



OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION

## WIDA Alternate Screener Guidelines

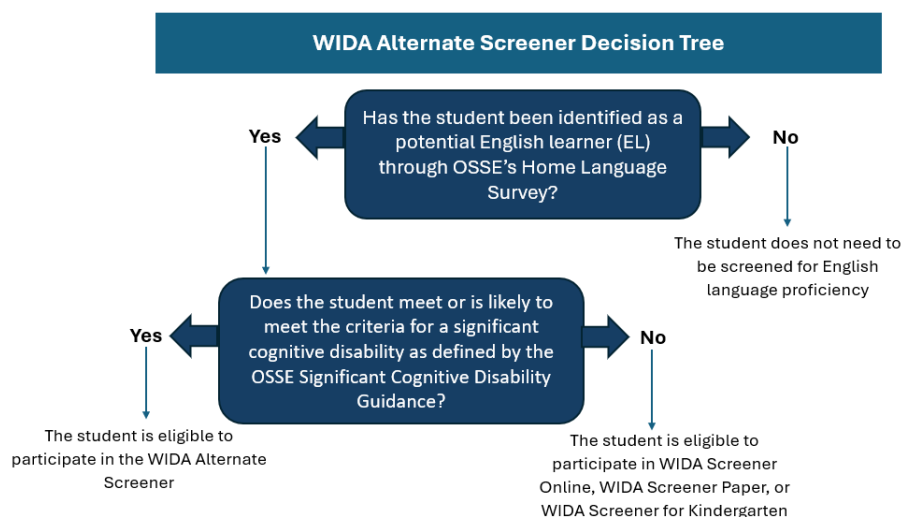
The WIDA Alternate Screener is an English language proficiency assessment for K-12 students with the most significant cognitive disabilities to help determine if students are English learners (ELs). The screener materials are available to print through the [WIDA Secure Portal](#) beginning in the 2025-26 school year. The local education agency (LEA) or school must follow the uniform identification procedures to identify all students who may be eligible for placement in a language assistance program. Identification must happen within 30 school days of Stage 5 enrollment if the student is enrolled at the beginning of the school year and within two weeks if the student enrolls thereafter.

### Participation Criteria

Individualized education program (IEP) teams determine eligibility for the WIDA Alternate Screener. Teams are to carefully review the criteria and needs of individual students for whom it may be most appropriate to participate in the alternate screener.

WIDA Alternate Screener can only be administered to students who meet all the following:

1. Student has been identified as a potential EL through [OSSE's Home Language Survey](#).
2. Student meets or is likely to meet the criteria for a significant cognitive disability as defined by the [OSSE Significant Cognitive Disability Guidance](#).
3. Student is in grades K-12.
  - a. This includes students who may have been proficient on a two-domain screener in pre-K or kindergarten and qualify for the alternate screener for the four-domain screener in spring of kindergarten or fall of grade 1.



Students with disabilities who do not meet the criteria for a significant cognitive disability should be administered the general WIDA Screener with appropriate accommodations. The Accessibility and Accommodations Manual on the WIDA Secure Portal provides information about appropriate accommodations.

### **Administration**

The WIDA Alternate Screener is a pencil-and-paper assessment individually administered to students in grades K-12 who meet the eligibility requirements. The screener is a nine-item assessment that includes all four domains—Listening, Reading, Speaking, and Writing—and takes approximately 30 minutes to administer, depending on the student's needs and accommodations included in their IEP. The WIDA Alternate Screener does not have universal "stop rules" that automatically end the test for all students. The test is designed to be responsive to student engagement, and test administrators are expected to adjust their approach to meet individual student needs during administration. The WIDA Alternate Screener can be administered at any time during the school year.

The WIDA Alternate Screener can be administered by staff who have completed the WIDA training modules and quizzes associated with the assessment. Training and resources are available through the WIDA Secure Portal.

Students should not be assessed using both the general WIDA Screener and the WIDA Alternate Screener.

### **Reporting**

LEAs will report the WIDA Alternate Screener status, score, and date in the same way in their student information system (SIS) they would the regular WIDA screener.

### **Proficiency**

The WIDA Alternate Screener uses the same scale as the WIDA Alternate ACCESS. In spring 2025, the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) determined that students approved to use the WIDA Alternate ACCESS and achieve a composite score of proficiency level 4 (PL4) may exit EL services. Consequently, a score of PL4 or higher on the WIDA Alternate Screener is considered proficient, indicating that the student does not qualify for EL services. LEAs will still have discretion to make individual determinations about the appropriate level of EL services for the students they serve.

### **Resources**

- [OSSE Home Language Survey](#)
- [OSSE Testing Accommodations](#)
- [WIDA Alternate Screener Parent Resources](#)
- [WIDA Alternate Can Do Descriptors](#)

For more information and guidance, contact [OSSE.Assessment@dc.gov](mailto:OSSE.Assessment@dc.gov).