

WIDA Alternate ACCESS Identification and Utilization

2025 ISBE Multilingual/Language Development Department
Regional Trainings

Federal Legislation and Landmark Cases

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.

Title VII of the ESEA of 1968: The Bilingual Education Act

- The first federal legislation to recognize the unique needs of English learners and the need for specialized instruction. It established federal funding for the training of bilingual teachers and bilingual programs.

Equal Educational Opportunity 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

English learners (ELs) must be able to participate effectively in all programs and content areas.

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 a 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; and
 - **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.

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

WIDA Alternate ACCESS

Participation Guidelines

- Illinois continues to have a higher proportion than expected of ELs taking the Alternate ACCESS.
- An updated guidance is being prepared to clarify who is eligible to take the Alternate ACCESS.
- Eligibility for Alternate ACCESS is determined by the IEP team. 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.

Participation Checklist Grades: K-12

- Is the student identified as an English learner according to the state of 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.

Participation Checklist Grades: K-12

- 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.

Participation Checklist Grades: K-12

- Is the student diagnosed with the most significant cognitive disability (e.g. Developmental Delay, Autism)?
 - Yes. Proceed to the next question.
 - No. Stop here. The student does not qualify for the WIDA Alternate ACCESS Assessment.

Different paths for K-3 and 4-12

Participation Checklist Grades: K-12

- Does the student participate in curriculum aligned to the Essential Elements aligned to the Illinois State standards for K-12?
 - 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.

Participation Checklist Grades: 1-3

- For grades 1-3, was the student able to participate in the 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.

Participation Checklist Grades: 4-12

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

Participation Checklist Grades: 4-12

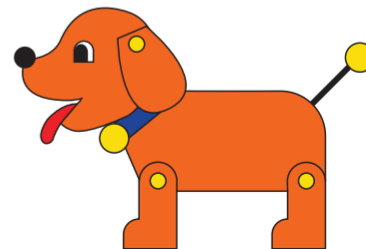
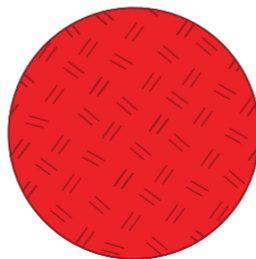
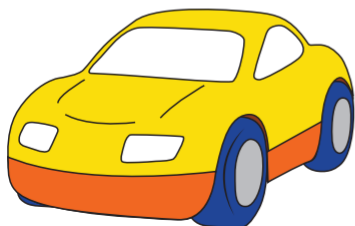
- Was the student able to meaningfully participate in the WIDA Screener/WIDA ACCESS with accommodations?
 - Yes. Stop here. The student does not qualify for the WIDA Alternate ACCESS Assessment.
 - No. Stop here. the student **is eligible** for WIDA Alternate ACCESS Assessment.

Alternate ACCESS

Sample Questions

Grade Cluster: K-2 Listening

2



Grade Cluster: 3-5

bat



Which one is a bat?



racket



bat



ball

1

Three cups



Which shows the number of cups?

1

3

4

CUE A

Point to THREE CUPS. **There are three cups.**

Point to QUESTION. **Which shows the number of cups?**

Point to NUMBER 1. **Number one.**

Point to NUMBER 3. **Number three.**

Point to NUMBER 4. **Number four.**

Sweep across NUMBER 1, NUMBER 3, NUMBER 4. **Which shows the number of cups? 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**.

Important Notes

- Every EL with an IEP does not need to be evaluated for eligibility for Alternate ACCESS. Evaluate students based on their needs and ability to participate in the 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.
- When a student earns an Overall Composite near the top of the scale on the Alternate ACCESS, consider transitioning to standard ACCESS for the following school year.

Important Notes

- 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" as the English Language Proficiency range does not exceed 3.0.
- The WIDA Alternate Screener is **NOT** approved to use in Illinois. This Alt Screener would require adoption into Part 228 before it will be allowed for use.



Questions?

Resources

- [WIDA Accessibility and Accommodations Manual](#)
- [WIDA Accessibility and Accommodations Website](#)
- [WIDA ACCESS Online Accommodations Checklist](#)
- [WIDA ACCESS Paper Accommodations Checklist](#)
- [WIDA Alternate ACCESS Accommodations Checklist](#)
- [WIDA ACCESS for Kindergarten Accommodations Checklist](#)
- [ACCESS or Alternate ACCESS?](#)

Thank you