

Date: July 26, 2016

To: State Education Agency (SEA) Representatives

From: WIDA Assessment Team

RE: Braille 2016 – 17

For the 2016 – 2017 testing year, WIDA is planning on providing ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 in the following braille formats:

| Grade Band | EBAE w/ Nemeth Contracted   | EBAE w/ Nemeth Uncontracted | UEB Contracted              | EBAE Uncontracted           |
|------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1          |                             |                             | Listening, Reading, Writing | Listening, Reading, Writing |
| 2          |                             |                             | Listening, Reading, Writing | Listening, Reading, Writing |
| 3          |                             |                             | Listening, Reading, Writing | Listening, Reading, Writing |
| 4 – 5      | Listening, Reading, Writing | Listening, Reading, Writing |                             |                             |
| 6 – 8      | Listening, Reading, Writing | Listening, Reading, Writing |                             |                             |
| 9 – 12     | Listening, Reading, Writing | Listening, Reading, Writing |                             |                             |

Originally, WIDA had planned on following the Braille Authority of North America’s (BANA) recommendation where beginning in January 2016 “all new transcriptions will be produced in UEB.” Multiple states indicated this would not provide the needed access for their students. To better meet student needs, WIDA is now proposing a 5 year transition plan where in 2016 – 2017 grades 1 – 3 are available in UEB (contracted and uncontracted), and Grades 4 – 12 are available in EBAE (contracted and uncontracted).

WIDA increased the number of domains available in braille format from two to three. WIDA and American Printing House for the Blind (APH) carefully reviewed each item, test construct, and proposed tactile graphics and picture descriptions. These proposed graphics were embossed, and provided to a panel of Teachers of the Visually Impaired last week. Each panelist selected is certified braille proficient, and regularly adapts instructional materials for students who are blind. ACCESS for ELL 2.0 items were thoroughly reviewed by this panel of experts to ensure maximum accessibility for

students who are proficient in braille. Recommendations on adjustments needed were recorded. The feedback from these experts indicated that “the interpretation of tactile graphics for the speaking sections of the assessment would be more of a hindrance than linguistic support. By the time the student is able to interpret the graphic, the auditory component [of the item] would be lost.” The significant amount of modification needed to extend braille to the Speaking domain would dramatically impact the construct of the assessment, providing results that are not comparable to other students taking the assessment. Based on the expert recommendation, WIDA proposes to not move forward with tactile graphics or picture descriptions for the Speaking domain at this time.

Please provide any concerns to your WIDA State Relations Specialist by August 12, 2016.