

Understanding and Implementing the WIDA ACCESS tests

August 13, 2025

Updated October 15, 2025

2026 ACCESS: Important Dates

Before Testing	Test administrators complete training and certifications	Sept 2025- February 2026
	DESE orders test materials for schools	Nov 18 and Dec 18, 2025
	Online test set-up (schools review and update student test registration information in WIDAAMS as needed. Do not add students before Dec 18)	Nov 25, 2025 – March 6, 2026
	Schools receive paper test materials	January 5 – 6, 2026
Test Administration	Administer ACCESS tests	January 5 – February 27, 2026
During Test Window	Additional Test Materials Ordering	January 5 – February 20, 2026
After Testing	Schedule UPS pickup of paper testing materials	March 2, 2026
	Deadline for UPS pickup of paper materials for on-time reporting	March 3, 2026
Before Results are Reported	Pre-reporting data validation (schools correct student demographic information, accommodations used, and Do Not Score codes in WIDAAMS)	March 30 – April 3, 2026
Results Reported	Results posted in WIDAAMS	April 27, 2026
	Paper results received in schools and districts	May 15-18, 2026
After Results are Reported	Post-reporting data validation (DESE will correct student demographic information, accommodations used, and Do Not Score codes in AMS)	May 20, 2026
	Validated and corrected results posted in WIDAAMS	June 9, 2026

**All Dates Updated
on October 15,
2025**

Participation Requirements

- Students in K-12 must take **WIDA ACCESS** if they:
 - were reported as EL in the October 2025 SIMS, **OR**
 - arrived after October 2025 and will be reported as EL in the March 2026 SIMS
 - are new to MA and arrived and were identified as EL on or before **February 20, 2026** (date updated 10/15/25)
- Students should be considered for **WIDA Alternate ACCESS** if they:
 - Are a student with the most significant cognitive disabilities, and
 - Meet all of the criteria found in the “Participation Guidelines for WIDA Alternate ACCESS 2025-2026” (to be updated this fall)
- Students whose parents have opted them out of EL services are required to take WIDA ACCESS, Kindergarten ACCESS, or WIDA Alternate ACCESS until they meet exit criteria*
- Accommodations for WIDA ACCESS, Kindergarten ACCESS, and WIDA Alternate ACCESS should be listed in the student’s signed IEP
 - Accommodations may be different from those on MCAS
 - If the student is taking the WIDA Alternate ACCESS, this must also be listed in the IEP

*Exit criteria for ACCESS and Kindergarten ACCESS is 4.2 overall and 3.9 literacy. Exit criteria for WIDA Alternate ACCESS is the scale score equivalent of P2 on the Alternate ACCESS for ELLs and a score of 12 on the English Language Observation Form.

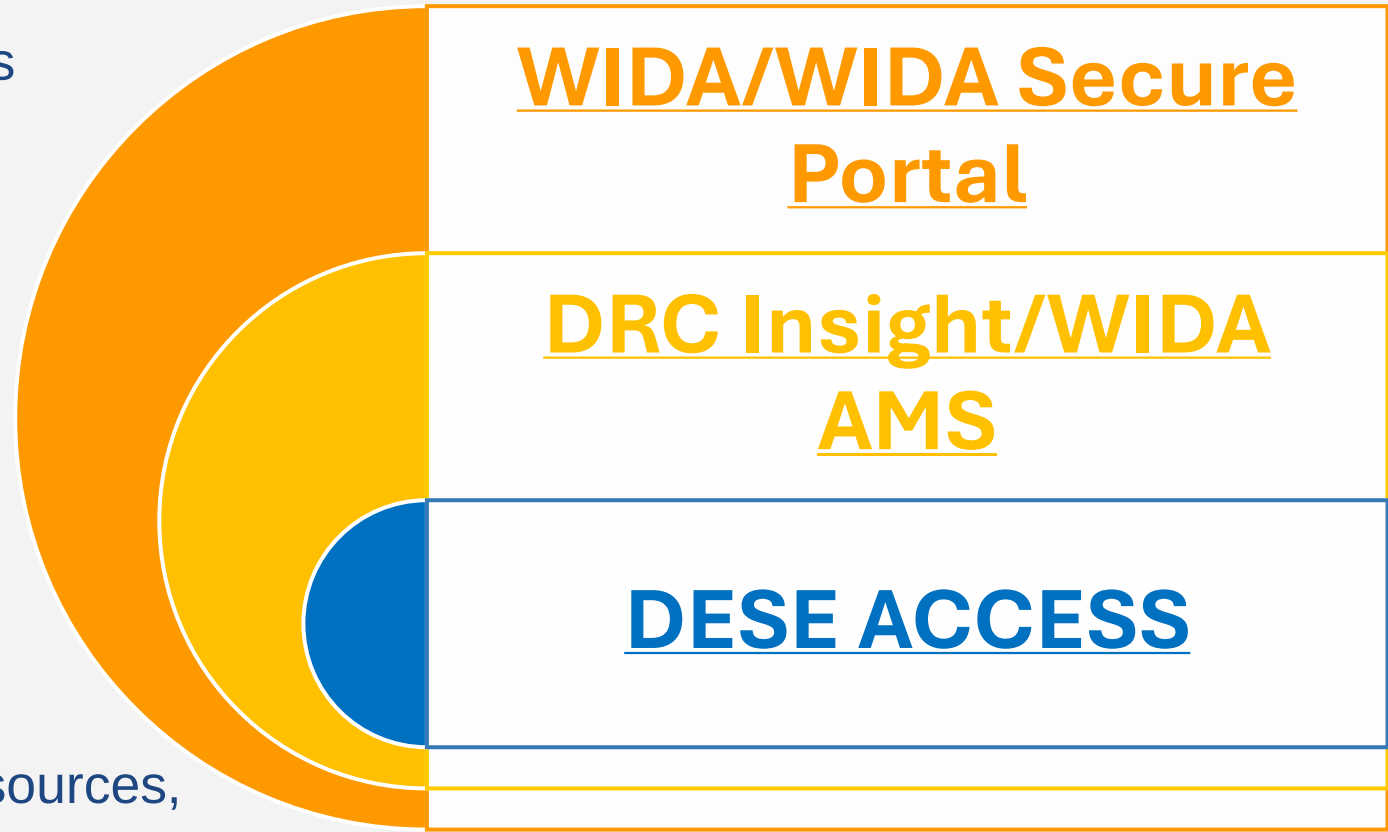
Modes of Testing

- WIDA ACCESS Online (grades 1-12) is the default testing mode
 - Grades 1-3 writing booklets are considered an online test
- WIDA ACCESS Paper (grades 1-12) is for:
 - Students with paper-based testing written in their IEP
 - First-year ELs who are unfamiliar with online testing or use of computers
- WIDA ACCESS for Kindergarten is administered 1:1 and locally scored
- WIDA Alternate ACCESS (grades K-12) administered 1:1, locally scored
 - Only for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities
 - Must be written in the IEP

WIDA ACCESS Accommodation and Code	Online	Paper	Kinder	Alt
Extended Speaking Test Response Time (ES)	X	X		
In-person Human Reader (IR)	X	X		
Repeat In-person Human Reader (RP)	X	X		
Interpreter Signs Directions in ASL (SD)	X	X	X	X
Manual Control of Item Audio (MC)	X	X		
Repeat Item Audio (RA) NOTE: This is not “read aloud”	X	X		
Scribe (SR)	X	X	X	X
Recording Device and Transcription (RD)	X	X	X	X
Test Administered in a Non-school Setting (NS)	X	X	X	X
Word Processor or Similar Keyboarding Device (WD)	X	X	X	X
Braille (BR)		X		
Large Print (LP)		X	X	
Low-vision Script (LV) NEW in 2026, only for ACCESS Kindergarten			X	
Extended Testing of a Test Domain Over Multiple Days (EM)	Not allowed in MA for any ACCESS test			

Where to Find Information

- WIDA/WIDA Secure Portal
 - General information about WIDA and its products
 - Test administration training courses
 - WIDA and DRC webinars
 - MA State page of the WIDA website
 - MA specific information and policies
 - DESE webinar PowerPoints
- DRC Insight/WIDA AMS
 - Testing
 - Initial results and reports
- DESE ACCESS webpage
 - Massachusetts specific information, resources, policies, aggregate results, guidelines



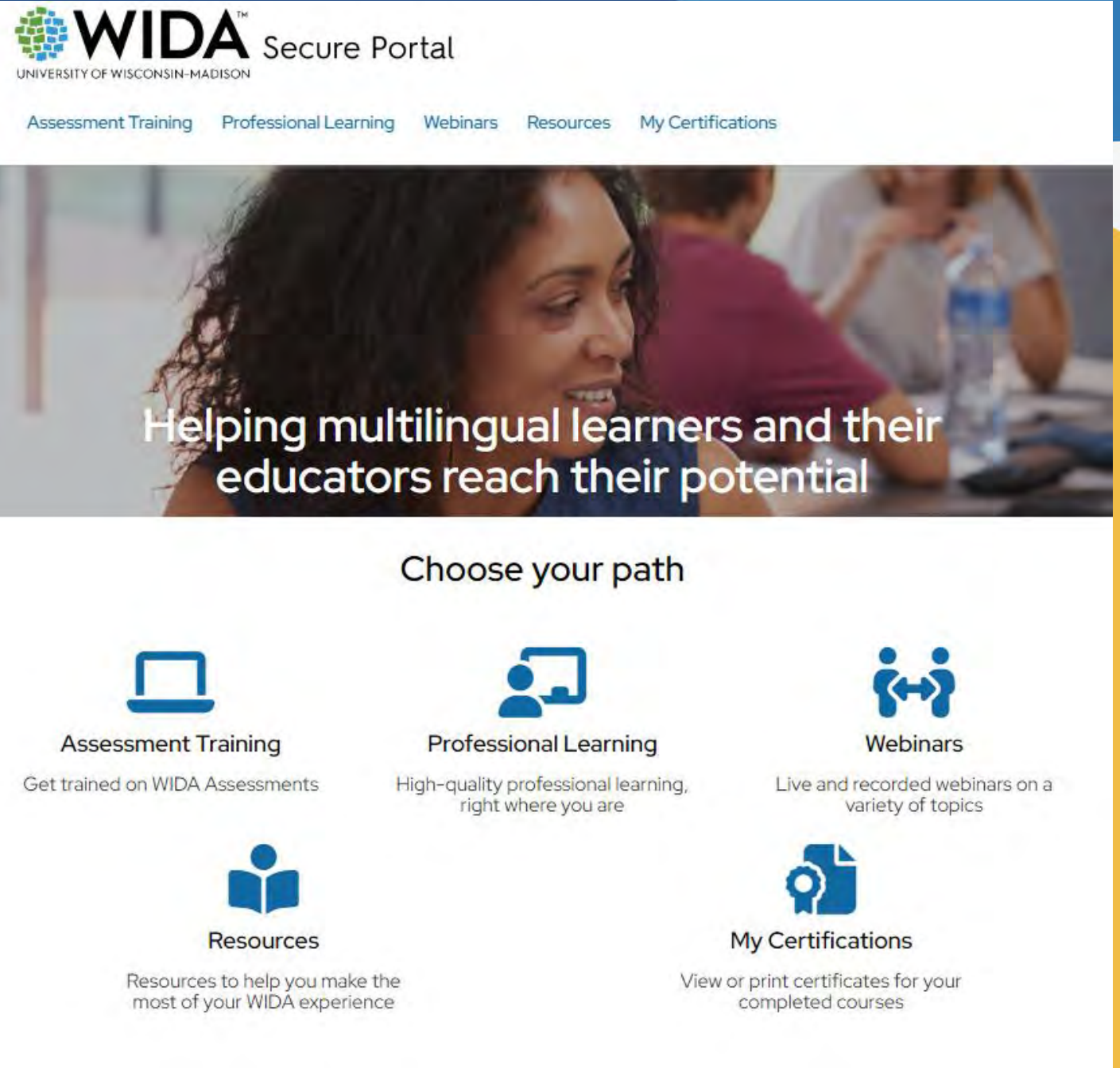
<https://wida.wisc.edu>

WIDA Website

- Public resources and information
- ELD Standards Framework
- Can Do Descriptors
- Score calculators
- Login to WIDA Secure Portal
 - Trainings
 - Resources
 - Webinars
- Links to state pages and state-specific information

WIDA Secure Portal

- Test administration trainings
- WIDA/DRC webinars
- Manuals and guides
- Parent resources
- Certifications



The screenshot shows the WIDA Secure Portal homepage. At the top, the WIDA logo (University of Wisconsin-Madison) is next to the text 'WIDA Secure Portal'. Below this is a navigation bar with links: 'Assessment Training', 'Professional Learning', 'Webinars', 'Resources', and 'My Certifications'. A large banner image of a woman smiling is overlaid with the text 'Helping multilingual learners and their educators reach their potential'. Below the banner, the heading 'Choose your path' is centered. There are five icons arranged in two rows. The top row contains: a laptop icon for 'Assessment Training' (with subtext 'Get trained on WIDA Assessments'), a person at a computer icon for 'Professional Learning' (with subtext 'High-quality professional learning, right where you are'), and a group of people icon for 'Webinars' (with subtext 'Live and recorded webinars on a variety of topics'). The bottom row contains: an open book icon for 'Resources' (with subtext 'Resources to help you make the most of your WIDA experience') and a certificate icon for 'My Certifications' (with subtext 'View or print certificates for your completed courses').

WIDATM Secure Portal
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Assessment Training Professional Learning Webinars Resources My Certifications

Helping multilingual learners and their educators reach their potential

Choose your path


Assessment Training
Get trained on WIDA Assessments


Professional Learning
High-quality professional learning, right where you are


Webinars
Live and recorded webinars on a variety of topics


Resources
Resources to help you make the most of your WIDA experience


My Certifications
View or print certificates for your completed courses

MA State Page on the WIDA Website

<https://wida.wisc.edu/memberships/consortium/ma>



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Member of the WIDA Consortium since 2012.

Assessments

Massachusetts uses WIDA Screener for Kindergarten, and WIDA Screener for Grades 1-12 to identify English learners (ELs). Kindergarten ACCESS for ELLs, ACCESS for ELLs or WIDA Alternate ACCESS, as appropriate, is given to all ELs during the annual testing window, which extends from early January through mid-February.

Testing Dates

9/17/24	Alternate ACCESS Reports and Data Files Available - Online in WIDA AMS
10/7/24	Alternate ACCESS Reports Available in Schools - Printed
11/27/24 - 2/28/25	WIDA AMS Test Setup Available for Registrations
1/2/25	Schools Receive Test Materials
1/6/25 - 2/28/25	Test Window

Contacts

[Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education](#)
[ACCESS for ELLs](#)

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Office of Language Acquisition

Requirements and Resources

See below for state-specific information and resources related to EL assessment, including your state's ACCESS for ELLs Checklists, indicating each step in the ACCESS testing process from beginning to end.

[ACCESS for ELLs Online Checklist](#)

[ACCESS for ELLs Paper Checklist](#)

[Identification and Placement Guidance](#)

[MA ACCESS Administration Manual 2024-25](#)

State Testing Requirements

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Test Preparation and Training

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Manuals, Guides and Workshops

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[Understanding and Implementing ACCESS Tests - August 2024](#)

- This PowerPoint provides an overview of key information regarding ACCESS testing. Topics include participation requirements, important dates and deadlines within the testing window, and

DRC Insight (WIDA AMS)

- Student management and test registration
- Additional materials ordering
- Add student to AMS or remove from registration
- Initial score reports
- Data validation
- Knowledge articles

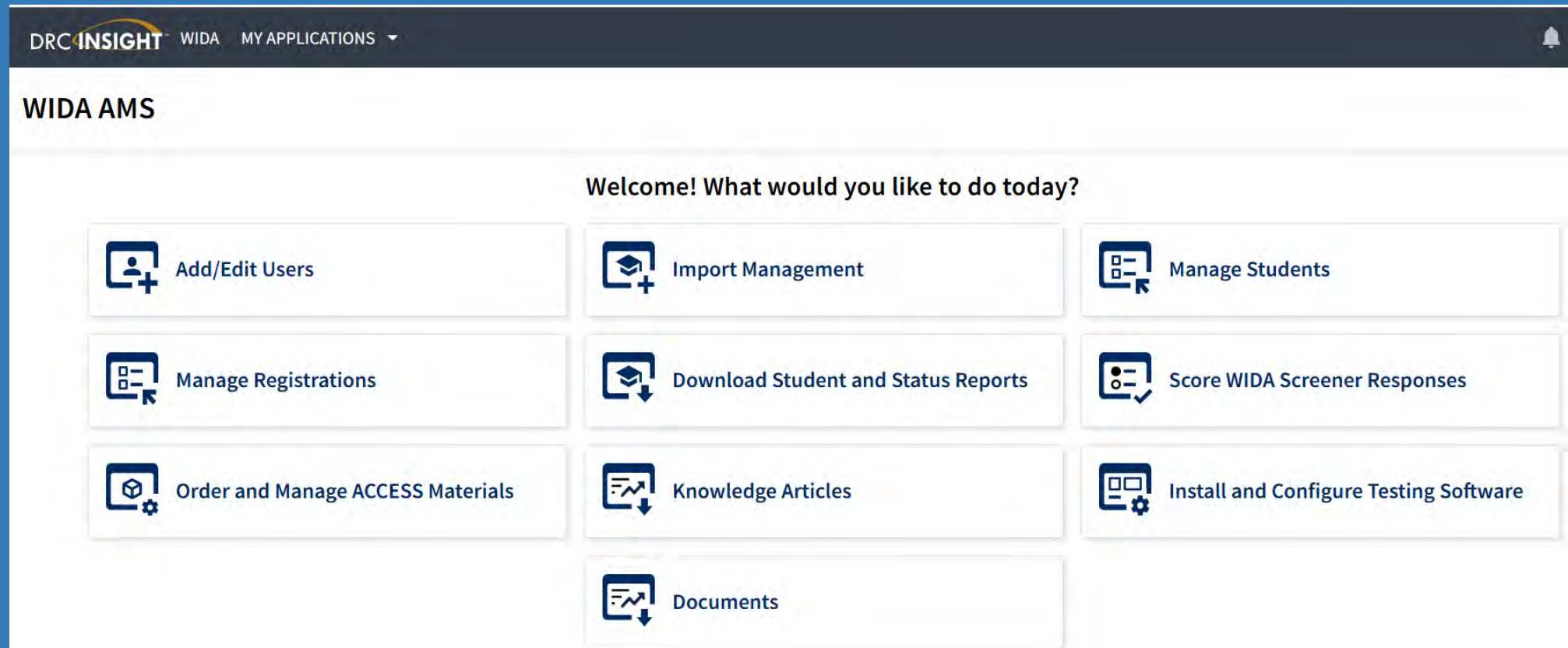


DRC INSIGHT
Sign In

Username*

Password*
 ☐ Show Text

[Forgot your password?](#)



DRC INSIGHT WIDA MY APPLICATIONS

WIDA AMS

Welcome! What would you like to do today?

-  Add/Edit Users
-  Import Management
-  Manage Students
-  Manage Registrations
-  Download Student and Status Reports
-  Score WIDA Screener Responses
-  Order and Manage ACCESS Materials
-  Knowledge Articles
-  Install and Configure Testing Software
-  Documents

DESE ACCESS Web Page

<https://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/access/>

Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System

Student Assessment

Graduation Requirements

MCAS

MCAS Alternate Assessment

Performance Appeals

Educational Proficiency Plans (EPPs)

ACCESS for ELLs

▪ Results

National/International Tests

Parent/Guardian Information

Training Opportunities

ACCESS for ELLs

(Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners)

ACCESS for ELLs Updates

There are no ACCESS for ELLs Headlines at this time

[ACCESS for ELLs Updates Archive](#)

Background and Student Participation

Federal and state laws require that English learner (EL) students be assessed annually to measure their proficiency in reading, writing, listening, and speaking English, as well as the progress they are making in learning English. In fulfillment of these laws, EL students are required to participate in ACCESS for ELLs tests. ACCESS for ELLs tests are administered annually in January-February.

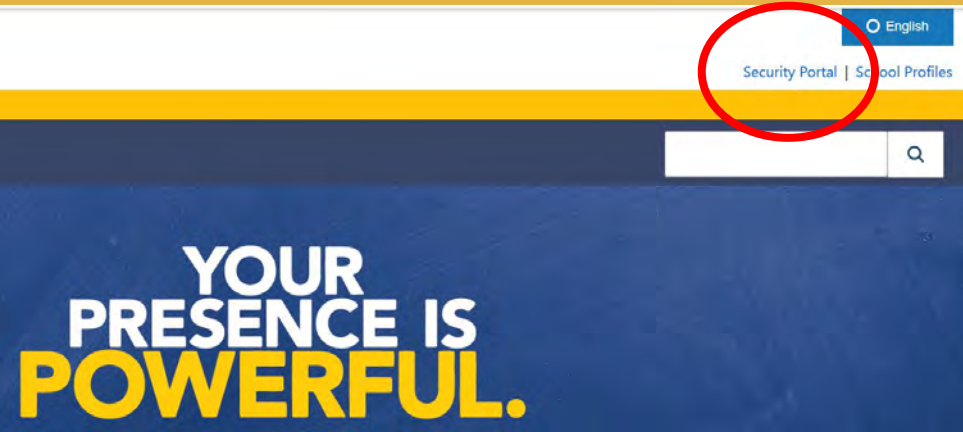
EL students are also required to participate in the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) tests for their grade.

[Participation Requirements for EL Students, including EL students with disabilities, in MCAS](#)

[Participation Guidelines for WIDA Alternate ACCESS 2024-2025](#)

2025 ACCESS Individual Student Results

DESE Security Portal DropBox and Edwin



- Round 1 – *without* Student Growth Percentile on ACCESS (SGPA), progress indicator, attainment, or 2026 targets
 - **DropBox** in early July and in **Edwin** in mid-July.
- Round 2 – *with* Student Growth Percentile on ACCESS (SGPA), progress indicator, attainment, 2026 targets
 - **DropBox** in mid-August and in **Edwin** in late August
- Round 3 – final results available in December

Additional information regarding WIDA ACCESS reporting can be found on the [Massachusetts state page of the WIDA website](#) under Manuals, Guides and Workshops in the [DESE ACCESS for ELLs Reporting Webinar — May 2025](#) PowerPoint presentation (4 parts).

Trainings and Workshops for Test Coordinators and Test Administrators



Past DESE training and workshop PowerPoint presentations are found on the [MA State page of the WIDA website](#) under Manuals, Guides and Workshops.



WIDA and DRC trainings and workshops are found in the [WIDA Secure Portal](#).



Registration information for DESE trainings and workshops will be announced in [EL Assessment Updates](#).

Registration for WIDA and DRC trainings are available in the WIDA Secure Portal.

Training and Certification for Administering ACCESS Tests

- Training and certification is required every two years in Massachusetts.
- Test administration training courses are updated every **September 1** and can be found in the WIDA Secure Portal.
- WIDA ACCESS for Kindergarten training is available **September 29**.
- If you took the trainings last year (September 1, 2024 and later) and certified for tests you will administer, you do not need to recertify in 2025-2026, except for Kindergarten. *All test administrators must take the Kindergarten training if administering the Kindergarten test in 2026.*
- You may want to review the training courses, even if you are not required to recertify, to become familiar with technical enhancements to WIDA AMS and DRC INSIGHT.

To Do

- Update School and District Profiles to ensure accurate delivery of materials
- Ensure students' EL status in October SIMS is correct
- Check with ACCESS Test Coordinators to ensure test administrators are trained and certified for the tests they will administer
- Review the Checklists from the MA state page of the WIDA website (2026 checklists will be updated in September)
- Watch for EL Assessment Updates for timely information and DESE webinar registrations throughout the year
- Bookmark the [MA state page of the WIDA website](#) for testing schedule and resources, and [DESE ACCESS web page](#) for state specific guidance

Directing Your Questions



MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE)

access@mass.gov

781-338-3625

Policies and program management, preparation for test administration – [DESE ACCESS web page](#)



WIDA

help@wida.wisc.edu ★

866-276-7735

Training and manuals - [WIDA Secure Portal](#)

MA specific information - [MA State page of the WIDA website](#)



Data Recognition Corporation (DRC)

WIDA@DataRecognitionCorp.com

855-787-9615

Technology, ordering additional test materials, shipping test materials, testing, scoring, reporting - [DRC Insight/WIDA AMS](#)

Contact Information

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