WIDA ACCESS test administration certification quizzes for the 2025-2026 school year; and,
- For WIDA Alternate ACCESS, test administrators must also routinely teach the students assigned the assessment.

ACCESS Annual Certification and/or Recertification Requirement

New Jersey WIDA ACCESS certification and/or recertification is required annually for all staff involved in the administration of WIDA ACCESS. District and School Test Coordinators must maintain evidence that all staff involved in test administration have completed the required certification and/or recertification. Proof of certification can be:

- Printed individually and submitted to the School or District Test Coordinator; or
- District Test Coordinators may access proof of certification directly with the Certification Report tool in the WIDA Secure Portal.

Evidence of certification may be requested by New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) staff during security monitoring visits.

Additional information regarding the requirements for ACCESS certification can be found in the New Jersey WIDA ACCESS District Test Coordinator Training 2025-2026 which will be posted on the [New Jersey WIDA webpage](#) under **2025-2026 New Jersey State Specific Resources** once available.

Technical Assistance

The NJDOE encourages districts to visit the [New Jersey WIDA webpage](#) for additional information and assistance with testing. Information and resources on test demos, test practice, and sample items for WIDA ACCESS Online and WIDA ACCESS Paper for grades 1-12 can be found on the dedicated webpage for [ACCESS Test Practice and Sample Items](#).

Contact Information

Contact	Contact Information	Contact for Questions Regarding
WIDA Client Services Center	Email: help@wida.wisc.edu Phone: (866) 276-7735	• WIDA Secure Portal user accounts • Training and certification • Test administration preparation and procedures • Content of score reports
DRC Customer Service	Email: WIDA@datarecognitioncorp.com Phone: (855) 787-9615	• Materials receipt, inventory, and return • Labeling of test booklets • Processing paper test materials • Data validation and correction issues
NJDOE Office of Assessments	Email: assessment@doe.nj.gov Phone: (609) 376-3960	• ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS assessment administration policy and procedures • ACCESS student participation guidance
NJDOE Office of Supplemental Educational Programs, Title III Unit	Email: ML@doe.nj.gov Phone: (609) 376-9080	• Technical/policy and program assistance • Student entrance and exit requirements

c: Members, State Board of Education
NJDOE Staff
Statewide Parent Advocacy Network
Garden State Coalition of Schools
NJ LEE Group