



NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

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TO LEA Superintendents
Charter School Directors

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2022–23 ALTERNATE ACCESS FIELD TEST FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELLs)

Students identified as English learners with significant cognitive disabilities participate in the Alternate Access for English Learners assessment. For many years North Carolina educators have participated in a redesign of this assessment, along with the Advancing ALTELLA: Alternate English Language Learning Assessment Project team; composed of WIDA staff, the WIDA Consortium, other state members of the consortium, and other national experts. The next step in the redesign is the administration of a field test to participating students.

What is the Alternate ACCESS for English Language Learners Field Test?

The Alternate ACCESS Field Test is a voluntary, one-time, paper-based test that may be administered during the 2022–23 school year. This administration is in addition to the annual administration of the Alternate ACCESS for ELLs test. WIDA, the test publisher, determined that administering two tests (i.e., Alternate ACCESS for ELLs and Alternate ACCESS for ELLs Field Test) will create less testing fatigue as opposed to one long test. The field test consists of newly developed test items and this test will help ensure those items measure only what is intended.

Eligible Students

All students in North Carolina with the most significant cognitive disabilities in Grades K–12 who are eligible to take Alternate ACCESS for ELLs are eligible to participate in the Alternate ACCESS for ELLs field test. Students will not receive a score from the field test.

Participation

Public school units may choose not to participate in the field test, however; participation is strongly recommended to assist in the development of an assessment that will better meet the needs of these students. Participation in the field test will also yield several outcomes including an (1) expanded grade band (Kindergarten), (2) a new alternate screener, and (3) newly designed test questions aligned to the 2020 WIDA English Language Development (ELD) Standards Framework. The data

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from each of the test questions will be analyzed by test developers prior to being added to the redesigned Alternate ACCESS test.

All schools with students who are eligible to participate in the Alternate ACCESS for ELLs test will automatically receive Alternate ACCESS for ELLs Field Test materials beginning as early as February 7, 2023. If a district or school chooses not to participate, the materials should be returned immediately to WIDA.

The field test window opens on Tuesday, February 14, 2023, and closes on Monday, April 17, 2023.

Additional Information

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction will provide additional details on the specifics of the field test administrations in joint training sessions. These sessions are planned for Wednesday, November 30, 2022, and Friday, December 2, 2022, and are for public school unit staff who support and plan for the administrations of ACCESS for ELLs and Alternate ACCESS for ELLs.

Registration links have been provided in broadcast communications to testing and English Learner public school unit staff and through regional accountability office staff. The selected staff members should register and attend one of the two sessions.

We appreciate your support of the efforts to redesign the Alternate ACCESS for ELLs. We look forward to the opportunity to work with your schools to ensure North Carolina English learners are represented in this important field test data collection.

MM:TLH:whw

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