SOUTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Beyond the TAM

Support and guidance for the South Carolina Administration of WIDA ACCESS.

This document replaces all previous policy and guidance documents related to WIDA ACCESS. This is a living document; the footer will indicate the date as to when it was last updated and the version it is replacing.

Dates to remember

Activity Description	Date (opening, deadline, widow)
Less Than 4 Domains (LT4D) submissions	October 1, 2026-December 18, 2026; 5:00 pm
Test Administration Manuals Delivered to Districts	November 13-16, 2026
PreID/Precode data due	November 20, 2026
DTC Pre-test Webinar	November 20, 2026; **Link to Recording**
New Requirement! Deadline for submitting Test Schedules	Due by January 5, 2027
Initial Test Materials Delivered to testing districts/schools	January 14-15, 2027
WIDA ACESS Test Window	January 20-March 5, 2027
Additional Materials Ordering in WIDA AMS	January 15-February 26, 2027
Deadline for Shipping Completed Test Materials to DRC	March 19, 2027
Pre-Reporting Data Validation	April 16-April 27, 2027
Districts receive WIDA ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS Reports and Data Available in WIDA AMS	May 13, 2027
Districts receive printed ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS reports	May 26-27, 2027
Post-Reporting Data Validation	May 18-May 24, 2027
Updated Data Posted in WIDA AMS	June 9, 2027

The following sections provide in-depth look at policies and guidance for SCDE related to the administration of WIDA ACCESS.

Beyond the TAM
SC WIDA ACCESS Test Policies, Procedures and Guidance

Unless otherwise stated, WIDA ACCESS will refer to any of the WIDA Assessments including Online, Paper, Alternate, Kindergarten, but not Screener.

2026-27-New and Updated Policies and Guidelines

Please review all policies carefully as there are some updates and changes from the 2025-26 administration. Policies specific to the 2026-27 administration must be followed or will result in a Testing violation. Updates and New policies will be indicated with an "UPDATE!" Or "New". "FAQ" indicates areas where additional clarification is being provided to support Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ).

The policies outlined below apply only to the administration of WIDA ACCESS and not for any other state assessments. Always follow the policies specific to the assessment program as stated in Vendor specific testing manuals (TAM) and other testing guidance documents (such as SC WIDA ACCESS Checklist). This document does not serve as a substitute for required test administration and test security training.

For WIDA ACCESS specific updates please refer to WIDA-ACCESS 2026-27: What to know: WIDA assessments in the 2026-2027 school year which includes information about updates on:

- New accommodations
- WIDA ACCESS Braille training course
- Changes to the appearance of the Individual Student Report (ISR)
- WIDA AMS/DRC Enchantments
- Updates related to 2026 Standards Setting (not state specific)

NEW! District/School Sites Testing Schedules Submission

All districts are required to submit detailed testing schedules for each school administering WIDA ACCESS in their district **no later than January 5, 2027.** Schedule(s) should be submitted using SCDE provided **WIDA ACCESS file template*** uploaded **WIDA ACCESS School Level Test Schedule Form**.

FAQ: The SCDE schedule template provides a **standardized, easy-to-read format** for all schools*.

After the survey closes, districts should notify SCDE (Meghan Walters-Branham, mgwalters@ed.sc.gov) of major schedule changes, such as:

- Changing planned testing domains for an entire week

- Missing multiple testing days due to emergencies
- Significant disruptions to the testing plan
- Schedule updates are for communication and awareness, not to seek permission for routine testing adjustments. Schools are not required to assign specific students to specific testing days on the schedule.
- Minor adjustments do not require SCDE approval (e.g., finishing a domain early and moving to the next domain).

UPDATE! Individual Administration and Test Monitors

Individual administration is provided to students who will be the only student in the testing session. WIDA Alternate ACCESS, WIDA Paper, and WIDA Kindergarten are administered individually. Individual administration **no longer requires** both a TA and a monitor to be present in the testing room. This amendment acknowledges the unique administration requirements of assessing multilingual kindergarteners and students with disabilities and supports a more efficient testing process. These adjustments would streamline administration while maintaining the integrity, security, and standardization of the assessment. Please note:

- When possible, a monitor should be available to assist either in the classroom or in the hallway.
- This policy applies to all sessions that have only one student testing, whether it is for accommodations, grouping considerations (e.g., Paper, Pre-A Speaking, Alternate, Kindergarten, etc.) or make-up testing, regardless of the domain.
- **FAQ:** WIDA ACCESS Paper Audio Streaming in WIDA AMS- TA uses a device to assist in administering Listening and Speaking Domains; it is recommended to have a monitor present in the classroom during testing.

UPDATE! Scratch Paper policy

- Follow WIDA guidelines for scratch paper use for Listening, Reading, and Writing.
- For the Speaking Domain: SCDE will maintain the policy that students may have a single 3”x 5” index card for jotting down ideas prior to recording their response when taking the Speaking domain.
- **NEW/CHANGE**- students may request a new index card per question or as needed. However, TAs must collect the current card before issuing a new card to the student. No student should have more than one index card at their seat at any time during the test.

- Possession of multiple index cards during the test will be viewed as a test security violation on the part of the TA for not following test directions.

Special Circumstances WIDA ACCESS Paper Administration

This request is for situations when a student does not have full Paper administration as an accommodation outlined in an IEP/504 or ILAP or for handwriting booklets for grade 4/5 in districts administering the writing domain without a writing booklet. It is advised to first contact SCDE to discuss the situation, then submit the digital form for review.

For questions, contact Meghan Walters-Branham (mgwalters@ed.sc.gov), ELP Assessments Program Manager

WIDA ACCESS Paper Administration Special Circumstances Request:
https://scde.formstack.com/forms/oas_wida_access_paper_administration_request

UPDATE! New Audio Streaming Within WIDA AMS

If your district has a student who will be taking WIDA Paper due to an IEP accommodation or an approved special request, Listening and Speaking test audio is accessed through Audio Streaming in WIDA AMS.

CDs will **not** be included automatically with initial WIDA Paper orders. While CDs have been phased out of standard shipments, they may still be ordered for specific situations in which internet access is unavailable.

- This feature will be available at the start of Test Setup through the end of the testing window. Once the window closes, users will no longer be able to access audio files.
- WIDA ACCESS Paper Audio streaming is controlled with permission **"Media Player-Registration View."** If your test administrator does not have access to this, please contact Meghan Walters-Branham (mgwalters@ed.sc.gov) to make a request to DRC.
- Due to the unique nature of this testing situation where a TA will be using a device to assist in administering these domains, it is recommended to have a monitor present in the room during testing.

Less Than 4 Domains (LT4D)

An LT4D Request form must be submitted annually for students who may continue to be considered 'LT4D.' All requests must be submitted by close of business on **December 18, 2026**. Only requests for newly enrolled students will be accepted after this date. A committee will review submissions. LT4D

decision letters, including procedures for authorized requests, will be sent before the testing window opens.

- LT4D Guidance document and submission procedures
- Recording of guidance webinar, (recorded October 2025)-great examples of what SCDE "looks for"

FAQ: What evidence should be included specifically for speech and language disabilities, specifically nonverbal?

SCDE will review any additional documentation such as Evaluations, Psych Reports, Goals, PLAAFP, etc. whatever the team feels will provide a full picture of the student.

- The present levels of performance are the best area for evidence.
- A thorough description of how the student's speech is presented.
- If the present level explains how they are actively communicating and what their significant limitation is, this is the easiest connection to draw for the request.

FAQ: Provide more explicit guidance surrounding AAC devices.

- AAC Considerations for ACCESS Speaking
- AAC may be appropriate for ACCESS Speaking only when a student can independently generate meaningful responses without significant vocabulary or navigation restrictions.
- Low-tech AAC systems often limit communication to preprogrammed words or phrases, which may not provide enough flexibility for students to demonstrate their language skills on the Speaking domain.
- Students must be able to respond to prompts by creating meaningful sentences, not just select or produce common requests used in daily routines.
- Examples of AAC use that may not be appropriate for ACCESS Speaking:
- Communication limited to requests such as:
    - "Snack"
    - "iPad"
    - "Bathroom"
- Inability to independently navigate the AAC system to construct original responses.
- Examples of AAC use that may be appropriate for ACCESS Speaking:
    - Student can independently generate meaningful sentences in response to prompts.

  - Example response: "The kids wait for the bus."
  - Student demonstrates the ability to communicate academic and descriptive language without significant limitations from the AAC system.
- When submitting an LT4D request, clearly describe the student's communication abilities, not just the AAC device being used.
- Include information such as:
  - Type of AAC (low-tech or high-tech)
  - Student's level of independence with the device
  - Extent of communication limitations
- Example description:
- "Low-tech AAC with limited communication"
- Providing this context helps reviewers more quickly determine whether the AAC system supports full academic communication and whether ACCESS Speaking administration is appropriate.
- The review committee will consult the student's communication but having the Present Levels of Performance, including communication ability in the submission helps to streamline the review process and decision-making.

NEW submission Link for 2026-27:
https://scde.formstack.com/forms/wida_access_assessments_lt4d_request_sy_26_27

- Decision letters will be provided in early January prior to the ACCESS window opening.

Reminder! As of 2026 administration, students approved for LT4D received ISRs directly through DRC, paper and digital form, like students that took all four domains. SCDE no longer provides separate score reports. Districts will receive a decision letter from SCDE in January prior to testing.

FAQ: How is a student's LP score calculated with an approved LT4D exemption?

The current LT4D methodology, is based on an equal redistribution of the weight of the missing domain(s) to the non-missing ones.

- For example, if Writing is missing:

  - the 35% (from the original Composite Reading {35} Speaking {15} Listening {15} Writing {35}) is distributed to -> Reading (+11), Speaking (+12) and Listening (+12).

Source-WIDA Technical Report (2020): **Generating Imputed* Overall Composite Scale Scores for English Learners with Disabilities Who Are Missing Domain Scores in the ACCESS for ELLs Assessment**

NEW! ACCESS Testing Window: Case-by-Case Extensions

Also outlined in ML Guiding Principles, Section X: Annual English Language Proficiency Assessment Guidance

Extensions are reserved only for verified, unavoidable disruptions, such as documented weather-related closures, confirmed public health emergencies (e.g., measles quarantine/ outbreak), or scheduled district breaks that overlap with the WIDA ACCESS testing window.

Extensions are **not** intended to provide additional time for districts that did not schedule appropriately, or that still had available testing days within the original window.

Districts requesting an extension must submit by **February 28th** of the current test administration window: WIDA ACCESS, WIDA Alternate ACCESS, and WIDA ACCESS Kindergarten Assessment Window Extension Request

Testing Environment:

Guidelines for ACCESS Online Scheduling- Refer to Test Coordinator Manual

- WIDA ACCESS online Reading, Listening, and Writing can be administered to up to 15 students at a time.
- WIDA ACCESS online Speaking should be administered to 5 or fewer students at a time.
- Tier Pre-A Speaking is to be administered individually
- Kindergarten and WIDA Alternate are administered individually
- Multiple domains cannot be tested at the same time in the same room.
- Grades 1-3 students use Writing Test Booklets, organized and separated by grade cluster (Gr 1, Gr 2-3) and Tier.
- WIDA and SCDE do not recommend a student to complete all testing in one day.
- Never administer different domain tests to a single testing group.
- Testing groups can include multiple grade levels and tiers within the same clusters.
- When testing multiple classrooms in the same hallway, a monitor should be placed in the hallway to support traffic and bathroom.
- TAs need to be able to monitor all students and assist as needed. When possible, include a testing monitor in the classroom in addition to a TA.

Test Monitoring App

- The Test Monitoring app is allowed to be used at the discretion of the district; however, TAs should be engaged in active monitoring. The district may decide to only allow the DTC and STCs to use the app.
- If a district/school does allow a TA to use the Test Monitoring app, then there **must** be an additional test monitor in the room.

Test Security, Tickets, and Schedules:

Update! Before testing begins, all Test Administrators (TA) for WIDA ACCESS must receive **IN-PERSON** test security training.

- The DTC or STC (if the DTC deems acceptable) must provide this training, all test security policies for SC Ready/EOCEP also apply to WIDA ACCESS test security.
- Emphasis on cell phone policies should be included in the training.
- STCs must collect TAs' complete WIDA Test Administrator training certificate(s) along with SCDE test security agreements.
- Anyone assisting with test administration must sign an SCDE test security agreement. This includes anyone who may be assisting with translations (using the translated test direction scripts in languages that the main test administrator is unable to speak).
- To ensure the secure handling of test materials, a TA **CANNOT** serve as the STC for WIDA ACCESS.
- **FAQ:** An STC may serve as a TA only if another qualified staff member assumes the STC responsibilities during that time. This ensures a secure chain of custody for the distribution and collection of testing materials.
- The testing schedule should be used to support material and ticket distribution and collection.
- TAs should ensure test tickets remain in a secure location when not in use. When students may be coming and going between sessions, the tickets should be secured in case the TA steps away from the classroom while waiting for the next student.
- TAs must work with the school-specific STC to secure test tickets each day of testing. Materials need to be checked in and out daily.
- All test tickets must remain on the specific school premises and should be checked out/in each testing day to the STC.

- Under **NO** circumstances may a TA take test tickets with them between testing sites, as this is considered a testing violation.

FAQ: To avoid the accidental distribution of the wrong test ticket, TAs should only sign out tickets for one session at a time.

- If a TA needs to take multiple sessions at one time, tickets should be separated by session (in envelopes or clipped) and then locked securely within the classroom during no active sessions.
- Best practice, use different colored paper to represent domains and grade levels when printing tickets.
- WIDA AMS has updated the layout process for printing tickets.
- Find out more by reviewing WIDA AMS and DRC Technical Enhancements for 2026-2027 webinar recording (WIDA Secure Portal).

NEW! All Testing Sessions require a seating chart.
Districts may determine the format by which the seating chart is created but is should include the first initial and last name of the students; any information related to the form and domain the students are taking; a general map/spacing of each student in the session; names of the TA and monitors' (if applicable).

- **FAQ:** A seating chart is also required for 1-on-1 administrations. It is important for districts to document where the student sat as well as the locations of the TA and Monitor/ room layout during testing.
  - Seating charts should be collected by the STC at the end of each session and stored with Test security agreements following SCDE policy for storing and destroying these documents.
  - Districts do not need to submit the seating chart to SCDE or WIDA/DRC unless it relates to a reported test security violation.

Materials:

- Materials will arrive **January 14 & 15, 2027**, via UPS. Be prepared to securely receive and store.
- Additional materials ordering window runs **January 15-February 26, 2027**.
- Additional TAMS are available for download on the WIDA secure portal.
- Be sure to save **ALL** boxes the materials are delivered in as they will be used for returning materials.
- Materials must be shipped back to DRC by **March 19, 2027**.

- If district overage materials are transferred from one school to another, the last school to have the materials can return the items to DRC. Ensure that a copy of the shipping information has been provided to the original location and the DTC to support proper tracking of all materials.
- Coding Booklets for students that arrive **AFTER** the precode window is closed: refer to pages 17-22 in the Test Administrators Manual or page 24-32 in the District and Test Coordinator Manual for a detailed breakdown of coding booklets.

HW Writing Domain Responses

HW Writing Booklets Grades 1-3

- All students in grades 1-3 complete the Writing test in a standalone Writing booklet (no computers are used).
- **FAQ:** Utilize materials provided in school overage first, if additional booklets are needed, they can be ordered during the additional materials order window based on the Tier Report generated in WIDA AMS.

HW Booklets option for grades 4/5

- Districts may choose to have students in grade 4/5 complete the Writing domain in a test booklet or directly online.
- Booklet testers see the prompt online but respond in a separate booklet.
- Districts order booklets during the additional order window based on the Tier Placement Report, be sure to select writing booklets and **not** Paper administration.
- **FAQ:** Districts opting into handwriting booklets will need to set up handwriting test registration in WIDA AMS, Test Management>Registration Window>Create Registration>Select Assessment> Handwriting Option
- For more information, follow directions as outlined by DRC for Creating/editing test registrations
- **FAQ:** For districts opting to not use handwriting booklets for all students but have newcomer MLs with Handwriting accommodation in their ILAP without an IEP accommodation for full paper administration will submit Special Circumstance Paper administration request for handwriting booklet only.

HW Booklets option for grades 6-12

- In alignment with SC READY and EOCEP policies for newcomer ML students, the need for a Paper test administration should be documented in the student's ILAP when the student's computer skills are not comparable to those of their grade-level peers and a Paper administration would provide a more accurate measure of the student's knowledge and skills. In these cases, a Special Circumstance Request is not required.
- For any Paper administration request that is not supported by documentation in the student's ILAP, IEP, or 504 Plan, a Special Circumstance Request must be submitted and approved for a full Paper administration. Blended modality administrations (Online and Paper handwriting booklet) will not be permitted for WIDA ACCESS testing at these grade levels.

Student Transfers

Newly enrolled students or transfer students with less than 20 days in the testing window, refer to English Proficiency Screening Guidance section in the Multilingual Learner Program Guiding Principles.

- Cut-off Date for Testing
- Student Transfers During Testing Window

ML Accountability-reference the Accountability Manual specific guidance.

Out-of-State Transfers
Refer to *English Proficiency Screening Guidance* section in the Multilingual Learner Program Guiding Principles, or refer to specifics as outlined in the District and School Test Coordinator Manual (WIDA Secure Portal)

How to Complete In-State Transfers
Submit a transfer form in WIDA AMS; specifics are outlined in District and School Test Coordinator Manual (WIDA Secure Portal). There is also a brief overview in the WIDA ACCESS Test Administrator Manual.

Reminders for administering WIDA ACCESS Kindergarten

- All four domains connect to a single storyline.
- Each language domain is administered once, with no starting or skipping rules.
- Task types reflect everyday classroom practices.

- There is a separate score sheet to mark student scores for Listening and Speaking, Writing, and Reading.
- Revised scoring protocols and rubrics for Speaking and Writing tasks.
    - Confirm all sections are completed; If Writing or Speaking are not scored by the TA, the student **WILL NOT** receive a composite score, and districts can **NOT** request rescoring.
- Before administering WIDA ACCESS for Kindergarten, annually, all TAs must complete **WIDA ACCESS for Kindergarten: Administration and Scoring training** course in the WIDA Secure Portal and pass the certification quiz.
- For more detailed information please check out these resources:
    - WIDA ACCESS for Kindergarten for New Test Administrators Assessment
    - Educators must sign into the secure WIDA portal to access online seminar/recording.

NEW- Guidance for Test Security Violations related to ELP (WIDA) Screener

See complete guidance and policy document below.

FAQ: Only one TSV needs to be submitted when Identification Errors result in Improper ACCESS Administration.

FAQ: Documentation and Records Retention-refer to updated sections in MLP Guiding Principles for ELP Screening documentation and Retention and Disposal of Materials.

Reminder for the Procedure for Reporting Test Security Violations

DTCs should contact the Program Manager as soon as a TSV is suspected. If the situation is deemed a TSV, then proper documentation must be completed.

Supporting Documentation – This information would include all the following items:

- A signed and dated written statement from all adults involved in the incident;
- If applicable, summaries of any interviews with student;
- Signed, dated, written statement(s) from the student(s) involved in or witnessing the incident,
- IEP, 504-Plan, or ILAP team meeting minutes with an indication of their recommendations; and

- A summary written by the DTC, highlighting all applicable information and indicating actions, if appropriate, taken by the DTC, district office, or school.

The supporting documentation must be attached and uploaded to the TSV Application portal. If any of the required information is not included with the test security violation, it will not be processed until all of the information has been received. Within 48 hours of being made aware of a possible test security violation, an investigation should be conducted and, when necessary, reported using the TSV Application.

Reference: SC READY & EOCEP Spring 2026—Test Administration Manual Test Security Reporting Test Security Violations.

Testing Over Multiple Days

- WIDA ACCESS and Screener tests do not lock overnight. They remain in an "In Progress" status until the student submits the test. If the test is submitted, then it will be put into a "Complete" status.
- Districts and Schools can verify the status of their students' tests by going to Reporting Services, selecting the Operational Dashboard, and then Student Status. Once they complete the primary filters, the report will show them the current status of their students' tests for the administration they selected in the primary filters.
- **FAQ:** TAs should make every effort to ensure students “End Test”. Have TAs verify the student has ended and not just logged out/closed laptop to indicate they are done testing. See more information regarding DTC authority to resume testing.
- **FAQ:** Tests technically do not lock, but if a situation arises where the student cannot reenter the session, then they may need to retest on another day. SCDE will need to be contacted to request a regeneration of Test ticket.
- For South Carolina, multi-day testing for WIDA ACCESS **is allowed for students with designated accommodations**.
- **UPDATE!** If a student has a specific accommodation in their IEP/504/ILAP that indicates that they may test over multiple days, the district **does not need to notify SCDE.**
- SCDE will run a report at the end of the testing window that identifies all tickets/sessions with start/end dates and can verify who tested over multiple days.
- If a student does not have this accommodation, SCDE must be notified about the situation, and approval needs to be requested to continue the same test session.

- Testing violations may result if SCDE completes an audit, and no proof of student accommodation can be provided or communication with the program manager related to the extenuating circumstance.
- Test tickets should always be collected and secured when not in an active test session. Students should not access a test when not under active monitoring. If a student has the designated accommodation for multiple day testing, then they should be with a test administrator that is closely monitoring and ensuring the student is not testing outside the designated time.
- Students who take WIDA Alternate ACCESS with accommodation for multi-day testing are using paper materials, so the locking of the test platform is not an issue.
- Carefully schedule your testing sessions to ensure enough time for students to complete the test during the single school day.
- No student without the designated accommodation should be permitted to test over multiple days. Although students have unlimited time, they should not start a testing session without enough time to complete the test session.
- If a situation arises where a student is not going to complete the domain before the end of the school day and it is not due to an extenuating circumstance, the DTC should contact SCDE to discuss the situation and determine next steps.

DTCs have the authority to resume testing in certain situations:

- When testing is interrupted due to student illness or a power/internet outage and must be made up later.
- When a student test becomes locked accidentally, the student will resume testing the same day, see note above about possible request to regenerate test.
- When a student has an IEP, 504-Plan or ILAP that specifies testing over multiple days as an accommodation.
- If a student is dismissed early by a parent refusing to wait for testing to be completed
- Student is removed from testing session as result of misbehavior during testing or previously determined consequences
- To ensuring an “in Progress” Test is marked “Complete.”
- If a test is reopened to mark as complete and the test is still in progress with questions to be answered, SCDE will need to be contacted before the student can proceed with testing.

If a student is nauseated, vomits, bleeds, or displays other severe distress symptoms, the following guidelines offer appropriate actions for the TA and the STC to implement, as needed:

- The TA should excuse the sick student from the testing room. The determination to remove a student depends on the severity and the timing of the sickness.
- The TA should not leave the room. If possible, the TA should send a monitor to accompany the student to the restroom, nurse's office, or other sick room.
- Students can take a supervised break until the sick student is situated, and the student's desk and the classroom have been cleaned.
- If a student cannot be tested during the testing window, contact Meghan Walters-Branham (mgwalters@ed.sc.gov) to discuss possible alternative test dates.

Student Illness- For Paper Testing

The TA can retrieve the student's test booklet and answer documents for further use if these documents are not damaged.

- Return the partially completed test booklet and answer document to the STC and sign in these documents on the security checklist.
- The STC should add the sick student's name to the make-up roster.
- Damaged test booklets or answer documents should be destroyed or disposed of in a secure manner (e.g., shredding, burning). Record this action in the "Notes" column on the security checklist. Do not return damaged documents to the contractor.
- If a new test booklet or answer document is needed for make-up testing, obtain and sign out the appropriate-subject documents from school overage and on the security checklist. Student responses must be transferred from a damaged answer document to a new answer document in a supervised, secure setting.

FAQ: DTCs are advised to keep records of all situations where they have granted permission to resume testing on another day. Choice of how DTCs document this is at their discretion, but documentation would be needed in the event of an audit or Test Violation investigation.

UPDATE! Testing Multiple Domains in One Day

SCDE does not advise this; however, there are some instances where this may be needed. For WIDA ACCESS, follow the guidelines in alignment with SC READY/EOCEP:

When a student has been absent for an extended period and there is an insufficient number of days remaining in the test window to administer all tests, the STC may approve the administration of two tests in one day for homebound students, students with serious medical issues, students up for expulsion, suspended students, or students with serious attendance challenges (including students who are truant.) The administration of two make-up tests in one day for any other reason requires written approval from the Program Manager.

FAQ: If a student unexpectedly reports it will be their final day at the school but still has multiple domains to complete, contact SCDE for verbal approval. For other circumstances that are not outlined above, districts should submit a "Special request for Alterations of Outlined Polices" form (see below) policy exception form. Maintain documentation of all approvals.

Standard Setting 2026 and Accountability

WIDA recommends treating this year's scores as a new baseline to measure growth against. This year's scale scores cannot be compared with scores from previous years.

Districts that usually use the scale scores for tracking student growth will have to include other data points as best practice, such as classroom evidence from throughout the year, classroom assessments or other interim measures, data from student's content teachers to track progress, and connecting with students' families for a sense of how their language development is progressing at home.

For updated information related to the 2026 Standards Setting Event and information related to the current status of that work, please refer to WIDA' Standard Setting webpage.

SCDE Specific Guidance
Refer to the Memo from November 17, 2026, entitled Post WIDA ACCESS Standards Setting State Level Update.

ML Accountability
Consult the Accountability Manual for questions related to school report cards and accountability metrics.

NEW! Special Circumstances Request for Alterations to Outlined Policies

Special requests for alterations to outlined policy (e.g., exceeding allowable group size, testing location, etc.) can be made to SCDE for review by submitting a request no later than 2 weeks prior to the testing window opening (January 5, 2027).

- Submission of request does not guarantee approval: https://scde.formstack.com/forms/wida_access_assessments_special_circumstances_request_26_27

SCDE sponsored Webinars, Supports and Professional Development

See full document below

Links to Other Manuals, Support Documents, and Helpful Resources

- WIDA Secure Portal
- WIDA AMS (DRC Insight)
- WIDA South Carolina Page
- SC Online Checklist (Additional State specific guidance)
- South Carolina Multilingual Learner Program Guiding Principles
- 2026-27 Accessibility and Accommodations Manual
- WIDA Alternate ACCESS Participation Tree
- Materials for Prepping Students

WIDA Secure Portal Login Required:

- WIDA Secure Portal Resource List
- Sample Test Schedule Resources
- District and School Test Coordinator Manual Digital Version
- WIDA AMS and DRC Technical Enhancements for 2026-2027 webinar recording

Contact Info

Contact OAS for state policies around:

- The testing environment
- Secure storage and handling of test materials
- Test security training
- Access to the WIDA Secure Portal, WIDA AMS, or the WIDA MODEL Online Test Administrator Interface
- The process for reporting potential test security incidents

Meghan Walters-Branham (mgwalters@ed.sc.gov), ELP Assessments Program Manager

- In the interim, questions related to accommodations can also be directed to Meghan Walters-Branham

Tonya Kinard (tmkinard@ed.sc.gov), Test Security Program Manager

For all other questions regarding Multilingual Learner Programming, contact **Title III** Office of Assessment and Standards

(titleiiimlp@ed.sc.gov)

WIDA

Help@wida.us

1-866-7735

Contact WIDA Client Services Center for questions regarding:

- Assessments, training, and certification
- WIDA Screener for Kindergarten
- WIDA Screener Online and Paper
- WIDA ACCESS Online and Paper
- WIDA Alternate ACCESS
- WIDA MODEL Paper, Online and Kindergarten
- WIDA Secure Portal Login credentials and account creation
- SC Educators are granted accounts through their district, District administrators request accounts through SCDE
- Test Administration preparation and procedures
- Content of score reports
- Standards and Can-Do Descriptions

Data Recognition Corp (DRC)

WIDA@datarecognitioncorp.com

1-855-787-9615

Contact DRC for questions regarding:

- WIDA AMS logins and permissions
- SC Educators are granted accounts through their district, District administrators request accounts through SCDE
- Test Material ordering for initial martials and additional materials
- Returning test materials
- Booklet Labels
- Editing/Adding test registrations
- Student Transfers
- Editing/Adding student information
- Tier Placement information
- Viewing Reports
- DRC Insight Online Software
- DRC Central Office Services (COS) and COS Service Devices

SOUTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Test Security Violation Guidance for ELP Screeners

Guidance regarding reporting Testing Security Violations (TSV) for English Language Proficiency (ELP) Assessments pertaining to the ELP Screener (WIDA ACCESS Screeners).

Test Security Violations (TSV) – WIDA Screener Administration

All WIDA ELP assessments, including screeners, are considered secure testing materials and should be stored and handled accordingly.

Regulatory Authority

In accordance with **2.S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 43-100 (2015), State Board Regulations** districts must report a **Test Security Violation (TSV)** when testing irregularities occur during the administration of the WIDA Screener.

Situations Requiring a TSV Report

A TSV **must be submitted** if any of the following occur:

1. Exposure of Secure Materials

- Secure test items are viewed, shared, or otherwise exposed outside of allowable testing conditions
- Reference: 2.S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 43-100 (2015), State Board Regulation IX (C), (F)

2. Mishandling of Testing Materials

- Failure to properly secure, store, or return paper-based testing materials
- Loss or improper disposal of testing materials
    - Reference: 2.S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 43-100 (2015), State Board Regulation IX (I), (J)

Note: Paper screener booklets and secure testing materials must **not** be placed in the student's cumulative record and must be handled in accordance with all applicable test security procedures. Only the official Score Report and required scoring documentation should be maintained in the student record. Folders with screener results prior to the 2026-27 school year will not be viewed as a TSV; however, if possible, the folder should be updated to remove secure items and retain only the official score report**.**

- For more details related to the record keeping and screener materials, reference SC Multilingual Learner Guidance Principles→ Retention and Disposal of WIDA ACCESS Testing Materials

3. Administration or Scoring by Untrained or Uncertified Staff

- Any individual administering or scoring the WIDA Screener without:
  - A current, completed training certification, renewed annually
- Includes all staff who have not met required training expectations
  - Reference: SC Multilingual Learner Guidance Principles → WIDA Training Modules and Certification; 2.S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 43-100 (2015), State Board Regulation IX (J), (K)

4. Administration of an Incorrect Assessment Format

- Example: Administering the **WIDA Alternate Screener** to a student who does not meet eligibility criteria
- Reference: *SC Mu*ltilingual Learner Guidance Principles → WIDA Alternate Screener Eligibility Criteria; 2.S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 43-100 (2015), State Board Regulation IX (K)

5. Administration of an Incorrect Grade Level or Grade-Level Cluster

- Providing a screener that does not align with the student's appropriate grade or enrollment period
- Reference: SC Multilingual Learner Guidance Principles → WIDA Screener and WIDA MODEL Administration Guidance; 2.S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 43-100 (2015), State Board Regulation IX (K)

Identification Errors During Screener Administration

A **Test Security Violation (TSV) is not required** when an identification error occurs during the administration of the WIDA Screener.

In these instances, the district must implement a process to **document the error**, which must include:

- Updating all relevant records in the student file. Paper or electronic documentation acceptable.
- Updating the student's **permanent file**

Monitoring and Accountability

Any findings related to improper identification procedures fall under the monitoring authority of **Title III** within the **Office of Federal and State Accountability (OFSA)**.

Key Distinction

- **Identification Error Only** → Document and correct locally (no TSV required)
- Contact Title III for question and procedures regarding proper ML identification and compliance
- **Testing Irregularity or Misadministration** → TSV **must** be submitted in accordance with state policy

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Identification Errors Resulting in Improper ACCESS Administration

If an identification error results in the administration of **WIDA ACCESS** to a student who should not have been assessed, a **Test Security Violation (TSV) must be submitted** in accordance with **S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 43-100 (2015), State Board Regulation IX (K)**.

This includes violations such as:

- Allowing, participating in, assisting in, or encouraging any unauthorized access to test materials **prior to, during, or after testing**

Required Actions

When this situation occurs, districts must:

- Submit a single **Test Security Violation (TSV)** for improperly administering WIDA ACCESS as required by state policy
- Document the testing error and maintain appropriate records
- Ensure corrective actions are implemented to prevent future occurrences

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Student Outcome and Next Steps

If a student's **WIDA ACCESS results do not meet proficiency**, and the student has:

- A **Home Language Survey (HLS)** indicating a language other than English, and/or
- A proficiency code other than 9 in PowerSchool (PS)

Then the results support the **initiation or continuation of multilingual learner services**.

Important:
The TSV **must still be submitted**, even when the results indicate the student qualifies for services.

Following submission of the TSV, districts should proceed with the appropriate **identification and placement process** in accordance with state guidance.

Key Distinction

- **Identification Error Only** → Document locally (no TSV required)
- Contact Title III for question and procedures regarding proper ML identification or the need for continuing services to maintain compliance
- Improper ACCESS Administration → TSV required, regardless of student outcome

Required Actions Following a Violation

- Submit a **Test Security Violation (TSV)** in accordance with state policy
- Document the incident thoroughly
- Follow corrective actions as outlined by district and state guidance

Reminder, failure to adhere to proper administration procedures not only impacts test validity but also places the district in noncompliance with state and federal accountability expectations.

Who to Contact when?

For suspected Test Security Violations- email Program Manager (Meghan Walters-Branham, mgwalters@ed.sc.gov) and cc Title III (TitleIIIMLP@ed.sc.gov) then follow up with Test Security as directed (tmkinard@ed.sc.gov).

Webinars, Support and Professional Learning

When denoted by *, the offering is NOT a replacement for required Test Administration Training.

Annual renewal of WIDA ACCESS Training includes required online modules and certification that must be completed prior to administering WIDA ACCESS assessments.

SC specific webinars and WIDA Webinars are supplementary support. Recordings from WIDA facilitated webinars will be available in WIDA Secure portal for any SC educator with an account to reference.

Webinars Provided by WIDA to Prepare for Testing Window

Learn more and add upcoming webinars to your calendar on the WIDA Secure portal Webinars page (login required). WIDA Assessment Webinars typically last an hour.

The recordings for Assessment Webinars are posted to the WIDA Secure Portal on the Webinars page within a week of the presentation. You can find technology-related webinar links in WIDA AMS. On the landing page, select Documents and filter the Document Type by Memos/Documents.

DTC Pre-test Webinar November 20, 2026*

Recording

SCDE WIDA ACCESS-specific Office Hours *

Office hours will be held throughout the administration window through post-data validation on the following Wednesdays from 2-2:30 pm: January 13, January 27, February 10, March 3, March 24, April 21, May 19, June 9

Microsoft Teams meeting Join:
https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/224029643817524?p=3M1V5JYgSwZhsxX5oc
Meeting ID: 224 029 643 817 524
Passcode: pp9vS3ga

Virtual Facilitated Webinar- Exploring WIDA ACCESS Online for Test Administrators*

Date/Time: December 15, 2026; 2:30 - 4 pm

Location: Virtual Training via Zoom, link provided to registered attendees one week prior to event.

Registration Deadline: December 7, 2026, Participants: 100 maximum

Registration link: Exploring WIDA ACCESS Online for Test Administrators

Audience: This workshop is designed for test administrators and coordinators who support multilingual learners who take WIDA ACCESS Online 1–12.

Description: This virtually facilitated offering provides a highlight of what's new with WIDA ACCESS Online this year and will explore some topics that educators identified as helpful to support their administration of the assessment. This offering is currently in development, and description is subject to change.

Virtual Facilitated Webinar- Exploring WIDA ACCESS for Kindergarten*

Date/Time: January 5, 2027; 2:30 - 4 pm

Location: Virtual Training via Zoom, link provided to registered attendees one week prior to event.

Registration Deadline: December 21, 2026, Participants: 100 maximum

Registration link: Exploring WIDA ACCESS for Kindergarten

Audience: This workshop is designed for test administrators and coordinators who support multilingual learners who take WIDA assessments.

Description: This virtually facilitated offering will support educators in understanding the redesigned WIDA ACCESS for Kindergarten assessment by reviewing its new and updated features. The supplementary Canvas component to this live webinar will provide helpful links, documents, and resources to support test administration. This offering is supplementary to the required WIDA ACCESS for Kindergarten Administration and Scoring training course in the Assessment Training section of the WIDA Secure Portal. All test administrators must complete that training course to become certified to administer the assessment.

Virtual Facilitated Webinar- WIDA ACCESS Score Reports and Instruction

Date/Time: April 14, 2027; 2:30 - 4 pm

Location: Virtual Training via Zoom, link provided to registered attendees one week prior to event.

Registration Deadline: April 6, 2027, Participants: 100 maximum

Registration link: WIDA ACCESS Score Reports and Instruction Webinar

Audience: This workshop is designed for test administrators and coordinators who support multilingual learners who take WIDA assessments.

Description: This virtually facilitated offering provides an overview of WIDA ACCESS score reports for educators who have administered WIDA ACCESS assessments in grades K–12. This offering is currently in development and the description is subject to change.

Core-Self Paced- Workshop Package

These learning opportunities are designed for the learner to work at their own pace to complete professional learning that best suits their interests and needs. Topics support all types of teaching models with several topics specifically for bilingual educators. Credit is given at the completion of each course. Available September 1, 2026-August 31, 2027. Registration is completed through the WIDA Secure Portal. If you need an account, contact your district's Multilingual Learner Coordinator or District Test Coordinator to request an account.

Topics include:

- Developing Language for Learning in Mathematics
- Engaging Multilingual Learners in Science: Making Sense of Phenomena
- Introduction to Marco DALE
- Making Language Visible in the Classroom
- Newcomers Promoting Success Through Strengthening Practices
- Reading Comprehension Across Content Areas with Multilingual Learners
- Supporting Multilingual Learners with Disabilities in Language and Communication
- Teaching Multilingual Learners Social Studies Through Multiple Perspectives
- WIDA ELD Standards Framework: A collaborative Approach

And many more!