WIDA Alternate ACCESS Identification and Utilization

School Year 2026-2027 Statewide English Learner Administrator Conference

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Federal and State Requirements

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Federal Requirements

- **Title VI, Civil Rights Act of 1964**
  - Prohibits denial of equal access to education because of language minority students' limited proficiency in English
- **Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974**
  - Defines denial of equal educational opportunity as "failure by an educational agency to take appropriate action to overcome language barriers that impede equal participation by students in an instructional program"
- **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1975**
  - Provides for free appropriate public education to eligible children with disabilities throughout the nation
  - Ensures special education and related services to those children
- **Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1968 as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)**
  - Establishes federal funding for supplemental services and programming to serve English learners (ELs)
  - Requires equal opportunities for EL students to meaningfully participate in all curricular and extracurricular activities

Landmark Cases

- Lau v. Nichols (414 U.S. 563, U.S. Supreme Court, 1974)
  - Districts must take affirmative steps to overcome educational barriers faced by the non-English speaking students in the district

- Castañeda v. Pickard (648 F.2d 989, U.S. Court of Appeals, 5th Circuit, 1981)
  - Program for ELs should be:
    - Theory: Based on "a sound educational theory"
    - Practice: "Reasonably calculated to implement effectively the educational theory adopted by the school," with adequate resources and personnel
    - Results: Evaluated as effective in overcoming language barriers after a trial period

- Plyler v. Doe (457 U.S. 202, 102 S. Ct. 2382, 72 L. Ed. 2d 786, 1982)
  - The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that undocumented children have the same right as U.S. citizens and permanent residents to receive a free public education.

Illinois Codes

- Illinois School Code
  - Article 14C, Transitional Bilingual Education
  - Article 14D, Dual Language Education
  - Section 22-105, Safe Schools for All Act (Guidance on the Safe Schools for All Act)
- Illinois Administrative Code (Title 23)
  - Part 228, Transitional Bilingual Education
  - Part 680, State Seal of Biliteracy

Agenda

- Criteria to determine Eligibility for the Alternate ACCESS
- Sample items from the Alternate ACCESS
- Reminder about accommodations that are available for ACCESS

WIDA Alternate ACCESS

Participation Checklist

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Participation Guidelines

- Illinois continues to have a higher proportion than expected of ELs taking the Alternate ACCESS.
- Guidance documents are available to help determine who is eligible to take the Alternate ACCESS.
  - WIDA Alternate ACCESS Guidance (K-3)
  - WIDA Alternate ACCESS Guidance (4-12)
- Eligibility for Alternate ACCESS is determined by the IEP team. The Alternate Assessment Indicator must be turned on in SIS. Students must meet the criteria on the participation guideline to take the Alternate ACCESS. However, the Alternate Access may not be the appropriate assessment for all eligible students.
- Evidence must be collected to justify use of the Alternate ACCESS and kept with the student's IEP, the participation guidelines form can be part of this evidence.

K-12 Participation Flowchart: Question 1

- Is the student identified as an English learner under Illinois requirements?
  - Yes. Proceed to the next question.
  - No. Stop here and do not administer the WIDA ACCESS or Alternate ACCESS Assessment this student is not eligible to take either assessment.

K-12 Participation Flowchart: Question 2

- Does the student have an IEP?
  - Yes. Proceed to the next question.
  - No. Stop here. The student does not qualify for the WIDA Alternate ACCESS Assessment.

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K-12 Participation Flowchart: Question 3

- Is the student identified with a most significant cognitive disability? (*most significant deficits in intellectual and adaptive functioning*)
  - Yes. Proceed to the next question.
  - No. Stop here. The student does not qualify for the WIDA Alternate ACCESS Assessment.

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K-12 Participation Flowchart: Question 4

- Does the student participate in curriculum aligned to Essential Elements? (*Illinois K-12 standards*)
  - Yes.
    - For kindergarten, stop here; the student is eligible for WIDA Alternate ACCESS Assessment.
    - For grades 1-12, move to the next question
  - No. Stop here. The student does not qualify for the WIDA Alternate ACCESS Assessment.

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Different Paths for 1-3 and 4-12

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1-3 Participation Flowchart: Question 5

- Can the student meaningfully participate in WIDA ACCESS with accommodations?
  - Yes. Stop here. The student does not qualify for the WIDA Alternate ACCESS Assessment.
  - No. Stop here. the student is eligible for WIDA Alternate ACCESS Assessment.

4-12 Participation Flowchart: Question 5

- Does the student meet participation guidelines for DLM-AA?
  - Yes. Proceed to the next question.
  - No. Stop here. The student does not qualify for the WIDA Alternate ACCESS Assessment.

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4-12 Participation Flowchart: Question 6

- Can the student meaningfully participate in WIDA ACCESS with accommodations?
  - Yes. Stop here. The student does not qualify for the WIDA Alternate ACCESS Assessment.
  - No. Stop here. the student is eligible for WIDA Alternate ACCESS Assessment.

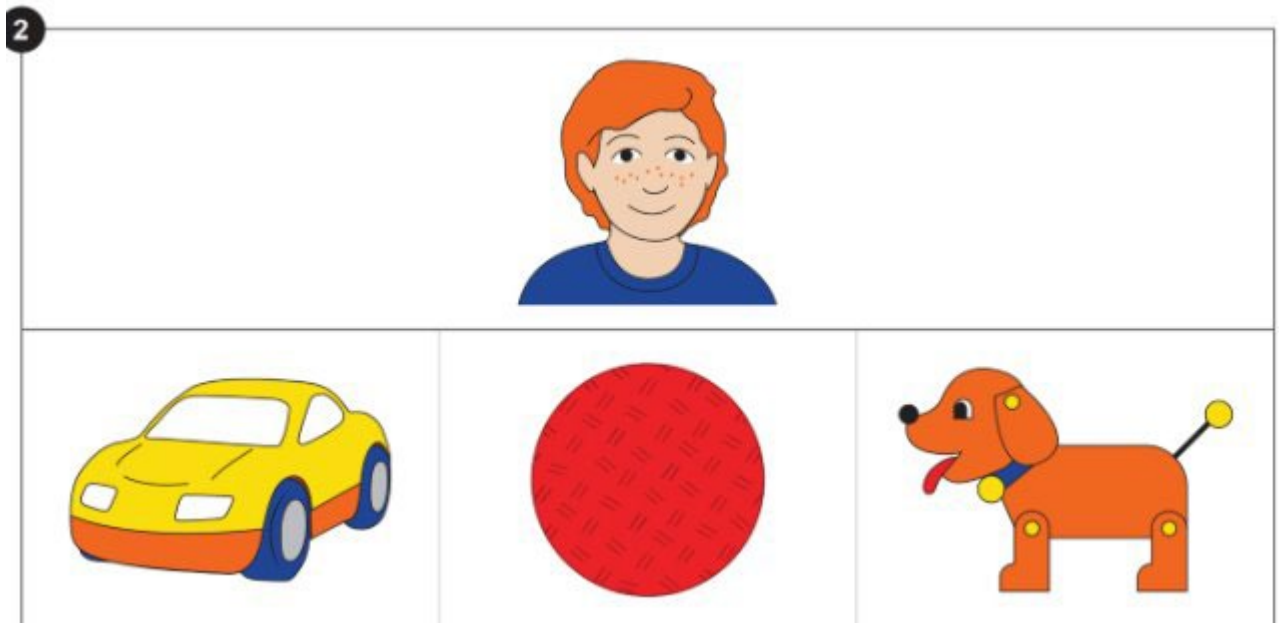
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Alternate ACCESS

Sample Questions

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Grade Cluster K-2 Listening



Test Administrator Script:

Point to BOY. Luis has a ball.

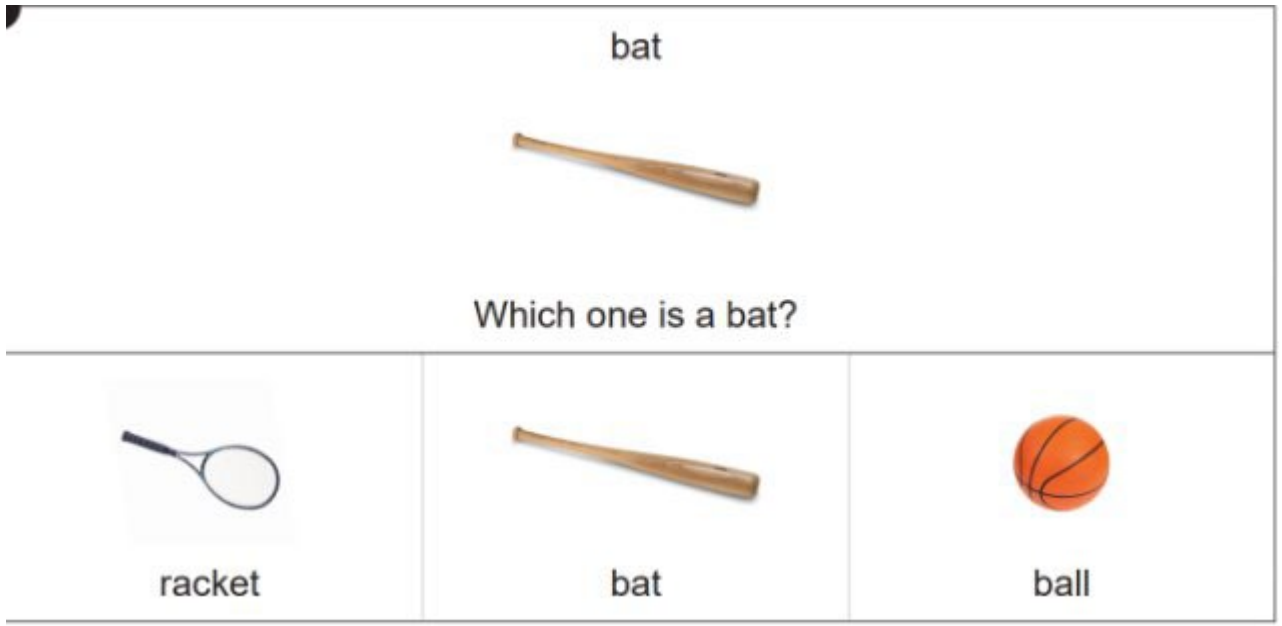
Sweep across CAR, BALL, and DOG.

What does Luis have? PAUSE.

If correct, go to MOVING ON box. If incorrect or no response, repeat CUE A. After repeat, if incorrect or no response, go to CUE B.

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Grade Cluster 3-5



Test Administrator Script:

Point to BAT AT TOP. *This is a bat.*

Point to QUESTION. *Which one is a bat?*

Point to RACKET. *Racket.* Point to BAT. *Bat.* Point to BALL. *Ball.*

Sweep across RACKET, BAT, and BALL. *Which one is a bat?* PAUSE.

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Important Notes

- An IEP does not automatically qualify a student for an alternative assessment. The evaluation for appropriateness of an alternative assessment is based on the identified needs and ability to participate in the regular assessment.
- ELs who take the DLM-AA are not required to take the Alternate ACCESS. Consider their history taking ACCESS when deciding.
- Students who took Alternate ACCESS in one school year are not required to continue taking it.

Important Notes Continued

- Observe students interacting with the Alternate ACCESS and provide information to the IEP team to inform future decisions.
- The IEP team must reevaluate a student's eligibility to participate in Alternate ACCESS every year with score results and observations.
- Students who take the Alternate ACCESS cannot reclassify as "Former EL."
- The WIDA Alternate Screener is NOT approved to use in Illinois.

Questions?

- Our team is here to help!
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Thank you!

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