



2024 WIDA ACCESS for ELLs and Alternate ACCESS for ELLs Test Exceptions and False EL Guidance

WIDA Test Exceptions

A Test Exception, or waiver, from the Spring 2024 WIDA ACCESS for ELLs or Alternate ACCESS for ELLs could be available for the student groups listed below.

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

- Kindergarten – Grade 2 students who are visually impaired and are in the process of learning braille could be allowed to not take assessments in all domains.
- Kindergarten students who use American Sign Language (ASL) as their primary method of communication could be allowed to not take assessments in all domains.
- 1st – 12th grade students who use American Sign Language (ASL) as their primary method of communication could be allowed to not take assessments in Speaking and Listening domains (WIDA considers the usage of ASL on this assessment a non-standard accommodation).
- Kindergarten–Grade 12 students who have mutism as identified on their IEP/Section 504 plan could be allowed to not take assessments in the Speaking domain.

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

- K – 12th grade students who are visually impaired (learning braille) and cognitively impaired could be allowed to not take assessments in all domains (there is no braille version of the Alternate ACCESS for ELLs).
- K – 12th grade students who use American Sign Language (ASL) as their primary method of communication could be allowed to not take assessments in the Speaking and Listening domains (WIDA considers the usage of ASL on this assessment a non-standard accommodation).
- K–12 students who have mutism as identified on their IEP/Section 504 plan could be allowed to not take the Speaking domain.

Changes to Test Exception Approval Procedures

Students with significant cognitive impairments who may have been eligible to take the WIDA Alternate ACCESS for ELLs in previous years, but who were granted exceptions, will be expected to take the assessment this year. Students will be expected to have one year of Alternate ACCESS for ELLs data to receive an exception in future years.

Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) that would like to request a Test Exception for a student must make the request on an annual basis through the Michigan Department of Education's Office of Educational Assessment and Accountability Secure Site. An approval of test exceptions for one to three domains of the assessment will result in the student not receiving an overall proficiency level score. **The WIDA Test Exception window is open from December 13, 2023 through January 19, 2024.** Directions for submitting WIDA Test Exceptions can be found on the [Secure Site Training web page](https://www.michigan.gov/mde/Services/Student-Assessment/secure-site-training) (<https://www.michigan.gov/mde/Services/Student-Assessment/secure-site-training>) under the Quick Reference section.

Students for whom a test exception is not appropriate:

- The identification of a disability alone when providing a description of the reason for why testing is not possible is not sufficient. For example, a response that says that a student is deaf or hard of hearing as the reason why he or she should receive an exception from the Listening test does not provide sufficient detail about the student's actual capabilities in those language domains. A student who is deaf or hard of hearing may find the use of a cochlear implant to access oral material in the classroom sufficient in meeting his or her instructional needs. This student would be capable of attempting the content presented in the WIDA ACCESS for ELLs assessment, possibly with Accommodations, and an exception request would not be approved. Students whose IEP teams have determined that the WIDA Alternate ACCESS for ELLs is appropriate for the student should not submit a WIDA Test Exception Request. A WIDA Test Exception Request is ONLY for students who are unable to take either the WIDA ACCESS or WIDA Alternate ACCESS for ELLs assessment.

Submission Tips

All requests should provide a detailed description of why the student is unable to take a particular language domain test even with accommodations. The descriptions should be specific to the student's abilities as they relate to the language domain exception request (Listening, Reading, Writing, or Speaking).

Educators may also be asked to submit supporting documentation or discuss areas of needed clarification by phone with OEAA staff if the description provided is not sufficient.

Students who receive an approved test exception will only receive the domain and composite scores for any domain(s) of the test actually completed by the student. For example, a student who is approved a test exception from the Speaking and Listening domains will be not receive scores for those domains nor the Oral language composite score provided by WIDA. Test Exception approvals will not negatively impact any of a district's accountability measures. If you have any questions, send them in an email to mde-oeaa@michigan.gov (use "WIDA" in the subject line) or call 877-560-8378.

False EL: Correction of Records for Students Incorrectly Designated as English Learners (ELs) (Formerly known as Limited English Proficient "false LEPs")

All English Learners in grades K-12 must be assessed on the annual English language proficiency (ELP) assessment. Anything less is a violation of federal legislation requirements. Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) have shared that one of the reasons certain students have not been tested was because they were falsely coded as EL in the Michigan Student Data System (MSDS) due to human error (e.g., data entry personnel inadvertently reported a student as EL when the student's home language and primary language is English).

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

To request a False EL designation, districts must enter the information and required documents described below using the WIDA Test Exceptions function on the OEAA Secure Site between **December 13, 2023 and January 19, 2024**. Late or incomplete requests will not be considered. Directions for submitting WIDA Test Exceptions and False EL appeals can be found on the [Secure Site Training web page](https://www.michigan.gov/mde/Services/Student-Assessment/secure-site-training) (<https://www.michigan.gov/mde/Services/Student-Assessment/secure-site-training>) under the Quick Reference section.

LEAs with a student whose False EL request is approved by MDE's EL team should not have that student participate in the 2024 WIDA ACCESS or beyond.

Please review this information before making a request to correct “False EL” records:

Who is a False EL?

A False EL is an English dominant student who does not meet the requirement for EL identification outlined in Title III law and who has erroneously been identified in MSDS as an EL. There are a variety of scenarios that can lead to a student accidentally being identified as an EL. The district submitting a False EL is responsible for securing this historical information from other districts as well as any additional information as noted in the table below.

The table outlines a number of possible scenarios and outcomes for False EL requests:

Scenario	Evidence Needed	MDE Response
Original Home Language Survey (HLS) shows English as the student’s home and primary language.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> In the Secure Site, submit/upload the initial home language survey of the False EL student completed by the parents upon the student’s first enrollment in any local educational agency (LEA) in Michigan. Contact the parents of the child and confirm that the English/English HLS is accurate. On the documentation submitted to MDE, include the date and the outcome of that contact. Additionally, include a description of the discrepancy between the original HLS and MSDS coding of EL. 	Approval possible, dependent on evidence/situation.
EL exit window missed; therefore, student is still considered EL for the current school year.	None	Automatic denial; student must still be assessed on the WIDA ACCESS, but is eligible to be exited during the school year.
Student was successfully exited from EL services in MSDS but accidentally re-entered as an EL.	None	Automatic denial; student must still be assessed on the WIDA ACCESS but is eligible to be exited during the school year.
Student passed the W-APT/ WIDA Screener and was entered as an EL in MSDS.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Screener scores in the OEAA Secure Site showing a passing score 	Approval possible, dependent on evidence/situation.
No Home Language survey (or original Home Language Survey)/mistake on Home Language Survey/primary language in the home changed.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> In the Secure Site, submit/upload a letter from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the parent explaining the circumstances that led to the mistake on the HLS. the district explaining the circumstances that led to the loss of or the mistake on the HLS. Submit any additional supporting evidence. 	Outcome variable dependent on evidence/situation.

Examples of the preceding scenarios:

1. 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.
2. The parent/guardian wants to withdraw the EL student from the program and fills out a new home language survey.
3. A bilingual parent and an English-speaking parent share parenting time, and the English-speaking parent completes a new home language survey indicating that the child speaks English.
4. The 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 parent(s) complete a new home language survey and indicate that both the student's native language and home language is English.

Direct any questions or concerns regarding False EL to:

LaTrese Royal

Analyst, Office of Educational Supports

517-241-6975 or at Royall@michigan.gov.

If you have questions about how to use the OEAA Secure Site, call 877-560-8378, Option 3.