

ACCESS or Alternate ACCESS?

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Welcome to WIDA Webinars, this is a free virtual learning opportunity that offers educators insights and resources on a variety of topics relevant to educators of multilingual learners.

In this webinar, you'll hear from expert staff and researchers. If you want to be notified about upcoming webinars, sign up for our newsletters at wida.wisc.edu/news. I just wanted to give a little overview of today's presentation.

After some introductions here with all of the speakers, we're going to talk about some overview of legal requirements for assessing multilingual learners. We're going to talk a little bit about the individual assessments ACCESS for ELLs, Alternate ACCESS, and then we're going to dive in a little bit more into learning about the characteristics of multilingual learners with disabilities and the most significant cognitive disabilities.

We'll talk about WIDA's approach to accessibility. And the meat and heart of the discussion here is really about the decision-making process and how to help navigate that with resources that WIDA has developed as well as those your state may have.

My name is Kristen Burton, I am an accessibility and inclusion specialist on the assessment team here at WIDA, and I will pass it off to my colleagues. Swati, good morning, everyone.

I'm on the East Coast, so shout out to any East Coast folks. Folks, my name is Swati Chauhan and I am also an accessibility and inclusion assessment specialist here at WIDA. I will throw this over to Kim.

Hi, everybody. My name is Kim Lesage. I am an accessibility and inclusion specialist working with Kristen and Swati.

We have a small but growing team doing a lot of mighty work and we're excited to be here today to talk to you a little bit about our two focus assessments that we'll talk about today to support decision making. Thank you. And so today, we really want to help you understand the unique test designs for and accessibility features for each of our assessments, the ACCESS for ELLs and the WIDA Alternate ACCESS in order to help make decisions about student participation.

If you haven't already. We just want to understand where you all are coming from and which hat you're wearing today or most days in terms of your current role. If you could help fill out that poll, that would be great. And we will get going. I'll pass it off to Swati. Thank you, Kristen.

Welcome to the first section of our webinar, which is an overview of key legal requirements for assessing multilingual learners and multilingual learners with disabilities. It's a topic that sets the foundation for our discussion today.

It's essential to understand the legal framework that guides the decision-making process and assessing students, including those with disabilities. The section will provide a high-level overview of the key federal laws and regulations that govern how to identify, assess and support MLS and with disabilities.

Understanding these legal requirements. I understand it's a little bit dry, but it will help educators and IEP teams make informed decisions about the most appropriate assessment type for each individual student. So this slide that you see on screen outlined some of the key federal policies related to decision making for MLS with disabilities. It's important to note that these bullet points represent guidelines from multiple federal policies. So this includes Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the IDEA or Individuals with Disabilities Act and the ESSA Every Student Succeeds Act.

And also some dear colleague letters that USDE has put out to kind of clarify various points. Just a quick breakdown of these various points. The first MLS with disabilities have options.

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They can participate in regular English language proficiency or ELP assessments with or without accommodations or they may take the alternate ELP assessment. Flexibility ensures that each student's unique needs are met. Next, when providing accommodations for ELP assessments, it's essential to ensure they don't invalidate what's being measured.

The goal is right to level the playing field, but not to alter the fundamental nature of the assessment and what is being measured. Accommodation can be tailored to individual student needs. They can be applied across all of the four domains that we had on ACCESS. Speaking, listening, reading, and writing, or just for a single domain if that's what's most appropriate for the student. Fourth, states have a responsibility to develop clear policies for participation and alternate ELP assessments. This ensures consistency and fairness across schools and districts. Next, for English learners with multilingual learners with significant cognitive disabilities who cannot participate in the general ELP assessment even with accommodations, an alternate ELP assessment must be administered right. It is Alternate ACCESS for our suite.

When making these decisions about which assessment, it is crucial that IEP teams include someone knowledgeable about second language acquisition. Expertise and helps ensure that language learning needs are not mistaken for learning disabilities or vice versa. Lastly, it the importance of parental involvement cannot be overstated. Local educational agencies need to ensure that parents who may not be fluent in English themselves are meaningfully included in the decision-making process. This might involve providing interpreters or providing translated materials to the parents. These policies, which are drawn from various federal mandates, are designed to protect the rights of MLS with disabilities and ensure they receive appropriate assessments and support. They highlight the complex interplay between language learning and special education needs, which emphasizes the importance of individualized decision making and inclusive practices.

Next, we have a poll. Just a couple of true, false questions. True or false? ESSA requires assessments to be designed using the principles of universal design. All students must participate in assessments with or without accommodation and true or false. Use of assistive technology is not permitted on WIDA assessments. I think we have over half of folks that have answered. Just to go over it and I'm not sure if it pops up on your end. The first one is true. It does pop up. The second question, the answer is true and the third, the right answer is false. And with that, I'm going to pass it on to Kim who will take over the next section. I'm going to talk a bit about our ACCESS for ELLs assessment, Alternate ACCESS for ELLS assessment and our approach to accessibility. It's defining that looking at some of the principles and the frameworks that we use that we incorporate it throughout our development cycle.

If we could go to the next slide, we can jump into that. What is ACCESS for ELLs? It was the first poll, but I did look at who is joining us today. I saw that we have folks who I'm assuming, I think I can safely assume are pretty familiar with the ACCESS for ELLs, but we'll still talk about it a little bit. It's our large scale English language proficiency assessment that's administered to students who've been identified as our English language learners. And we administer that test from kindergarten throughout twelfth grade. Access is given annually by the states in the consortium, and it's part of the mandate, the federal mandate that requires that states give an English language proficiency assessment to monitor student progress.

And the assessment focuses on English language proficiency in academic context. ACCESS for ELLs. And then if you want to become familiar with what it looks like for those folks who have limited experience with it, you can get a really good sense of what the ACCESS is about by going to our web page that includes sample items and a test and test practices specific to or tailored to the different grade clusters. So you can get a really good idea of the format, the content, the complexity of the content. And while test administrators are typically pretty familiar with the sample item page, the test practices and that sort of thing, and they use that as part of the preparation with their students.

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Hopefully we have also seen and recommend that educators are accessing it so they can also become familiar with what their students are going to be expected to do. And there's even some benefit in sharing this with family so that they can incorporate in it and whatever supports they have for their students. If you use this barcode that could take you to the page or you can, what

I typically do because I just find it very easy convenient is I just Google it and it comes up very easily. Google's great for finding this quickly, but we have a barcode here that you can use to route you to that page. And then if you move to the next slide, we have a little overview, a glimpse of the WIDA Alternate ACCESS. And based on the poll, I think that this one may not be as this assessment may not be as familiar to everyone, but in brief, it is our large scale English language proficiency test that's based on alternate proficiency level descriptor descriptors that are used for English language learners with significant cognitive disability.

Students that are typically found participating in the state's alternate content assessment. It would be the assessment that our instructional support staff has worked together, that's including our teachers, our families, folks who are working with the IEP teams, counselors that have identified the student as someone who is not only an English language learner, considered would qualify for as most, most significant cognitive disabilities.

As with ACCESS for ELLs, we are measuring English language proficiency in an academic context for listening, reading, speaking, and writing. It is doing very similar things, but it's more most appropriate for our students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. I'm just going to leave a second because Kristen is very close to Alternate ACCESS.

Great job. Alright, next slide. Here is our barcode that'll take you to our web page with sample items, test practice, other materials that you'll be able to use to become familiar with the with the WIDA Alternate ACCESS. Again, test administrators, test coordinators, families are also welcome to use this. This is this is public information posted. Anybody can access this and we would encourage educators to visit here to help support students so that they're prepared for the test when it is time to take it. We talked about those domains, the listening, reading, writing and speaking and ACCESS measures English language development in these four areas. The listening and reading are the domains that are measuring interpretive language.

It is measuring the student's ability to comprehend English and how they, the students are processing, understanding and responding to information they receive. And then we have our reading and spike speaking domains and these are the domains that are doing expressive language and we're measuring information the students produce. What they are, the meaning they are conveying through oral communication or written communication. To learn more about these two assessments, we have a space to do that. Now, you do have to have an account and access to the portal to be able to access these two courses.

But if you have those things, then you are able to go into more detail, find out more about go through the course. They're very, very helpful. But the course, there's one for administration and then there's one for scoring. And you'll find that for both, both assessments, ACCESS for ELLs as well as Alternate ACCESS. I'm trying to make sure I don't miss any other important point in my notes. I think that covers it. But I do want to reiterate, to access these courses, you have to have access to our secure portal. Go ahead, Kristen. I apologize for interrupting.

I just wanted to highlight again, if it did cut out of this part that while you're able to access these, it will require an account to and access to the secure portal. But you can find detail and support in these courses for administration and scoring for both of those assessments. Thank you for that overview. I also just wanted to mention that at the end of the presentation, we will share QR code where you can find a Google document where all of these links and resources are compiled. And

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you'll be able to take that document and be able to share that with your colleagues or to be able to use for future reference in case you're missing any of them in the chat. Now that you have heard a little bit about some of the legal requirements for testing multilingual learners and heard a little bit about the test, we wanted to dive in a little bit further to talk about multilingual learners with disabilities and multilingual learners with significant cognitive disabilities and their characteristics. Who are multilingual learners with disabilities? They are small but important subgroup of students in schools. And despite the subgroup small size, these students have diverse needs related to language and disability. WIDA defines multilingual learners with disabilities as individuals who have one or more disabilities as documented in their IEP or 504, and who are progressing towards English language proficiency in each of the four domains of speaking, reading, writing and understanding the English language. So you may have seen a similar graphic like this in the past, but Short and Fitzsimmons ascertained that English learners must perform double the work of their native English speaking peers, so learning English while studying core content areas in English. With this burden in mind, we suggest that English learners who have disabilities often perform triple the work since their disability related needs must be met as well. And if you want to learn more a little bit about this concept, we do have an ALTELLA brief for helping to understand English learners with disabilities and a framework that we have developed. We want to look a little bit about the characteristics of multilingual learners that take the ACCESS for ELLs assessments. Based on our 2022-23 data, approximately 2.3 million students participated in the assessment, and we can see slightly more males and females participated. Spanish continues to be the most commonly reported home language, followed by English, Portuguese, Arabic, Russian, Vietnamese and so on. Just give you a little overview of where our students come from and the unique cultures and characteristics that they bring. In terms of language, approximately 11 percent or a little over 300,000 students taking the ACCESS for ELLs assessment have a documented disability through either an IEP or 504. Here you can see based on the primary disability codes that were reported, specific learning disability is the most commonly identified disability category followed by speech and language impairments and other health impairments. And in the earlier grades we see developmental delay specifically for that category showing up very frequently. Also autism in our top categories for primary disabilities that are reported. And you can see that the frequency of students participating in the ACCESS assessment kind of drops a little bit when we talk about students who haven't identified intellectual disability, multiple disabilities, and emotional behavioral disabilities in terms of their participation. And while relatively small, we also see students who are deaf and hard of hearing, students who are blind and visually impaired, and those with traumatic brain injuries also participating in the assessment, even though potentially some of their disabilities may impact their participation in specific domains. But even with accommodation, these students are able to participate in the ACCESS assessments. Last, we just wanted to share a little data with you about some of the most commonly used accommodations on the ACCESS for ELLs assessment. Kim will talk a lot more about our approach to accessibility and accommodations here in a few moments. But data was captured either through designations that were reported in AMS and or captured on our paper test booklets for students that were taking the assessments. And you can see that extended speaking time, repeat item audio manual control extended time and the in person human reader accommodations kind of top the chart. But we still have a large number of students participating through keyboarding devices and that utilize other approaches and accommodations to access the ACCESS for ELLs assessment. Next, we want to differentiate a little bit some of the characteristics that we see for multilingual learners with the most significant cognitive disabilities. And although the federal policy known as ESSA that Swati talked about a little bit earlier, requires annual English proficiency assessment of English language learners, it doesn't include a specific definition of who English learners with the most significant cognitive disabilities are. Again, has defined them as individuals with difficulties in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language as they are

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progressing towards English language proficiency and who have one or more disabilities that significantly impact their intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior. And as you may recall in that graphic that I shared earlier depicting multilingual learners doing triple the work, English learners who have significant cognitive disabilities experience triple the work and beyond as they encounter even more labor-intensive challenges in the classroom associated with their language and disability needs. For example, English learners with significant cognitive disabilities may face challenges related to learning the content, developing English language proficiency, and even those possibly using American Sign Language or another signing system or AAC devices, among other learning opportunities and challenges. Next, I just wanted to share some of the characteristics that we see often with multilingual learners with significant cognitive disabilities. I wanted to share some data that we gathered under a grant called ALTELLA. And you might be familiar with Advancing ALTELLA grant that has been used to help develop our new Alternate ACCESS and Alternate Screener.

But prior to that, we had a grant called ALTELLA where we did a lot of research trying to understand a little bit more about the population and the challenges that exist in our states. Under this grant, we conducted a study using many of the same questions that you see on the Alternate ACCESS through the individual characteristics questionnaire. This was originally one of our pilots for that questionnaire. And so you can see that we had over 1500 students participate and that I'll tell a grant included additional states outside of the WIDA Consortium such as Arizona and New York.

You'll also notice that we incorporated feedback from educators in those States and the purpose of the study was really to learn again more about the characteristics of English learners with significant cognitive disabilities. And we asked questions related to the students use of language in English and the other languages as well as some other disability related needs.

We did not collect any personal identifiable information and asked educators to complete one ICQ for each of the students in their classrooms. Through the data that was reported, you can see that most students were reported as having an intellectual disability as their primary disability. And of the 646 students who also were reported as having a secondary disability, we saw a large percentage of those students also being qualifying for speech and language services.

And or if they were reported as having a different disability in their primary category, they had intellectual disabilities as their secondary disability as well. Similarly, we collected information on student home language, and here I think this is more representative of the states that participated in a study. We see that Arabic was one of the most commonly used languages, but we also see English here topping one of the most commonly used languages at home, as well as French, Haitian, Creole, Mandarin, Russian, Somali, and Spanish.

Overall, Spanish was one of the most commonly used home languages for primary disability categories and look at some of that other information there. Next, the ICQ also gathered information about a student's primary classroom setting, so where they spend the majority of their day. And you can see a large portion of students or multilingual learners with significant cognitive disabilities are in self-contained classrooms, often separated from their same age peers from the general Ed classroom.

Also, you can see that they may be participating in a general education setting, but within the resource room or even potentially in a totally separate setting in a special school. We also gathered ways in which or data about the ways in which students communicate. And while a large number of students are predominantly speaking or use speech as a way to communicate, we also see a large number of students who use AAC devices and communication boards as well as eye

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gaze sign and picture cards. I will also say here that while many students use speech as their primary method, they're often utilizing multiple modes of communication at the same time.

Might be simultaneously using their device and sign as they are using verbal speech as a mode of communication. Last, we just want to talk about the importance of thinking about and addressing both language and communication needs. These are distinct function and we often tend to focus on communication needs, but we really want to be thinking about language, particularly for instruction for multilingual learners with significant cognitive disabilities.

Communication again is that social event that requires sending and receiving of messages with shared understanding. That's more of the, the, again, when we think about students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, we're often finding that effective mode of communication for students. But once that's been established, we want to be thinking about the language that we're supporting. That structured and shared form of communication between spoken and written words, use of characters and gestures, and a combination of all of those different considerations. Before we move on, I just wanted to share one more resource with you all.

And this is the US Department Toolkit, which was published back in 2015 as a companion to support some of those dear colleague letters that Swati discussed in the beginning of the presentation. And the toolkit helps states and local education agencies help English learners by fulfilling the various obligations that are required by law. And so this toolkit has ten different chapters, and there's one specific on supporting multilingual learners with disabilities. And so they do share a large number of strategies to support all of the requirements with identification and serving multilingual learners. I just wanted to call your attention to this toolkit as a great resource to be thinking about as you continue to serve students. I'm going to hand it over to Kim here to talk a little bit about the approach to accessibility and for each of our assessments and how multilingual learners with disabilities interact with our assessments. On the next slide, we have a definition for accessibility that we use internally. I'll say this probably multiple times throughout this segment.

It's an expression that somebody recently used in my group. That's exactly it. It's like baked in. It is the definition that we use to help our efforts to make the assessments and the tools and the resources we have accessible and inclusive. When we're talking about accessibility, we're talking about a system of approaches and supports that ensures equitable and valid access to content, processes and procedures that meet the needs of all students, including but not limited to ethnicity, race, nationality, language, gender, disability, neurodiversity, age, sexual orientation, place of origin, beliefs and education. And as I said, baked in, this is how we think about internally.

But for the purposes of this webinar that were on the same page and how it's so that we are consistent and how we are approaching not only the information here, but as we are doing the actions of assessment, design and development. That approach and implementation is accessible and equitable for everybody. We've focused primarily on students and now are expanding that into making sure that we're also supporting our educators, so they are able to access the resources and the materials in a way that is best suited and appropriate for preparation and then administration of our assessments. We have an accessibility and accommodations manual, accessibility and accommodations manual, often referred to as the TAM so you'll hear me use that term.

If you have done any work with test coordinating or test administration, then you're very familiar with this document or this resource. But not everybody is familiar based on the poll that we did earlier. I don't have those stats stuck in my head for sure. I do remember that screenshot or glimpse, just a little snapshot of it to know. I'm aware that there are folks who are not familiar with it. It is also available publicly. One of those other things that I use Google to get there very quickly, but you can route through the assessment links on website to get to accessibility and accommodations manual.

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Google will serve as well to get you there. I think there may even be a link that's available in the chat. I'll make sure to get it into the webinar before we close. But this is the resource that we use to support implement or apply accommodations or accessibility features for our students.

And here we have the framework that illustrates our tiers and levels of support. We want to make sure that all of our students who are engaging with this, with our assessments are getting the support that's most appropriate for them to be able to access and engage with the instruments while at the same time not compromising the instruments or what we're trying to measure or the intent and purpose of the ACCESS for ELLs or the Alternate ACCESS.

If we go to the next slide, we'll begin the process of talking through those different tiers of support. There's universal design baked in the effort to include it. And our definition here many of you will be familiar with. Just pardon me as I read off the definition to you. This is designed that is usable by all people to the greatest extent with minimal or no accommodation or adaptations. And we have a screen grab or picture of this sidewalk to illustrate universal design in action. We actually read a book as our team that was really insightful and gave information about some of the efforts that have been made that we just take for granted at this point, including these sidewalks like this and the opportunity to be able to use strollers or wheelchairs to access the sidewalk without having to go over that. A drop off that was part of universal design that was advocated for and now has become common practice. So those kinds of principles we make sure make an effort to emulate some things like that into our assessments so that our students, all students are able to engage with our assessments with equity and that we are inclusive about it. We have our administrative consideration.

If you look at our framework, you see this is the green tier or second level up. These are considerations. While our universal design supports would apply and be accessible to everyone. You might have testers that have administrative considerations. These are also available to all students, part of our framework to make sure that our assessments are equitable and that you are supporting your students so that they are able to take this test in a way that's comparable to all other testers.

Examples of some of the administrative considerations would be the supervised breaks, extended time, individual small group setting, medical devices. But there are ways to ensure that students are able to access things like this. There's the full list. I won't read through everything, and you will get copies of presentation. But you'll be able to see it there. And you'll also find examples noted in our TAM. And if we move to the next slide, these are our universal tools offering another layer of support. And as the test administrator, you would go in and or make sure that your students have access to these things when appropriate. Something else I want to highlight is that we would see these tools or these features implemented as part of instruction and then in administration.

Not a student wouldn't see these for the first time when they are taking the ACCESS for ELLs or the Alternate ACCESS, they would have seen this and use this. These features would have been applied throughout their instruction as well as in their test administration.

Examples of universal tools would be the audio aids, color overlay. I talked about projecting onto a screen, if that if that is needed. Magnifications, scratch paper, sticky notes, things like that. Accommodation is the blue tier scene in our framework. This one, while available to students, does require a process that would involve the instructional support team and instructional documentation or documentation about these features that are used for the students. But you would not just go in and permit accommodations. This would have to be documented, and these are changes that remove barriers and are not available to all students like our universal design or administrative consideration features might be, but with instructional documentation, instructional plans that indicate that this is a need, then that would be available. Key point that we try to do is make a distinction between the accommodations. Accommodations and our modifications.

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Sometimes, confused when we're talking about accommodations, our definition for that would be changes made to instructional practices and assessments that do not alter the text. Swati kind of touched on that when she was talking through federal guidelines and the purpose of in that they are supports, but they do not alter the test or what is being measured. Rather are the supports needed to remove barriers presented by a disability. Purpose of these is to an accommodation is to ensure students have equals access to learning or the assessment or the assessment so they're able to demonstrate what they know and what they can do without hindrance by a disability.

On the other hand, we have modifications, and this involves changes made to content or to the difficulty of the task or to the assessment. And modifications are used when accommodations are not addressing the students need as accommodations might. Something separate. We would advise that you are depending on your communication tree, this would be something that you would need to work with your LEA. Of course, your state department also refer for guidance about how to address accommodations and recommendations made about modifications because we want to make sure we are avoiding modifying the test. I'm going to give you some examples of what modifications would be. And that's like reducing the workload, simplifying a task or simplifying an assignment, changing grading criteria or scoring and using maybe alternate prompts, stimulus, alternate curriculum. Any of those will be modifications.

Our next slide will give examples of accommodation and so many of you will be familiar with these. There's a whole list here. You can also find this list in our TAM, so you don't have to memorize it. But you don't need to take a screenshot. Examples of accommodation would be the extended testing time, which is permitted, but you will want to make sure that you have a plan for that. Human reader Inter interpreter. Interpreter for ASL. Large print Braille and I'll just give you a second to read through the others right next slide. It is a consideration not represented in our framework, but we acknowledge domain exemptions exist or the need for them may exist. But we start with the knowledge that state and federal laws require that all ELLs are multilingual learners participate in an annual English language proficiency assessment. ACCESS, Alternate ACCESS, we have folks, I saw in the poll that we have others. Maybe you are not necessarily a part of the consortium, but you are in a state that is going to have to provide a test. All students who are who are identified as English language learners are required to take a test. I want to highlight that because we are having a conversation about domain exemptions. While that might need to be a consideration, we understand a student still has to take measurement of English language proficiency. No disability exempts a student from requirement.

However, there are rare cases where exemptions might be the appropriate choice for a student with a disability that would limit their engagement or their ability to perform and properly and appropriately demonstrate what they're able to do. If those exemptions help create more equity, that would be a consideration. But you would need to contact your state agency to make that determination. Whether that is you contact them directly or if you have to go through LEA, that is something that you would need to do as a very early step in the process. And our domain exemptions decision tree. You can find this in our TAM and it walks you through the steps of coming to the conclusion that that this might be a consideration that you need to take, an exempt, a step you need to take.

But if you notice, and it's pretty small, notice that at the very last part where it's in bold. Please consult with your state education agency for guidance on domain exemptions. We have a poll question, what accommodation do you assign the most? We're getting a glimpse at what your experience is like. And it supports us as we create resources to support those in the field. And it also informs us about the work that we do. We thought we would take this opportunity to get a little bit of information from those who are on the call. Note about the options we've given because we realize that these are not the only options. Features we have noted here are ones that we have found to be infrequent assignment or frequently assigned. We just selected those to get a little nuance and some context

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around what's happening in the field. We understand that these are not the only accommodations that are assigned to students. I think we have a good activity. Kim, can you talk a little bit about accommodation? They're extended, extended speaking and the response time for speaking. Extended speaking, part of recommendations, the ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS are

not timed assessments, but they're there. We have support for like scheduling because that's still part of it. But extended speaking is a feature that is offered as a support speaking there. I'm thinking about like on the if you were taking the online assessment, then there is a set amount of time.

But if a student requires additional time, that is a feature that is supported. We recognize that students might need consideration when it comes to the amount of time that is permitted to provide their speaking response. Extended speaking is a feature that is built into our assessments and then response time. It also permits the same concept of allowing that additional time, despite and forgive me for not having the technical terms in this moment to talk about what the platform looks like.

When you assign those accommodations, students are given additional time to be able to respond appropriately. And it gives them the time to be able to process the information they need to do so that they can demonstrate their expressive English language proficiency. Thank you, Kim. You're welcome. I just wanted to also mention, so WIDA is a consortium of states. We serve a multitude of 41 different states and territories. Each of those states and territories may have their own unique policies and requirements that are separate from others within the consortium.

And that's why we always talk about how some of these things are local decisions or that your states may have additional guidance for some of our policies and guidelines that WIDA makes recommendations on. WIDA recommendations and policies are really grounded in our federal statutes say in terms of requirements as well as the functions of our assessments, but that states are able to make additional guidance or policies to support you all at a local level. Thank you, Kim, for talking a little bit about our, approaches to accessibility and the accommodations for each of our assessments. I just wanted to talk a lot a little bit more about those determinations. Making a determination for an ELP assessments, teams must consider a multitude of factors as to which assessment is the most appropriate for students with disabilities. We now have developed the Alternate Access Participation Decision tree to help IEP teams make this determination. As for which assessment a student may take, again just wanted to reiterate that assessments are valid only if the assessment is given to students for whom it was developed. Alternate ACCESS was developed specifically with students with the most significant cognitive disabilities as defined again by individual states and who have met the individual state criteria. We just want to make sure that as you're thinking about it, that you are again relying on that IEP team process and decision and your state specific guidelines as to who qualifies as a student with the most significant cognitive disability.

We'll talk a little bit about each of those decision-making factors found within that decision making guide. State participation guidelines again supersede any element of participation guidance. It is intended to support and not dictate participation in the WIDA Alternate ACCESS. IEP teams should be able to answer yes for each of the following different participation criteria in order for the student to participate in Alternate ACCESS. Student should be classified as an English Language Learner. And when we say English Language learner, we're using the federal terms for English learner. When we think about supporting our students, WIDA tends to use multilingual learners as it's more asset-based approach and takes into considerations that students may be learning multiple languages, not just English and also supports their home language. I just wanted to point that out here as we kind of flip flop through terms. Next, we want to make sure that the IEP team has considered that the student has the most significant cognitive disability and receive special education services under

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Next, we also want IEP teams to be thinking about the student services. It is federal language that the student must require extensive, direct, individualized instruction and substantial supports to achieve measurable gains in the grade and age-appropriate curriculum. And last but not least, we want IEP teams to be thinking about participation in the statewide alternate academic content assessments. Typically, those start in third grade, but IEP teams should be making a unilateral decision about alternate assessments. If a student participates in those alternate content assessments, we anticipate that they would be participating in an alternate ELP assessment.

Or if the IEP teams decide that the students going to participate in ACCESS for as long as possible, that is also part of that decision making process. To help us understand more about the criteria education educators are using when making decisions about participation in an ELP assessment, we conducted a study focused on the following questions. Who determines whether an English learner takes Alternate ACCESS and what decision-making criteria are used? We know that at a local level, educators often struggle with this decision-making process.

We wanted to learn a little bit more about some of the conversations that are happening and maybe where some misunderstanding lies, where we can also help support that process and provide additional guidance to states as necessary. In the study, we it was an online study directed towards district level and school level participants and we followed up with in depth interviews based on the survey findings. We asked participants if they would want to participate in a follow up interview. All participants have had experience working with English learners with disabilities and have administered the Alternate ACCESS and or have been part of the decision making process to determine whether or not a student should take the Alternate ACCESS. We had over 300 participants from 35 different states or territories participate in the study. And the majority of students served larger districts with over 2500 students and that had a larger number of English learners as well. And here you can see some of the top participating states.

The primary role of our participants were on the English language development side. Were specifically either ESL bilingual teachers or Title 3 coordinators. We did have some district administrators participating in the study as well as special education teachers or district test coordinators. Just a little bit here about the experience. Most of our participants had over 10 years of experience, a multitude of experiences serving multilingual learners and multilingual learners with disabilities and have been part of those IEP processes as well as instructional discussions, talking a little bit about their certifications.

We had a large number of teachers who are duly identified, but we did have some students that didn't have any special certification or special education. I think that's one critical thing we want to continue to be thinking about as we serve our multilingual learners with disabilities is that touch point for collaboration between departments. We did gather some information about the types of professional development that teachers have received in terms of guidance on how to make decision making and what that process looks like for which assessment that students should take. And so you'll see a large number of folks are following guidance specific from their state. Potentially in addition to the WIDA guidance and training that we have offered, individual states offer additional support to their districts that people are taking advantage of. We also had a lot of things happening at a local level, either through professional development activities or school-based meetings and conversations that are happening more at that local level. We saw individuals say that haven't received any support.

We also just wanted to mention that we asked folks if they think the right people are involved in this decision-making process and the majority of folks did say yes. Where there is also a smaller number of folks saying either no or they're not really sure depending on the circumstance of the student. And then we also asked students or asked a question about potential misidentification for students taking the Alternate ACCESS. And the majority of folks said no, they didn't think

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that students were misidentified, that it was appropriate. But we still saw a significant, almost a third number of folks say that yes, potentially students are being misidentified to take an Alternate ACCESS and those students should have been participating in the ACCESS assessment. Reflects a little bit about that same concept about potential misidentification training that goes into decision making process. We asked folks about how confident they feel in their decision making regarding assigning students to take an assessment and 64% felt very confident. While we still had a larger number of folks saying either they were somewhat confident or not confident at all. And we asked a question about the challenges in decision making and how often folks feel that they struggle with that decision making.

67% said that they rarely do, while 20%, twenty, 7% said some of the time. 4% said most of the time, and I know it's really hard to read, but a smaller percent said all of the time that they feel challenged in that decision making process. We also broke up by grade clusters, which were the most challenging grade levels for decision making. And unsurprisingly educators really struggle in those early grades. K2 grade clusters with over 165 folks saying that's where they find it to be the most challenging. We do always recommend that in those early grades, IEP teams considering opportunities to learn and not making decisions about alternate assessments too quickly. As they continue to learn about the students, they continue to think about effective modes of communication for that student, particularly for newcomers as they're coming in and they may be in that transition phase. And that is also true, I think, for states with their content assessments.

There's always a caution about making decisions too early too soon and trying to allow students an opportunity to engage and participate in general classrooms content assessment for as long as possible with additional supports and strategies being offered to those students. Based on all of those questions, we just have a quick poll question for you to talk about a little bit and reflect on your own experiences. Are families part of the decision-making process in your school? I'm just watching the poll and I'm very excited to see all of the yes popping up that you all are meaningfully including parents in that decision making process. It is amazing. I'm going to pass that over to Swati for some final thoughts as you guys continue to think about the decision-making process being implemented in your schools and districts and as you reflect upon the information that was shared. Thank you everyone for your questions and your patience and I'm going to bring it on home. What are your thoughts here.

As we conclude this presentation, this slide represents a really powerful assumption. Least dangerous assumption is to presume competence. It is a principle at the heart of equitable and effective education for all of our students, particularly those who are multilingual learners and those with disabilities, those students who really require that additional support.

It's acting on the presumption of competence provides students with the opportunity to learn, achieve and ultimately become more independent. But this idea or concept really challenges us to approach each of our students with the belief in their potential. When we presume competence, we set high expectations for all of our learners. We provide rich grade level, appropriate content and instruction. We can offer necessary support and accommodation so that students are able to access their content. We create opportunities for students to demonstrate their knowledge and their skills. And in doing we avoid the risk of underestimating our student abilities and we create a more inclusive, empowering and effective educational environment for all of learners.

Building on that principle of presuming competence, we have these this can do philosophy. And a lot of you, if you're in ACCESS or Alternate ACCESS world, you're familiar with our can do. Approach focuses on students capabilities and potential rather than the limitations. Asset based language, first and foremost, multilingual learners with disabilities can learn complex language and communication systems, which affirms cognitive abilities and potential for growth, challenging any preconceptions about their capacity to acquire language. Secondly, these students can improve their measures of academic language growth. But this point emphasizes importance of setting high expectations and providing

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appropriate support to facilitate their progress. It's crucial to recognize multilingual learners with disabilities do have specific learning needs that differ from those of other students with disabilities. We talked a little bit about that in earlier sections. They're doing triple the work.

This acknowledgement ensures that we provide tailored support that addresses both their language learning and disability related needs. Important insight is that students who do not respond verbally do understand. It reminds us to not equate verbal communication with comprehension and to seek alternative ways for students to demonstrate their understanding. Lastly, multilingual learners with disabilities do benefit from English development services. It underscores importance of providing comprehensive language support even when a student has a disability. Philosophy aligns perfectly with our presumption of confidence.

It challenges us to focus on possibilities rather than limitations to provide rich learning opportunities and to believe in the potential of every student to learn, grow and achieve. We would love your feedback as it helps inform our work. I'm wrapping up here at the end, I invite you to use the QR code on the screen or a link in the chat to complete a quick survey. I'm going to give you time to complete that before we fully wrap up. Thank you for participating in the survey. Folks are looking at that survey. I think we also have a little time to maybe review some of the questions that have come in through the chat and provide a little bit more.

I know that you have been trying to respond to some questions throughout the presentation. I think there's a few more that we could probably address here in our remaining time. And then if you guys want to jump in on a response, that would be great. Jennifer, what type of training is required for a special education teacher to administer either ACCESS or Alternate ACCESS. And this one, I did put a response in the chat, if you visit your member or state page at the top of the website, there are testing dates and policies around you know which assessment is being used in your state. Also there's a specific secure portal that is required in order to get some training on all of the various kinds of assessments. Paper ACCESS, Online ACCESS, Kindergarten ACCESS, Alternate ACCESS.

But you need to have portal information in order to get that training. Swati and I see some of you all are helping each other out and answering each other's questions in the chat. It's amazing as well. Here's a reminder that we're not all from the same state, so there will be some nuance. Specific guidelines for different states. It is an important distinction that the group has acknowledged in the chat that requirements for you might be different than in other states and they follow guidelines that won't violate federal guidelines, but you will see some differences among the states. It's extended time, which is EM and the extended speaking for that response time. Thank you for catching that. I saw a lot of feedback making sure that, that people had the correct understanding about that.

I think there was another question early on. I'm just going to bring it up about scoring. And you're required to complete those courses and receive the certification to be able to both administer and score the different domains. But we've said throughout, you'll want to make sure you also refer to your state guidelines to get the details about what's entailed and who will provide that. Because I'll just give an illustration.

In some cases, the state will manage the trainings. And so that might look a little bit different about how you access the trainings. Whatever the case, you'll have to complete that and be certified to be able to do the administration and the scoring. Screener assessments. And there are certification courses for those for the administration process of the screeners.

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Again, in the secure portal under assessments, you'll be able to find a multitude of trainings. Alternate ACCESS if it's available to all states within the consortium. Alternate available to all states in the consortium. Check with your specific state if they are utilizing the Alternate ACCESS. All you're answering questions or looking at the questions, Kristen, on the screen we have another QR code. I know we threw a lot of links at you in the chat and this was asked early on, but we did put helpful Google Doc together that has all of those links through that QR code. I also put a URL if you don't have the QR code that you can use, and it will give you access to all of those links that we talked about and plus a bonus link from the Office of Special Education that has a specific web page about what works when testing English language learners. Also, there was a question about if a student is exempt from a specific domain, how does WIDA come up with a score?

Because domain exemption process and procedures as we were talking about is very state specific. I would encourage you to contact your states about ISR which are developed or produced for the domains that were participated in. WIDA has provided some additional guidance for states to consider if they think about scores for students that have less than four domains. It is an individual state decision about how those scores are produced and or released for specific accountability purposes as well as consideration for individual student instruction cameras.

Swati, are there any other questions that you see that we may have missed that you want to address. I just want to thank Swati for staying on top of those questions. I thought you did a really great job. I think we're good. I did want to address one more. I was scrolling through and there was a question about what suggestions do you have for students who are not yet identified as needing an IEP or 504 plans.

I wanted to go back to one of Swati's closing slides. Least dangerous assumption is to resume competence. And we know that students, newcomers come with a variety of experiences and needs. And while we're going through some of those initial identification processes and or evaluation for special education, we always want to assume that level of competence and provide them that opportunity to learn and to demonstrate what they possibly need to know.

And we would always encourage participation in the ACCESS assessment while some of those determined and evaluations are being made again. I would recommend strongly that you contact your state with any specific questions about it. Individual student, we know that these are not sometimes easy conversations, or cut and dry decisions to make as there's many different nuances and complex situations that play into that. States have specific guidance if students aren't meeting the criteria or thoughts to provide your district.

Great, thank you so much.