



WIDA ACCESS Assessment Profile Last Reviewed: June 2025

Assessment Profile for the WIDA Assessments

Why:

The English language proficiency (ELP) Assessment that the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) uses is WIDA ACCESS, aligned to the state's English language development standards (2011). The OPI joined the World Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) consortium in 2011 and uses the English Learner (EL) screener tool to identify ELs and support students with acquiring academic English. Beginning in the 2025/2026 school year, the OPI will also be adopting the WIDA Alternate Screener for students with severe cognitive disabilities (SwSDCs) when applicable. When a student enrolls in a district and a language other than English is indicated on the [Home Language Survey](#), or an educator notices that there may be a language of impact, the student must be provided the appropriate WIDA Screener. If the student scores below Montana's definition of proficiency, then they are identified as an EL, and this should be reflected in EDUCATE (IC). There is also an Alternate WIDA ACCESS for students who are ELs and have significant cognitive disabilities.

The WIDA ACCESS is used to provide state, district, school, and individual student achievement information on the state-adopted content standards in ELP. It is used by the state to provide a consistent picture of student performance and proficiency in academic English across Montana's public schools and private schools seeking accreditation. It is used at the local level to provide teachers with a clear and standardized evaluation of students' academic English proficiency for instructional planning purposes. It is an important measure for understanding comparisons between schools over time and for gaining understanding of equity in educational services.

State Requirement:

- "Administered to all students identified as English Learners (EL) in grades (K-12).
These assessments shall be administered mid-school year."
Source: [ARM 10.56.102\(4\)](#)
- **State Guidelines:** See the [EL Checklist for Districts](#) and [English Learner Guidance for School Districts](#).

Federal Requirement:

- "Provide for an annual assessment of English proficiency of all English learners in the schools served by the State."
Source: [ESEA Section 1111\(b\)\(2\)\(G\)](#)
- **Federal Guidelines:** *The district has 14 days to administer the screener and 30 days to make a determination.* These requirements apply throughout the school year. All districts collect a [Home Language Survey \(HLS\)](#) as part of the data collection process, however, some districts may collect additional information prior to the screening process. A second path for identification is via teacher/educator observations that there may be a language deficit and administers Teacher Observation Checklist to determine if WIDA Screener is needed.

What:

Subtests include the domains of listening, speaking, writing, and reading. Montana's accountability system uses results from this assessment for all schools with ten or more ELs to calculate the ESSA EL Progress Measure. ELs take this assessment until they reach proficiency according to Montana's proficiency criteria: **a minimum overall composite score of 4.7.**



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Who:

Montana belongs to the WIDA consortium along with 34 other states. **This assessment is required in all public schools and accredited private schools.** Annually, roughly 3,500 Montana students are assessed using this summative measure in the tested grades.

All district System Test Coordinators (STCs) will be assigned a district user role in the WIDA Secure Portal and WIDA AMS (DRC). The STC is responsible for creating all other user roles within the district. A newly created user will receive an email from each system (WIDA and DRC) with a link and first-time login credentials.

Testing Coordinators use the WIDA Secure Portal (portal.wida.us) to access test training manuals and resources, as well as Online Professional Learning modules and the [WIDA AMS \(DRC\)](#) to administer the WIDA ACCESS. Prior to being able to administer the WIDA Screeners or WIDA ACCESS each user must complete all relevant training modules in the [WIDA Secure Portal](#). **All individuals who plan to engage and administer the assessment or screener MUST complete all appropriate training courses and maintain their updated training status every 2 years under OPI guidelines (WIDA recommends renewal each year due to updates and enhancements).**

Students who are identified in EDUCATE(IC) as ELs by the program participation date will be registered at the end of October. There will be multiple uploads conducted by the OPI prior to the administration window of the assessment. Districts will be responsible for adding any newly identified students during the test window, which is done so by reaching out to the Special Populations Assessment Specialist at OPI and **securely** exchanging student information. To ensure that student accommodation is available, IEPs must be entered in the EDUCATE(IC) student information system. If a student moves out of district, the district should ensure that the student is end-dated at said district, in order to allow the student to enroll in another school system within the state and participate in the statewide required assessment.

When:

The WIDA ACCESS is given annually to monitor EL progress in acquiring academic English. Beginning in the 2025-2026 school year, this state summative assessment has moved to a 9-week test window that starts in January each year.

This 2025-2026 school year administration window will be open from January 5, 2026 – March 6, 2026.

Domain	WIDA ACCESS Testing Time	Alt ACCESS Testing Time
Listening	Up to 65 minutes	Up to 20 minutes
Speaking	Up to 50 minutes	Up to 20 minutes
Reading	Up to 60 minutes	Up to 20 minutes
Writing	Up to 90 minutes	Up to 20 minutes
Total	Up to 4.5 hours*	Up to 80 minutes*

**These times include material distribution, directions, and test practice. These estimates are intended for scheduling and planning purposes.*



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Where:

The [WIDA Secure Portal](#) contains test administrator training materials and certification quizzes. [WIDA AMS](#) is the test management portal for the WIDA ACCESS.

Cost:

The WIDA consortium contracts collectively for test delivery services using the WIDA ACCESS package so the OPI pays WIDA directly for test delivery services that are provided by DRC. Annually, these costs are roughly \$28.75 per student.

Where Do I Find More Information or Ask Additional Questions?

Beginning in the SY25/26 Administration, there are many enhancements coming to the WIDA AMS Portal, please note that processes below may be subject to change.

Score reports will be available to STCs...

Online: Spring 2026

Printed: Spring 2026

The results on WIDA AMS can be retrieved by going to:

1. Login to [WIDA AMS](#).
2. Go to **My Applications** ☐ **Reporting Services (a new window opens)** Published Reports.
3. Select **MT ACCESS Assessment** and school year of administration.
4. Select your district from the dropdown menu.
5. Click **Show Reports**.

***NOTE:** *the instructions provided above are subject to change as WIDA DRC is making platform improvements. Updates will be provided as available for the retrieval of reports.*

DSR files are spreadsheets that show all student scores for the district. Frequency reports show participation and high/low scores for schools and districts. Roster reports are similar to DSR files but come in PDF form. Student reports are individualized and ideal for sharing with teachers and families to show student progress and proficiency in each language domain.

It is required by law that results be shared with parents/guardians, but school systems may decide how to do this. It is recommended that a copy of the Individual Student Report be kept in the student's cumulative file and that another copy be sent home to the parent/guardian for discussions about setting goals and checking progress. WIDA also provides translations of Individual Student Reports in 47 languages free of charge. Contact DRC Customer Service at 800-747-4868 with district information to request access.

For state official reporting purposes, the OPI receives the raw results in late April each year and typically releases the official results to the public in mid-September.

Questions about this assessment should be directed to the OPI Assessment Help Desk at 1.844.867.2569, or e-mail us at OPIAssessmentHelpDesk@mt.gov.

You can explore additional resources and materials for this assessment on the [WIDA website](#).