Updates Regarding the ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 English Language Proficiency Test Requirements

The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) is providing updated information to assist school districts as they prepare for testing with the Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State to State for English language learners (ACCESS for ELLs 2.0) language proficiency assessment.

Background
The enactment of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in December 2015 expanded the accountability requirements to include the performance of English language learners (ELLs) toward English proficiency. Under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, this requirement was limited to only those school districts that received Title III funds. Specifically, ESSA requires states to demonstrate an increase in the percentage of ELLs making progress in achieving English language proficiency (ESSA §1111(c)(4)(a)(III)(ii)) and that each state must demonstrate that local educational agencies in the state will provide for an annual assessment of English proficiency of all ELLs in the schools (ESSA §1111(b)(2)(g)(i)(ii)(G)).

Requirement Updates
All school districts in New Jersey were required by ESSA to administer the ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 language proficiency assessment to all ELLs in grades K-12 for the first time during the 2016-17 school year. Starting in the 2018-19 school year, students’ demonstrated progress from the 2016-17 administration to the 2017-18 administration will be used to determine schools’ and districts’ performance on the English language proficiency indicator in the statewide accountability system. To help school districts prepare for this school year’s testing cycle, the New Jersey ACCESS for ELLs webpage provides important 2017-18 administration dates. Please review the document with appropriate staff to plan for the test administration.

Additional Context
New Jersey is a member of the WIDA consortium. WIDA is a nonprofit cooperative with a purpose of developing standards and assessments that promote educational equity for English language learners.

New Jersey’s membership in WIDA enables school districts to receive the following resources and services:

- ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 Annual Summative Assessment;
- Professional Learning;
- Technical Assistance;
- Educational Resources;
- English Language Development (ELD) Standards and Can Do Descriptors;
- Client Services;
- WIDA Screener; and
- WIDA ACCESS Placement Test (W-APT), the online English language development screening test.

Note that as part of the statewide assessment program, ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 is provided to districts at no cost for the 2017-18 school year.

Technical Assistance
- Visit webpage for ACCESS for ELLs 2.0
- WIDA information on preparing for test administration
- For questions regarding the ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 test ordering and administration protocol, please contact the test vendor, Data Recognition Corporation (DRC), at (855) 787-9615 or WIDA@datarecognitioncorp.com.
- For questions regarding training, contact WIDA at (866) 276-7735 or help@wida.us.

For other questions, contact the NJDOE’s Office of Supplemental Educational Programs at (609) 376-9080 or email ell@doe.state.nj.us.

c: Members, State Board of Education
Kimberley Harrington, Commissioner
NJDOE Staff
Statewide Parent Advocacy Network
Garden State Coalition of Schools
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