

Intradistrict Communication

DATE: Thursday, December 19, 2019

TO: All Principals

FROM: Shelley Nordick, Ph.D., Administrator of Teaching and Learning
Ben Jameson, Director of Evaluation, Research and Accountability

SUBJECT: Preparation for 2020 WIDA Access for ELLs Testing

January 6, 2020 marks the opening of the WIDA ACCESS for ELLs test administration window. Testing will conclude on March 6, 2020. This test will be administered to every EL student with a Language Proficiency Level (LPL) of 4 or less. With the exception of a small group of pilot schools who will administer the WIDA ACCESS themselves, four teams of testers from the Evaluation, Research & Accountability Department will administer the test in each school. Attached with this memo is a test schedule that outlines the WIDA ACCESS test dates for each school. Following is a list of important information and friendly reminders to schools as they prepare for their testing day(s):

Important Information:

- The WIDA is a federally-mandated test and it is a civil right belonging to students to take the test and receive the EL services that are informed by the test's results. The federal government does not allow parents to opt their student out of the test. However, the state allows parents to opt their student out of the WIDA. We ask that school administrators have a frank conversation with parents who are thinking about opting their student out of the test about why the WIDA is a benefit to their child. A student's performance on the WIDA will help determine accommodations on other tests such as RISE, Utah Aspire Plus and the ACT. Parents may also contact Ben Jameson or the district's ALS Department to inquire further about the benefits that come from taking the WIDA ACCESS.
- If a parent has refused EL services, please note that their child will still take the WIDA ACCESS unless the parent has also filled out the state's opt out form and turned it into the school. The opt out form must be filled out annually.
- We do not want the test platform to get in the way of students' ability to demonstrate their language proficiency. Therefore, **schools are strongly encouraged to set aside time for EL students to take at least one practice test for each subtest (listening, reading, speaking and writing)**. We also encourage teachers of EL students to take a practice test so that they can see how academic language proficiency is assessed through authentic learning scenarios presented by this assessment. The practice test site can be accessed by clicking here: <https://wbte.drctdirect.com/WIDA/portals/wida>

Helpful Reminders:

- Please reserve a computer lab for the day(s) of testing. Principals are encouraged to work with their school technology experts to ensure lab software is up-to-date and that settings, including sound and microphone settings, are set to the requisite WIDA specifications a week before the school testing date. Chromebook labs can be used to test as well. We would ask that a room large enough to space students out (keeping in mind that it gets noisy during the speaking test) is also reserved for testing with Chromebooks. A normal sized classroom with desks would be sufficient for testing.
- If at all possible, we ask that schools refrain from scheduling school-wide events such as assemblies or field trips on the day(s) of testing. Students are always less enthused about taking a test if they are missing a fun event. Such events also increase the likelihood that a parent will opt the student out of the test.
- We ask that someone from the school, especially at the secondary level, be available if needed to help escort students to the testing lab to take the test.
- As we will have a team of testers proctoring and administering the WIDA ACCESS, it will not be necessary for school personnel to be in the testing lab.
- Our testers will work around lunch and recess schedules and will allow students to use the bathroom, get a drink, or take a break as needed.

Please contact JoLynn Snelgrove (WIDA Test Coordinator) at 801-567-8419 (jolynn.snelgrove@jordandistrict.org) or Ben Jameson for any questions you may have about the 2020 WIDA ACCESS administration. We look forward to working with each of your schools to ensure a smooth test administration.