

# APS ACCESS Guidance

## 2020-2021

### **ACCESS FOR ELLS 2.0**

Each year students who qualify for ESOL program support are tested to determine their progress in learning English. This test is the ACCESS for ELLs assessment and is mandated by the federal government and includes all students who are identified as English Learners (ELs), whether they are receiving ESOL program services or not. This year, students will be tested between **January 25 and March 26, 2021**.

Students are tested in reading, writing, listening, and speaking across two or more days. Depending on their grade and educational setting, students may take the test in a paper-pencil format or online.

- Students in kindergarten and alternative education settings take the ACCESS test in a paper-and-pencil format.
- Students in grades 1 through 3 utilize a paper format for the writing portion of the test and an online format for the other tested areas.
- Students in grades 4 through 12 use the online format for all areas of the test.

The following website provides an opportunity for students to become familiar with the ACCESS test and the features of the online testing platform: <https://wbte.drctdirect.com/WIDA/portals/wida>. This site does not require a log in and is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Importantly, this practice site is not a “practice test” and scores will not be generated based on a student’s responses. It is intended to allow students to familiarize themselves with the ACCESS test questions and the online platform prior to testing. More information regarding the ACCESS test can be found at [wida.wisc.edu](http://wida.wisc.edu).

There is no remote model of the ACCESS test; it must be administered in person. Please note the wearing of masks can impede a child’s ability to understand when listening to teachers or a teacher’s understanding of a child’s speaking, which may impact administration and student scores. Make sure that a child who is wearing a mask can be understood by conducting a microphone check before conducting the online speaking test. See below for considerations to support a safe in-person administration.

### **Determine who is testing**

- Face-to-face students are expected to test during regular scheduled testing times.
- Test Coordinators will need to determine the number of ELL students you have in face-to-face and virtual instruction in order to complete the following form (see link) <https://forms.gle/ByF847kiMjzm9gXL8>
- “Virtual Parent Letter” response from families will allow schools to know which students learning virtually are coming to the school to test.

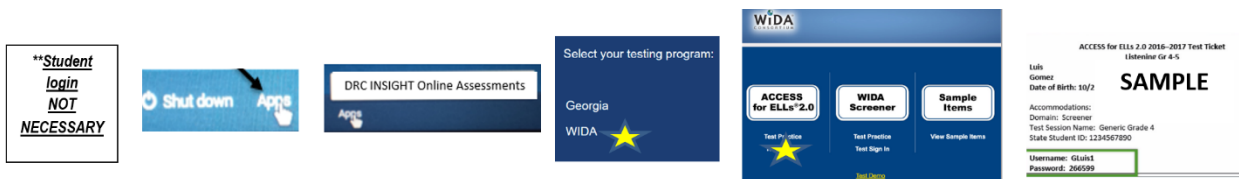
### **Transportation for Virtual Students**

- Schools should consider the transportation needs of students and families to ensure high participation.
- Arrangements may be made through the Transportation Department to get test takers to and from school using their designated buses.

- Supervision should be provided to students whose families opt to take the bus. Also, if parents want to pick up their children after testing, they may do so.
- We may not refuse to test a student because a parent does not have transportation. If a child is offered to use the school bus and the parent refuses, the parent then takes the responsibility off the district.

### Virtual Students who test

- Arrival procedures: Symptom Self Certification; Temperature Check; Symptom Screening
- Students should bring their APS issued devices to test. \*Note that iPads are not compatible with taking ACCESS 2.0.
- Students should be reminded to charge their device and bring their chargers to ensure enough power to complete the assessment.
- When students arrive, they should promptly turn on their devices in order to receive all updates. This should take about 15 minutes.
- Once the devices update, the students will be ready to take the assessment.
- Students are to access the test using the following steps:



### Administering the Assessment

- Kindergarten: Tests are administered one-to-one. It is recommended that assessment coordinators plan to use space that allows for social distancing as much as possible between the pair(s) of student and proctors and other individuals in the space.
- A Plexiglass partition may be used to help keep students and teachers safe while allowing for interaction.
- Grades 1-3: Consider providing each student a personal pencil to keep for the writing portion, so that the pencils are not shared with other students.
- Grade 1-12: Sanitize computer stations and keyboards in between uses or cover with plastic wrap/disposable keyboard covers and change after every use. This is effective in saving sanitation time and reducing wear and tear on the computers.
- Grades 1-12: If speaking tests need to be one-on-one, allow a minimum of 20-30 minutes per child to complete the test. If more than one student is testing at a time, make sure they are socially distanced.

- Testing Space: Should be large enough to ensure appropriate social distancing.
- No more than 10 students should be tested at one time per WIDA guidance.
- PPE should be worn at all times during testing.

### **Materials**

- Out of an abundance of caution, when handing out and returning test materials consider wearing gloves.
- A clear divider could be placed between the student and test administrator wherever possible.
- Some suggested safety precautions for kindergarten materials handling include putting the cards and story book into page protectors or placing cards and items on the table under a transparent overlay, such as a sheet of clear plastic. Activity boards and cards used for Kindergarten tests can be wiped cleaned without any modifications.
- Kindergartners can use their pencils as pointers to indicate their answers in the books or on the cards, instead of using their hands. We suggest providing a pencil to each child to use during the test and keep afterward.
- Shared headsets should be sanitized between usages by students in the manner recommended by the CDC.
- Make sure that a child who is wearing a mask can be understood by conducting a mic check. Allow extra time between test sessions for sanitizing.
- Do not modify student response booklets, writing booklets or braille test booklets. You may modify test administrator scripts, speaking test booklets, Alternate Access test booklets. Make sure that all materials are returned – always return all pages from materials with security bar codes.

### **Student and Proctoring Scheduling Guidance**

- Keep in mind how your students' classes are scheduled. This may affect the number of test sessions you may have. Keep in mind that there is a medium risk in mixing groups of students and teachers throughout/across school days, according to the CDC. You can reduce the risk of transmission by strategically planning your assessment schedules.
- Remember: Once you begin assessing a domain, the student must finish. A domain may not be split over days.
- We recommend testing face-to-face students and students who are learning virtually in separate sessions. This may make parents feel more comfortable sending their children to schools to test.
- In-person assessments may require additional staffing to complete all tests during the testing window; more individuals will need to be trained in administering the ACCESS through the WIDA website.
- The following individuals may be considered as additional test administrators, if needed: Any of the following used as examiners must hold a valid PSC Certificate. ESOL teachers, school psychologists, resource teachers, coaches, assistant principals/administrators, certified staff who

don't have their own classrooms, reading/math specialists, classroom teachers, and counselors. All potential test administrators must also go through WIDA certification training in order to administer the test. Schools should plan ahead. **\*NOTE\* Any staff member who administers the ACCESS Kindergarten assessment must hold ESOL certification.**

Schools must ensure that communication occurs in the language of the parent. School staff should utilize the services provided by the Office of ESOL & World Languages for phone call support and follow up. School staff must submit a request for interpretation support for phone calls by submitting the request via the online request form at <http://tinyAPS.com/?TranslationRequest>

### **Encouraging and Supporting Participation**

- Work with students to encourage them to do their best on the test. Help older students realize the importance of this test and try to make it meaningful to them.
- Outline precautions being taken by the school for safety and wellness to help parents feel comfortable about testing situations.
- Try to ensure that students don't consistently miss the same classes during testing. Creating a special school-wide testing schedule is one practical approach. Make sure that teachers understand that students need to take these tests and will be missing their classes.

### **Students learning Virtually**

- It is recommended that schools document every effort made to contact parents and schedule testing sessions, should parents refuse to bring their students to school for the assessment.
- Schools must ensure that communication occurs in the language of the parent. School staff should utilize the services provided by the Office of ESOL & World Languages for phone call support and follow up. School staff must submit a request for interpretation support for phone calls by submitting the request via the online request form at <http://tinyAPS.com/?TranslationRequest>

### **ALTERNATE ACCESS**

Students who take Alternate ACCESS are diverse. They may demonstrate some of the same behaviors, but each has unique needs, abilities, proficiencies, and goals that should be outlined in their IEPs. As part of the IEP process, eligibility for the Alternate ACCESS will have been determined ahead of time in consultation with the ESL teacher.

The Alternate ACCESS testing window is from **January 25 through March 26, 2021**. WIDA is the vendor that has produced the ACCESS suite of assessments. These tools measure the English language proficiency of multilingual students. Alternate ACCESS is one such tool and is taken by a sub-group of our student population based on criteria described in their IEPs when also considering their English proficiency levels. There are options for educators to safely test their students on Alternate ACCESS. These discussions must begin with the student's IEP.

See below for considerations to support a safe in-person administration.

### **Student and Proctoring Scheduling Guidance**

- It is strongly recommended for schools to reach out to parents as early as possible prior to the ACCESS testing window to inform them that state standardized testing will continue as scheduled, albeit in a different format than usual. Rapport is everything when it comes to a student's comfort level with a test examiner on assessments like Alternate ACCESS. It is strongly recommended that the assessment be given by a test examiner that the student is familiar with and in a location comfortable to the student. This may mean that the student's special education case manager or other familiar teacher should become certified to administer Alternate ACCESS.
- The location of testing must strictly follow the guidance from APS for ensuring the safety of staff and students. This is specifically important for any student or staff member who may be considered medically fragile or high risk for Covid-19.
- Consider transportation if students are not returning to face-to-face learning.
- WIDA has estimated that 20 minutes is needed to assess each language domain for a total of 80 minutes. This estimate does not include convening the student for the test, providing breaks in between domains, redirecting the student as needed, sanitizing testing spaces between students, etc.
- All of these transitions must be carefully considered based on the individual needs of the child and his/her IEP. When it comes to scheduling sessions, the four Alternate ACCESS for ELLs domains can be administered in any order and are not timed.
- Due to the adaptive nature of the test and unique abilities and behaviors of the students, actual test times can vary widely. The different domain tests can be administered on different days, with no minimum or maximum break between the administrations (from pages 41-42 of the 2020-21 WIDA District and School Test Coordinator Manual).

### **Material Handling Logistics**

- Alternate ACCESS materials were shipped along with all other ACCESS materials in early January. Most of ACCESS is administered online, but all of the Alternate materials are paper.
- Secure test materials are included for the administration of the Alternate ACCESS; however, the Test Booklet may be cut apart and presented in a way that better suits the needs of the individual student taking the assessment. The Test Administrator Script and the Student Response Booklet must remain intact and all materials must be returned to WIDA-DRC at upon the completion of the test. There is further information about these on page 71 of the 2020-21 WIDA Test Administrator Manual.
- Test administrators should have appropriate PPE, including, but not limited to, clear face coverings, hand sanitizer, disposable gloves, antibacterial wipes, page protectors, and/or plastic coverings that make for easier sanitization thereby limiting the cleaning process in between test administrations.
- To prevent the sharing of materials unique to the test administrators, district-level users of the WIDA-Assessment Management System (WIDA-AMS) can order additional materials so that test administrators do not have to share test materials, manuals can be printed or viewed online, etc.

- There are no manipulatives involved in the Alternate ACCESS; it is almost strictly the student pointing at pictures in the test book or responding with their voice when prompted. The writing tasks direct the student to use a pencil.
- Students should not share writing instruments, so test administrators should keep a pencil for their own use to reduce the spread of hand germs.
- Test administrators are encouraged to have students point with their pencil or some type of pointer that can be sanitized (rather than their finger). Additionally, if a picture from a test item is amplified or magnified by making a paper copy for better visibility, please seek further guidance specific to the test procedures and materials in the WIDA manuals mentioned throughout this section.
- Once Alternate ACCESS materials are collected, it may be wise to quarantine them before return shipping to WIDA-DRC. Secure test materials are typically bagged, zip-tied, packed into boxes, sealed, and shipped via parcel service with prepaid labels.

## **RESOURCES**



Assessment-Best-Practices-During-COVI

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[GaDOE ACCESS 2.0, Alternate ACCESS and WIDA Screener Resource Page](#)