



## **ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 Operational Webinar Q&A**

\*Note: These responses have been edited to provide the most concise information and weblinks, as appropriate

**Q:** Regarding students speaking into a microphone, do you recommend a process for preparing students?

**A:** The online test will have an interactive practice tutorial in which students can review and try out the headset/microphone and record into it. Participating in the Speaking field test this year would also allow students to gain exposure using and recording with the headsets.

**Q:** Will divisions need to buy headsets with microphones if we do not participate in the field test?

**A:** Yes. WIDA is providing headsets as an incentive to participate in the field test and to obtain input on them for the operational test. If your district does not already have headsets with microphones, they would need to be purchased for the speaking test and headphones would be needed for all domains.

**Q:** Will this presentation be posted online?

**A:** Yes, we will be editing this document and posting it online. With all upcoming webinars and trainings, the materials will be posted on the WIDA website under the Assessment dropdown/[ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 webpage](#). All documents, webinars, and other materials to assist districts are being posted to the [Preparation Resources](#) section of that page.

**Q:** When is the deadline to decide about field test participation?

**A:** We don't have a hard deadline, as this will depend on each state's testing window for the current paper-based ACCESS. We highly recommend that states and districts decide about their participation by around mid-November, which is when we will have most of the training documentation published on our field test website. That said, our partner for the field test, Data Recognition Corporation, has been fantastic with helping participants get set up and was able to work with us and with districts on even last-minute (up to a couple of weeks before field testing) support. So we encourage districts to determine their participation earlier on but will work with you to ensure maximum participation.

**Q:** When will the technology specifications be available for divisions to confirm that they have the necessary hardware, network requirements, etc.?

**A:** The [technology requirements](#) are currently documented on the website and list all information regarding the operating system that is needed for the computers, the computer headsets, and what needs to be installed within the system to run the test platform. [Field Test technology requirements](#) are also listed on the site with the Field Test information.

**Q:** Will we have to use the computer for every test except kindergarten, with the exception of the writing domain?

**A:** For the 1-12 test, students will use the computer for all of the domains except writing at the younger grade levels (1-3), which will continue to be paper-based. However, students who are not comfortable taking a computerized test will be able to take the test on paper. Kindergarten will continue to be a paper-based assessment for the foreseeable future.



**Q:** Can students be grouped across grade levels to complete the assessment?

**A:** Yes. Students will work individually on the computers, therefore, there won't be a need to group students by grade cluster or by tier as we have traditionally required. This should assist educators who are scheduling computer labs, as students of different grades will be able to test at the same time.

**Q:** Will there be a training center for divisions to test their site's technology?

**A:** Resources to ensure system readiness will be created in collaboration with our project partners with an availability timeframe of fall of next year. A Technology Coordinator webinar will also be held next Spring, 2015, to provide more information about technology planning.

**Q:** How does someone get involved in the field test? Will the field test replace the ACCESS for the year, or is it in addition?

**A:** To participate or learn more about this year's field test, please contact WIDA's Field Test Recruiter, Alex Bauer: [asbauer@wisc.edu](mailto:asbauer@wisc.edu). Next Friday, he will host a webinar on ACCESS 2.0 Field Testing and we highly recommend joining in or listening later to get more detailed information. The field test will not replace this year's ACCESS test. Field testing is conducted to test the validity and the items being developed for ACCESS 2.0. The data from it will be used, along with the current test, to establish the psychometric linking between performances on the paper ACCESS test and the computerized test. This will ensure that scores are comparable as we transition to the computerized test.

**Q:** How many students are required to participate in the field test?

**A:** There is not a minimum number required. We would like as many participants as possible, as we are looking to obtain a strong sample across the Consortium, including both students and educators in smaller districts as well as larger districts. We will work with educators and students to make sure that anyone who is interested can participate.

**Q:** Will you please give consideration to extending the field test window so that my state can participate?

**A:** Unfortunately, the field test window has to be set that way so that we have enough time to analyze the data and make changes to finalize the operational online test. We want to note for any state whose operational testing window would prevent them from participating in the field test that they may participate in a speaking sample collection that will use and follow the same procedures as the online Speaking test. The purpose of the sample collection will be slightly different, in that we will be collecting students' voice recordings to use for rater training for scoring in the future. We can work with you to participate in that and it would give a good understanding of the setup procedures and how the online system works.

**Q:** Do students take the "regular" ACCESS test prior to taking the Field Test?

**A:** Yes, students need to take the current operational test first as we want to make sure we are capturing their effort and the current test is what is used to measure student growth and for accountability purposes. The goal is to take the field test up to two weeks after the current test, though there may be some flexibility depending on individual circumstance.



**Q:** Will the Spring 2015 ACCESS for ELLs test administrations be taking place online or as a paper-based assessment?

**A:** This year, the operational test continues to be the paper-based assessment. This year is series 303 and it will be the last series of the paper ACCESS assessment. During the 2015-16 school year, the operational assessment will be online.

**Q:** Currently we allocate 6 weeks for the testing window. How many weeks is required for states to allocate for the ACCESS 2.0 field test? Does it have to be 6 weeks, as well?

**A:** The timing and length of testing windows is a decision made by each state. Testing windows will not change once the test is administered online unless an individual state decides to change their testing window.

**Q:** Is the field test during the same testing window as the ACCESS for ELL testing window?

**A:** The 2015 Field Test will be administered between December 2014 and April 2015. Because we have so many different states with different ranges of testing windows, we've tried to create the widest window we could for field testing while still building in the necessary analysis and development time for finalizing the operational test.

**Q:** Will K-2 students be expected to complete all parts of the test online?

**A:** Kindergarten will continue to be a paper-based test for the foreseeable future. For the higher grades, writing for grades 1-3 will also continue to be a paper-based test. For grades 1-2, students will complete the remaining domains of speaking, listening, and reading online unless they are not comfortable testing online.

**Q:** We signed up to field test, but there's no confirmation. How do we know we are confirmed?

**A:** The official confirmation happens once the test coordinator has filled out information relating to which schools will participate within the districts and how many students will participate per domain and grade cluster. We now have a Field Test Coordinator Database that will make registering a simple process. A short video explaining that process is available on the [Field Test Preparation Resources](#) webpage.

**Q:** When is the new ACCESS expected to go live?

**A:** It will become operational during the 2015/2016 school year. So we have one last year of the paper ACCESS series 303 and then Fall of 2015/2016 will be the online administration of ACCESS 2.0. The exact testing dates will continue to depend on the operational window in your state.

**Q:** Who is the vendor for scoring and reporting ACCESS 2.0?

**A:** We've been working with the University of Wisconsin Purchasing department on selecting a vendor in accordance with University of Wisconsin procurement policies. We expect to make an announcement in the coming weeks.

**Q:** We have SpEd students who will not be able to use a computer. Is there an alternative to computers?

**A:** Yes. There will be a paper-based version of the ACCESS 2.0 assessment for students who are unable to use a computer and need to take a paper test as an accommodation.



**Q:** If we decide to participate in the field test, do all students who take the operational test also need to take the field test? Or can 1 or 2 students take the field test?

**A:** While all students will need to take the operational test, the field test is completely optional. We invite maximum participation and do not have a minimum number required. You may want to consider the preparation time needed to install the needed software and prepare the tests, as that may be additional work to test one or two students. However, the experience of even a small number would give you an understanding of the process that will be used for many more students next year and would also give you an opportunity to provide important feedback to us on our procedures.

**Q:** How do you suggest determining if a student is comfortable with a computer?

**A:** Observing students practice with the interactive tutorial and practice items will be one way to see if how well they are able to interact with the computer. You may also ask students about their comfort level or observe them as they participate in other activities using a computer.

**Q:** For schools that participate in the field test, do the free headphones stay at the school, or must they be returned?

**A:** The headsets are a gift from WIDA as an incentive for participation for next year, so if your district chooses to participate, they will stay at your school.

**Q:** Would we be able to pause within the domain for the students with IEPs, for example to provide extra time for reading?

**A:** Yes, the system will allow students to pause, as needed, and to take the test at their own pace.

**Q:** Does my state approve of the "multiple grade", "multiple tier" group testing?

**A:** This question would be best to pose to your State Department of Education, as they will make policy decisions. We have not heard of any state's opposition to allowing students of multiple grades and tiers test at the same time.

**Q:** Will we be provided with the results of our district's field test?

**A:** For the field test, information is being collected to analyze the data for psychometric purposes, but is not being scored in the conventional way with results to go back to districts. The results will instead be part of technical reports establishing how the linking was done and how the data was analyzed.

**Q:** Will the Alternate ACCESS be on paper or computer?

**A:** Alternate ACCESS will continue to be paper-based for the foreseeable future, but we are looking into possibilities of also updating that assessment.

**Q:** I understand that the operational test (on computer) will be required beginning Fall 2014. How about the screeners - WIDA MODEL, W-APT? Will they also be on the computer?

**A:** We are also creating a computerized screener, to be available in 2016, and discussing plans for the future of MODEL. Their development is on a different timeline and WIDA will provide more detailed information about them over the coming year.



**Q:** If field testing will not replace our regular testing and we will have to do two rounds of testing, what benefit will participating in field testing provide schools?

**A:** Participating in the field test will provide the best opportunity to experience firsthand and give feedback on the procedures that will be used for online testing. It'll allow students to give input on the items, give staff members experience in administering the future operational ACCESS 2.0, and in the feedback you give us, help us to create the trainings and preparation resources that best meet your needs.

**Q:** Would students be able to record their speaking responses more than once or do they only have one chance to answer?

**A:** An Accommodations subcommittee of our member states is providing recommendations on this functionality and we will work with the selected vendor on functionality decisions of this kind.

**Q:** Will we need to purchase anything else for the test beside the headphones?

**A:** Other than computers, the only additional thing that will be needed are headsets with microphones for the Speaking domain. The same headsets can be used for the other domains.

**Q:** Do you have to have an IEP in order to take the paper-based test or could just the ESL teacher make that determination?

**A:** Our Accommodations subcommittee of member states is considering this issue and WIDA will share accommodations guidelines in Spring 2015. In addition, we have noted that any student who is not comfortable using a computer will be able to take the test on paper.

**Q:** Do you envision the ACCESS 2.0 to be administered in a computer lab or in classes with computers in small groupings (such as 2 or 3 students)?

**A:** Administration could be done in either of those settings, depending on the space you have available. Depending on the number of students, you could administer it in study corrals, a library, in a computer lab, or other available rooms. A computer lab would allow you to administer the test to a larger number of students. The only exception for that would be for speaking since students' voices will be recorded into a microphone. We recommend not having more than 5-7 students test at the same time for speaking, just to limit the background noise.

**Q:** Will the computerized assessment allow us to receive ACCESS scores faster?

**A:** The timing for release of reports is a policy decision being made by our member states. While the listening and reading tests will be digitally captured and scored via the computer, the writing and speaking test will still be scored offsite. Our member states are determining how best to release scores in such a way that there is a full picture of the student for all domain. The timing for reports will be determined in the coming year.

**Q:** About how long is the assessment? Could you please provide a range of time?

**A:** The test will be self-paced, and we recommend planning up to an hour for each domain.

**Q:** Will there be provisions for visually impaired students?

**A:** The Accommodation subcommittee of our member states is working on this as part of guidance on accommodations. In spring 2015, we will release guidance that will include revisions to the current allowable accommodations.



**Q:** Will we still receive a growth report for free as an incentive for field testing?

**A:** Yes, you will still receive growth reports as an incentive if your district has data from two years of ACCESS testing.

**Q:** Will the ACCESS 2.0 be administered in one setting? If not, how will it be divided?

**A:** Administration questions will be more logistical considerations at the local level. Two of the domains (listening and reading) need to be administered before the others, and we recommend that those be taken together. However, districts may decide otherwise if they prefer to administer those separately. Then, students will take either the writing or speaking test. The reason is that the test is designed to no longer be tiered. Students will automatically be placed in the appropriate writing or speaking level based on the information from the listening and reading tests.

**Q:** Is it best to administer the field test right after administering the operational test?

**A:** Yes. The goal is to administer it as close as possible to the operational test because we're comparing the students' testing experience online and don't want additional language development to have occurred, which will hopefully and presumably occur as more time passes. We understand that two weeks is difficult so we did extend that a bit last year, but our goal is as close to the operational test as you can do.

**Q:** In Alabama, our ACCESS (Operational) Window is March 23rd-May 1st. If the Field Test Window is December 15th, 2014 - April 10th, 2015, and you must give the operational prior to the field test, then we would have to give the operational and then the Field Test between March 23rd and April 10th to finish the field test. This will be hard.

**A:** We understand that the field test window may not work well for all states and apologize if that puts you in a difficult position. As noted earlier, even if you can't participate in the field test, there will still be an opportunity to participate in the speaking sample collection, which will involve working directly with the test engine under the same conditions as the field test. The speaking sample collection will assist us in the development of training resources.

**Q:** Will notes for this session be sent to SEAs?

**A:** Yes, we'll be sharing the recording as well as editing these questions and likely adding some of them to the frequently asked questions we're creating on our website.

**Q:** How involved have state departments of education been in these new WIDA testing developments? I'm just curious because our state's department has not mentioned these changes at all.

**A:** We are working closely with WIDA member states, who are part of state departments of education, but there is a lot of development work in progress. WIDA disseminates information through the various ways we have available, including our website, and there may be some differences across states in how much is disseminated. We encourage anyone, if you have questions, to contact us and to periodically check the WIDA ACCESS 2.0 website for new Preparation Resources that have become available:

[http://wida.us/access\\_2.0/preparation](http://wida.us/access_2.0/preparation)



**Q:** Approximately what is the cost of the type of headsets required for each person?

**A:** The headsets that we're providing districts as an incentive have worked out well, based on feedback we've received, and are around \$9 per student. On the [ACCESS 2.0 Technology page](#), there is a list of recommended headsets on the website that describes the headphones we've tested. Please feel free to reference that document as you make purchasing decisions:

[http://wida.us/access\\_2.0/technology/headsets](http://wida.us/access_2.0/technology/headsets)