

Video Transcript

Revising ACCESS: The Impact of the Standards Framework, 2020 Edition

Hi! I'm Jason! And I'm Sharon! We're with the WIDA Assessment Team, and this is the first video in our Revising ACCESS series that highlights our work to update WIDA ACCESS, which will be the new name of the assessment starting in the 2025-26 school year. We hope this video series will help educators and multilingual learners be ready for the release of the revised version of ACCESS.

In this video, we take a look at the ACCESS test and the impact of the 2020 Edition of the Standards on ACCESS. Let's check in on what ACCESS is and why you use it. ACCESS is a large-scale summative English language proficiency test. Federal laws require that multilingual learners receive equal opportunities for academic advancement, and ACCESS helps state education agencies meet the federal mandate for monitoring students' progress in acquiring English language proficiency for academic contexts. Also, ACCESS scores can be used in placement and reclassification decisions, and for programming purposes, ACCESS is not a test of content knowledge. Instead, ACCESS uses academic content as the vehicle for assessing English language proficiency.

ACCESS is made up of four tests: Listening, Reading, Speaking, and Writing. All students identified as English learners in the WIDA Consortium take ACCESS once a year. Sharon, please tell us how ACCESS is connected to the Standards. ACCESS is a standards-referenced test. This means that student performance is compared to the WIDA ELD Standards. Any student can achieve any score, and students are not ranked against each other or against the expected performance of monolingual English speakers. The 2020 Edition of the Standards is guiding updates to ACCESS. In the 2025-26 school year, multilingual learners across the WIDA Consortium will take a version of ACCESS that reflects the 2020 Edition of the Standards for the first time.

Now, let's take a look at the WIDA ELD Standards Framework. In December 2020, we published the 2020 Edition of our English Language Development Standards Framework. The WIDA ELD Standards Framework is centered on equity and fosters the assets, contributions, and potential of multilingual learners. The Standards Framework provides a foundation for curriculum, instruction, and assessment for multilingual learners in kindergarten through grade 12. There are four Big Ideas in the framework:

Equity of opportunity and access: This is essential for multilingual learners' preparation for college, career and civic lives.

Integration of content and language: Academic content is the context for language learning, and language is the means for learning academic content. Collaboration among stakeholders: Stakeholders share responsibility for educating multilingual learners. Functional approach to language development.

This approach helps educators focus on the purposeful use of language. Additionally, the Framework consists of four components: The WIDA ELD Standards Statements: The Standards illustrate the integration of content and language by showing language in use of learning. Key Language Uses: Sometimes known by their initials, KLUs, these describe prominent ways that language is used in school, across all disciplines. Language Expectations: The Language Expectations set goals for content-driven language learning. They are the statements most similar to what educators find in academic content standards. Proficiency Level Descriptors: The six Proficiency Level Descriptors, also known as PLDs, describe a continuum of language development activities that target Language Expectations.

Now, let's wrap up this video by taking a look at a specific update to the Standards and its impact on the development of ACCESS. We've made a minor revision to the five Standard Statements. Instead of focusing on the "language of" a content area, the 2020 Edition places emphasis on "language for" content areas. This slight adjustment emphasizes the use of language for specific purposes. The Five ELD Standards are: language for Social and Instructional Purposes, Language for Language Arts, Language for Mathematics, Language for Science, and Language for Social Studies.

In our next video, we will describe the updates planned for the Listening and Reading tests. We hope this video series and the other resources and test preparation materials we're developing will help educators and multilingual learners be ready for the release of the revised version of ACCESS.

We will continue sharing updates as we approach the 2025–26 school year. We hope you'll continue to engage with this content, as we're excited about the upcoming changes to all things ACCESS!

Please bookmark our Revising ACCESS page on the WIDA website to stay up to date.