

ACCESS for ELLs® Frequently Asked Questions

What is the purpose of the ACCESS for ELLs assessment?

Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners (ACCESS for ELLs) is a secure large-scale English language proficiency assessment given to Kindergarten through 12th graders who have been identified as English language learners (ELLs). It is given annually to monitor students' progress in acquiring academic English. This information can be used to identify the types of language supports and services that should be provided to students to help them succeed in the classroom. It should also be used to inform a student's growth in English Language Proficiency, to inform a student's English language proficiency for re-designation, and to inform instruction based on students' English language ability.

Under Title I, Colorado is required to administer academic achievement assessments to all students as well as an English Language Proficiency assessment to English learners. States receiving grants under Title III must establish annual goals for increasing and measuring the progress of students with limited English proficiency in 1) learning English and 2) attaining English language proficiency.

How was ACCESS selected as the new English language proficiency assessment?

The ACCESS for ELLs assessments were selected through a year-long process that included input from across Colorado. In 2010, CDE established an Assessment Stakeholders group whose task was to make recommendations regarding Colorado's new assessment system, including the new English language proficiency assessments. Several subcommittees from an applicant pool were established based on a blind selection process, including one for special populations. The stakeholders and subcommittee members included teachers, district level educators, representatives from universities, representatives from the business community, and community members.

Once selected, the subcommittee participated in four in-person meetings and conducted research and homework in between meetings. The work conducted by the subcommittee involved reviewing the options for future English language proficiency assessments and reviewing the paths and directions of other states. It was the strong opinion of the English language assessment subcommittee that the new assessment needed to align with the Colorado English Language Proficiency standards. The subcommittee also recognized the benefits of working with other states to learn more about the process of language acquisition for different languages and ages of students. The subcommittee concluded that in light of these and other considerations, the WIDA ACCESS for ELLs assessment would best and uniquely serve Colorado's needs.

What are the components of ACCESS?

The components of ACCESS for ELLs are Speaking, Listening, Reading and Writing.

What are the differences between CELApro and ACCESS for ELLs?

The Colorado English Language Proficiency assessment (CELApro) was the assessment formerly used in Colorado to determine the level at which Colorado NEP and LEP students met the Colorado English Language Development Standards in the domains of Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. Differences between CELApro and ACCESS for ELLs are listed below.

1. The main difference between CELApro and ACCESS for ELLs is that ACCESS for ELLs aligns to the [Colorado English Language Proficiency \(CELP\) standards](#). These standards reflect not just social language, but academic language as well. Educators are encouraged to review the sample ACCESS for ELLs items available at: <http://www.wida.us/assessment/ACCESS/>.
2. For grades 1-12, ACCESS for ELLs is a tiered test with 3 levels at each grade level cluster. The grade level clusters are 1-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12.
3. At the kindergarten level, the ACCESS for ELLs is administered individually and is not tiered.

When is the ACCESS for ELLs testing window?

The 2012-2013 ACCESS for ELLs testing window will be from January 7, 2013 through February 8, 2013.

Why did the testing window change?

The testing window changed to provide an official five week window instead of the former official four week window with an optional week for Speaking in December. The official five week window runs from January to February to enhance a district's ability to maintain the security of the assessments.

How long does it take to administer the ACCESS for ELLs?

While no two students test the same, for scheduling purposes the following schedule is provided. The Listening, Reading, and Writing sections of ACCESS for ELLs can be group administered. The Speaking section is individually administered. WIDA recommends the following administration sessions for grades 1-12:

- Listening and Reading can be scheduled together in one session lasting 75 minutes (less time for grades 1-2)
- Writing is scheduled in one session lasting 75 minutes (less time for grades 1-2)
- Speaking takes approximately 15 minutes per student

WIDA states that the average test time for Kindergarten ACCESS for ELLs is about 35 minutes, with the lowest ELL proficiency level finishing in about 10 minutes and the highest proficiency level

student needing about 75 minutes. Additionally, test administration time lessens as test administrator assessment familiarity increases.

NOTE: Times provided include time for logistics of material distribution/collection and a break in between tests. Please review the “District and School ACCESS for ELLs® Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking Test Administration Manual” for scheduling support. The manual is available for download at both the WIDA and MetriTech websites and will be shipped with ACCESS for ELLs test materials.

Who is allowed to administer the ACCESS for ELLs assessment?

To administer ACCESS for ELLs the individual must:

- Be a school district staff member
 - Preferably: licensed teachers, licensed administrators, instructional support para-professionals, substitute teachers that hold a teaching certificate, school psychologists, school social workers, school librarians, school counselors, or speech pathologists.
- Participate in WIDA’s online training modules
- Pass the appropriate WIDA ACCESS for ELLs quizzes at 80% or greater
- Be a proficient English speaker who is able to model clear standard pronunciation of English phonemes that will impact student responses.

NOTE: Student teachers may **not** serve as Test Administrators in charge of administering ACCESS for ELLs. However, they may serve as proctors who assist the Test Administrators.

What training is required for ACCESS for ELLs?

There are four training modules: 1) Kindergarten; 2) Alternate Assessment; 3) Speaking; and 4) Reading, Writing and Listening. Not all test administrators need to review all modules. In conjunction with district level trainings, all ACCESS for ELLs test administrators must pass the appropriate ACCESS for ELLs quiz (with a minimum of 80%) in order to be qualified to administer the ACCESS for ELLs assessment. A quiz and WIDA online training module takes about 60 minutes to complete.

What is the administrator to student ratio?

ACCESS for ELLs in grades 1-12 allows a 1 to 22 administrator student ratio. ACCESS for ELLs at the Kindergarten level is administered 1 on 1.