

Health and Safety Guidance for 2021 ACCESS Administration

Teaching & Learning

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RIDE Rhode Island
Department
of Education

Importance

ACCESS for ELLs administration is critical, particularly in an academic year such as 2020-2021, because LEAs will use the assessment results to improve instruction and identify gaps in student learning that have arisen during periods of school closure.

Multilingual learners (MLLs) must have access to instructional services that allow them to participate meaningfully in grade-level academic content learning, and the ACCESS for ELLs assessment provides school and district staff with vital information about MLLs' needs and strengths that will assist with planning for the 2021-2022 school year.

Checklist for District Testing Coordinators

- Establish which students are participating in remote, hybrid, or in-person learning** by downloading a roster of MLLs who must take the ACCESS for ELLs assessment, and follow the recommendations below for maintaining stable pods.
- Maintain a complete list of test takers for potential contact tracing efforts**, including times, dates, and test-taking locations.
- Determine how many fully remote students will be taking ACCESS Online grades 1-12**, and make plans to administer ACCESS Online pursuant to six-foot social distancing guidelines and face covering requirements, with hand sanitizer readily available in all testing environments.
- Determine how many students are taking the Kindergarten ACCESS, Alternate ACCESS, and ACCESS Paper grades 1-12**, per their paper-based accommodation.
 - Administration of these ACCESS assessments require closer contact with the test administrator than ACCESS Online grades 1-12; therefore, increased mitigation measures, such as plexiglass, face shields, and/or gloves, are recommended for these test sessions. While WIDA only references plexiglass, additional mitigation measures are appropriate.
 - Local education agencies may determine which additional mitigation measures to implement, in accordance with local policies. Decisions about how much additional protective gear is needed can be made based on counts of students taking the Kindergarten ACCESS, Alternate ACCESS, and ACCESS Paper.
- Create a schedule that clearly identifies who will serve as test administrators** for each session while minimizing the number of pods with which a test administrator interacts.
- Use all your available space** to better maintain stable pods and social distancing guidelines, including buildings that are not currently open for operations, to reduce



physical contact while maintaining a secure testing environment, per RIDE's [COVID-19 Facilities and Physical Plant School Checklist](#).

- ❑ **Develop a two-way communication plan** to inform MLL families about test schedules, reason for testing, and health & safety protocols, such as sanitizing technology and maintaining socially distant test environments.
- ❑ **Communicate thoroughly with students about any schedule modifications**, especially in the event changes are made to their existing in-person or hybrid days or their assigned classrooms for a given time period.
- ❑ **Update devices and technology protocols** by installing testing software prior to testing (see www.ride.ri.gov/Assessment-Manuals for technology coordinator information) and by making arrangements for each student to have their own headsets or for staff to clean devices thoroughly between uses.
- ❑ **Ensure all test administrators have a valid WIDA certificate**, and consider training additional test administrators to enhance health and safety protocols.

What has changed for test administration in 2020-2021?

- State assessments are required by federal law even in the face of local school closures.
- RIDE has extended the ACCESS testing window.
- Face coverings must be used at all times by test administrations, proctors, and students throughout administration of all four ACCESS domains, including the speaking domain, per school and district policies for 2020-2021.
- Plan to screen students for illness prior to testing and administer the test in smaller groups or even 1:1, in accordance with [public health guidance](#). Alcohol hand gel should be readily available in testing environments.
- Administer multiple sessions per day for students above grade 5. WIDA allows for but does not recommend administration of all four domains in one day.
- Teacher assistants and paraprofessionals employed by the LEA, such as substitutes, can serve as 2021 test administrators for ACCESS Online grades 1-12 if they obtain the required online WIDA certification.

Who can administer the assessment in 2020-2021?

After successful completion of the online WIDA training, the following individuals may serve as test administrators for ACCESS online grades 1-12:

- Individuals employed by the LEA as teachers



- LEA and school-level administrators (e.g., principals, assistant principals, directors, assistant superintendents, associate superintendents, superintendents) who hold certificates for their positions as administrators
- Long-term substitute teachers holding a teaching certificate, or state equivalent credentials, employed by the LEA as teachers
- School psychologists, school social workers, librarians, school guidance counselors, and speech pathologists who hold certificates for their positions
- Teachers employed by the LEA who hold provisional certificates
- Teacher assistants or para-professionals employed by the LEA

After successful completion of the online WIDA training, the following individuals may serve as Kindergarten ACCESS, Alternate ACCESS, and ACCESS for ELLs Paper test administrators:

- Individuals employed by the LEA who hold a ESOL or BDL certificate

To complete an online WIDA training or review the [WIDA Test Administrator Manual 2020-2021](#), please visit the WIDA Secure Portal. If you are a test administrator and require access to the [WIDA Secure Portal](#), please contact your district MLL Director or Coordinator.

Recommendations Scheduling & Maintaining Stable Pods

Creating a safe physical space

- Make seating charts for testing to ensure that the proximity between individual students is tracked and that records are kept for potential contact tracing efforts.
- Stagger testing start times so remote learning students arrive at school for testing before or after students participating in hybrid or in-person instruction.
- Choose testing locations that allow for safe distancing between remote learning students and in-person or hybrid pods.
- Put non-testing students on remote learning schedules during ACCESS testing if physical space is not sufficient for students to maintain safe distancing guidelines.
- Align test schedules with class schedules to lessen the movement between rooms (if applicable).
- Use in-person days to assess hybrid students when they are already in the school.
- Designate teams on testing day to sanitize devices and ensure students continue to follow 6-foot social distancing guidelines before, during, and after test sessions.
- Assign particular test administrators or proctors to specific students when using large spaces for testing, such as a gymnasium, to better maintain distancing guidelines.



Selecting appropriate test administrators

- Take steps to minimize the number of pods that a single test administrator must work with in a two-week period.
- For MLLs who are participating in hybrid or in-person learning, select test administrators for students who are already in their pod.
- For MLLs who are fully remote, select test administrators who will minimize disruptions to existing hybrid or in-person pods.
- Consider hiring substitute teachers to serve exclusively as test administrators or proctors during the ACCESS testing window, per the criteria above about who can serve as test administrator.

Planning to test fully remote students

- Designate certain personnel as test administrators only for remote learning students, per the criteria above about who can serve as test administrator.
- Review the current bussing schedule for the selected testing locations and determine which remote learning students will have access to current bus routes.
- Survey remote learning families on transportation availability for testing purposes.
- Inform parents about the testing schedule for their student(s) and any transportation needed well in advance, and give families the opportunity to ask questions.
- Select a central testing location for all remote learning students to reduce contact across pods and allow for district-arranged transportation.
- Give explicit instructions to students about where they should wait before or after test sessions.

Communication with Families

Information to parents should include:

- The upcoming assessment, reason for assessment and implications
- Testing location, date and time
- Safety measures the school will implement

WIDA has produced the following resources:

[What is Language Testing?](#)
[Explaining ELL Status](#)

[Available in multiple languages](#)
[Available in multiple languages](#)

