

WIDA ACCESS for ELLs and Alternate ACCESS for ELLs Test Exceptions

Below is a list of student groups for whom a Test Exception, or waiver, from the Spring 2015 WIDA ACCESS or Alternate ACCESS for ELLs could be available. It may be the case that many students who were approved Test Exceptions in prior years will be expected to test this coming spring. These new Test Exception criteria have been created per a directive from the U.S. Department of Education to ensure all English Learners (ELs) who are also Students with Disabilities (SWDs) are tested.

Student groups for whom a test exception from the ACCESS for ELLs could be available:

- K – 2nd grade students who are visually impaired and are in the process of learning braille (There is no braille version available for students in grades K-2.)
- K students who use American Sign Language (ASL) as their primary method of communication could be allowed to not take all domains
- 1st – 12th grade students who use American Sign Language (ASL) as their primary method of communication could be allowed to not take Speaking and Listening domains (WIDA considers the usage of ASL on this assessment a non-standard accommodation)

Student groups for whom a test exception from the Alternate ACCESS for ELLs could be available:

- 1st – 12th grade students who are visually impaired (learning braille) and cognitively impaired (There is no braille version of the Alternate ACCESS for ELLs.)
- 1st – 12th grade students who use American Sign Language (ASL) as their primary method of communication could be allowed to not take the Speaking and Listening domains (WIDA considers the usage of ASL on this assessment a non-standard accommodation)

Districts that would like to request a Test Exception for a student, must make the request on an annual basis through the MDE Secure Site. The WIDA Test Exception window is now open and closes on January 26, 2015. Directions for submitting WIDA Test Exceptions are found at [WIDA Test Exceptions](http://michigan.gov/documents/mde/WIDA_Test_Exceptions_Quick_Reference_47634_5_7.pdf) ([http://michigan.gov/documents/mde/WIDA Test Exceptions Quick Reference 47634 5 7.pdf](http://michigan.gov/documents/mde/WIDA_Test_Exceptions_Quick_Reference_47634_5_7.pdf)).

Test Exception approvals will not negatively impact any of a district's accountability measures. Please send any questions contact baa@michigan.gov, place WIDA in subject line or call 877-560-8378.

Correction of Records for Students Incorrectly Designated as Limited English Proficient 'false LEPs'):

A significant number of limited English proficient (LEP) students are not being assessed on the annual ELP assessment (WIDA). This is a violation of the ESEA legislation and requirements. Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) have shared that one of the reasons for

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not testing certain students was that they were *falsely* coded as LEP in MSDS due to human error (e.g., a data entry personnel inadvertently reported a student as LEP when the student's home language and primary language is English).

A team from the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) has created an annual process by which LEAs may submit an appeal to MDE requesting a review of 'false LEP' cases for a **final** resolution and possible correction within MSDS.

To request correction of 'false LEP' records, districts must enter the information and required documents described below using the WIDA Test Exceptions function on the Secure Site between December 17, 2014 and January 26, 2015. Directions for submitting WIDA Test Exceptions are found at [WIDA Test Exceptions](http://michigan.gov/documents/mde/WIDA_Test_Exceptions_Quick_Reference_47634_5_7.pdf) (http://michigan.gov/documents/mde/WIDA_Test_Exceptions_Quick_Reference_47634_5_7.pdf).

If the LEA's request is approved by MDE's Title III team, the student will continue to be reported as LEP in MSDS **only** for the 2014/15 academic year but will not participate in the spring WIDA, 2015 or beyond.

Prior to submitting your request to correct 'false LEP' records, please read the information below carefully:

Who is a 'false LEP?'

A 'false LEP' is an English speaker, as determined by the **initial** home language survey (HLS) completed by parents upon the **first** enrollment in **any** local educational agency (LEA) in the state of Michigan. Appealing districts are responsible for securing this historical information from other districts.

What to Submit: Districts submitting an appeal to resolve a 'false LEP' case **must:**

1. Submit/upload to the secure site the **initial** home language survey (of the 'false LEP' student) completed by parents upon the **first** enrollment in **any** local educational agency (LEA) in the state of Michigan. All responses on the students' **initial** HLS **must** indicate that the student's primary language **and** the student's home language is English.
2. Attest/certify that the uploaded HLS is identical to the original document. A signature of the local district's program director fulfills this requirement.
3. Ensure the HLS was signed by the student's parent/guardian and not signed on behalf of the parent/guardian.
4. Provide an explanation of the discrepancy between the original HLS and MSDS coding of LEP.
5. Submit the request in the MSE secure site no later than January 26, 2015.

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The MDE Title III team **will not review** requests for changing a LEP status to a non-LEP status if:

1. The request is not submitted by the January 26, 2015 deadline.
2. The request submitted to OFS lacks **any** of the required documents and information listed above.
3. The student transitions to another LEA and the parent/guardian fills out a new home language survey reporting that the child speaks English and the home language is English while previously a second language, other than English was reported.
4. The parent/guardian wants to withdraw the LEP student from the program and fills out a new home language survey.
5. The parents (one is bilingual and the other is an English speaker) share parenting time and the English-speaking parent completes a new home language survey indicating that the child speaks English.
6. The LEP/EL student, whose native language is a language other than English, is placed in a foster care home with English speaking foster parent(s). The foster parents complete a new home language survey and indicate that both native language and home language are English.

For details, please refer to the communication sent by OFS and posted on the Office of Field Services website at www.michigan.gov/ofc - English Learner and Immigrant Programs. Please direct questions or concerns regarding 'false LEP' to ***Maria Silva, EL Consultant or Shereen Tabrizi, Education Consultant Manager, Office of Field Services at 517 373-6066.***