

# Office Hour FAQ

## Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Education



**COLORADO**  
Department of Education

## October 17, 2024 Office Hour Topics:

### Alternate ACCESS

WIDA Alternate ACCESS is a large-print, paper-based test individually administered to students in grades K-12 who are identified as Multilingual learners (MLs) with the most significant cognitive disabilities. Alternate ACCESS is intended for students who participate, or who would be likely to participate, in their state's alternate content assessment(s).

- Test four language domains (Listening, Reading, Speaking, Writing) locally scored
- Based on the same English Language Development (ELD) standards as the WIDA ACCESS general assessment
- The WIDA ACCESS scale ranges from 100-600 (500 points)
- WIDA ACCESS Alternate scale ranges from 900-980 (80 points)

**Who takes the WIDA Alternate ACCESS?** Students who are identified as NEP or LEP and also qualify for the Extended Evidence Outcomes (EEOs) and take the alternate version of the content assessments. Note: Students with Specific Learning Disability (SLD), Speech or Language Impairment (SLI), and Developmental Delay (DD) should not take this assessment

After years of test development, the redesigned Alternate ACCESS was administered for the 2023–24 testing year. In Colorado, this assessment was administered during the WIDA ACCESS testing window from January 8, 2024 – February 9, 2024. After WIDA conducted their standard setting process over the summer and fall, CDE’s Exceptional Student Services, Assessment Unit, and the Office of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Education convened a committee focused on setting redesignation criteria for the Alternate ACCESS in October 2024.

Standard setting must be conducted after the first operational administration of a revised assessment. Standard setting is a process through which proficiency level scores are determined, and cut scores are set for an assessment. Cut scores delineate the level of student performance needed to meet the expectations of each proficiency level. Cut scores also assist states in determining the appropriate level a student must achieve on Alternate ACCESS to be considered proficient in English and redesignated to Fluent English Proficient (FEP) monitor status.

Multilingual Learners (MLs) with disabilities are a culturally and linguistically diverse group of students with unique and exceptional challenges and opportunities. The appropriate identification, services, and redesignation decisions for MLs with the most significant cognitive disabilities are essential in ensuring civil rights are adequately met. CDE will be gathering feedback regarding the cut scores recommended for the Alternate ACCESS criteria for redesignation. After feedback is collected, CDE will finalize recommendations and make a finalized proposal to the ESSA Committee of Practitioners. With their approval, the Colorado ESSA State Plan will be revised with the proposed changes and submitted to the US Department of Education (USED) for approval. The [Colorado Standardized Redesignation Guidance](#) will be updated upon final approval from the USED.

### Part-Time Homeschooled Students

Colorado Local Education Agencies (LEAs), including Districts, schools and BOCES, must meet educational and civil rights obligations under state and federal laws (EEOA, ELPA, Title VI - Lau v. Nichols, ESEA/ESSA). These laws protect students’ rights to access and participate fully in public education programs. Across the state, some districts, BOCES, and schools also provide part-time instruction to homeschool students, including Multilingual Learners (MLs) participating in homeschool. Some MLs who participate in homeschool education also participate part-time in public school education



or enrichment programs through the school, districts, or BOCES. In considering public instruction for any multilingual learner, including homeschool students participating in public instruction part-time, these laws must be taken into account.

The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) has received questions pertaining to the requirements that apply to part-time homeschooled MLs. New guidance clarifies the LEAs' and public enrichment centers' obligations in identifying a students' language proficiency, providing meaningful access to public school program(s) and grade level content/curriculum for students identified as MLs, WIDA ACCESS assessment information, as well as, Colorado Standardized Redesignation Procedures, including students who participate in homeschool education.

**ML Identification:** Part-time homeschool students are not exempt from [Colorado's Standardized Identification guidance](#). Districts are required to follow the same procedures to use Screener scores and a BOE when making ELP level decisions. Public enrichment centers must work with their district/school to administer a WIDA Screener to all enrolling part-time homeschool students when the home language survey indicates a need to assess the English Language Proficiency of the student.

**Annual English Language Proficiency (ELP) Assessment:** State and Federal laws require that students participating in public school education programs, including part-time homeschool students annually take the state English Language Proficiency (ELP) assessment, WIDA ACCESS (Kindergarten ACCESS, Alternate ACCESS and ACCESS for ELLs).

For the 2024-2025 school year, students enrolled in part-time public school homeschool programs may opt into testing for the 2025 administration of WIDA ACCESS. All homeschool program students will be loaded into WIDA Assessment Management System (AMS) through the PreID file upload. If the eligible student(s) do not participate in WIDA ACCESS, the District Assessment Coordinator (DAC) must contact Heather Villalobos Pavia in the Assessment Office to correct the PreID file.

Beginning in 2025-2026 all students enrolled in part-time public school homeschool programs and identified as ML and coded as NEP or LEP are required to participate in WIDA ACCESS. When a part-time homeschooled student is identified as NEP or LEP and participating in a public school program, districts and schools should communicate information about WIDA ACCESS, including the district or school assessment window and any expectations of families and students during the window.

**Accountability:** The purpose of Colorado's performance frameworks is to describe the impact of school and district instruction on student performance and the purpose of federal accountability is to identify public schools for support and improvement, therefore students receiving full- or part-time home-based instruction are excluded from all state and federal accountability calculations. This applies for all Achievement, Growth and Postsecondary & Workforce Readiness measures, school and district framework ratings and federal identifications.

**Colorado Standardized Redesignation Procedures:** For part-time homeschool students identified as multilingual learners and participating in public education courses in a public school, public charter school or public enrichment center, the participating school/organization must follow Colorado Standardized Redesignation Procedures in order for the student(s) to be exited from language instruction and programs and moved to Fluent English Proficient Monitor 1 (FEP M1). Districts must ensure that homeschool students identified as multilingual learners and participating in public education courses in a public school, public charter school or public enrichment centers are monitored the same way as all FEP M1/M2 students.

**ML State of the State Report:** [Chapter 2](#) provides information regarding student achievement and growth on academic assessments, the progress of multilingual learners on achieving English language proficiency and results on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).