

## **2025-26 North Carolina ACCESS for ELLs and WIDA Alternate ACCESS Test Training Presentation--Script**

### **Slide 1: Title Slide**

I want to welcome you to the 2025-26 North Carolina State Specific Guidance for WIDA ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS Testing. This session is a collaborative effort through the Offices of Accountability and Testing and the Office of Academic Standards.

### **Slide 2: Office of Accountability and Testing**

I'm Wendy Wooten and I work in the Office of Accountability and Testing with the Testing Policy and Operations staff.

Much of the content for this presentation comes from the North Carolina State Specific Guidance for WIDA Assessments publication. This publication is updated each November. It focuses on state testing policy for WIDA assessments including topics such as test training, test material calculations and ordering, updates and changes to the tests, and administration specific practices.

I work closely with our colleagues in ML/Title III who are stellar partners and assist with overseeing elements of testing such as our state's data management process for the PreID file, data validation, and the application of student scores for ACCESS. I'm sure you'll want to join me in thanking them for their tireless efforts as we have set new exit criteria during this last school year, adjusted our state's entrance criteria, implemented the use of a new alternate screening tool, and additional work which focuses on an alternate pathway to exit EL status is currently being planned. Our work with English learners is exciting and has direct impacts on student outcomes.

Thank you for taking the time to listen in today and to prepare for our test window this year. We appreciate your dedication to our state's English learners!

### **Slide 3: Presentation Outline**

This presentation is designed to assist all public school unit staff members with understanding state guidance to plan locally for ACCESS testing. WIDA's training courses are found in the WIDA Secure Portal and address the administration directions and materials for each test. This session will provide state clarifications that will assist you in making sure all individuals who are involved in ACCESS testing know what additional information to focus on as we approach the window in January.

Each public school unit across the state assigns roles to staff members and these roles vary in function from one location to another. This session is not designed to replace your local test training sessions that should be provided to help your school-based staff and test administrators know how testing will work in their specific location. As a reminder, this session does not replace the required test training provided in the WIDA Secure Portal for each of those tests.

This presentation will be divided into segments. We will begin with an overview of what is new for the current testing year. We will then move into information that aids in

planning and preparing for testing BEFORE the window opens. Next, we'll take a look at the activities that will occur and impact test administrations DURING the testing window. There are also events that will need to be considered and planned when the window closes, and this information is highlighted in the AFTER testing portion of the slide deck.

As the presentation concludes, I'll provide you with information on how to address questions that may arise and resources that you can utilize in the coming weeks.

#### **Slide 4: Learning the Language**

This presentation does use several acronyms. To make accessing this content easier for everyone, I'll highlight these acronyms and their meanings.

#### **Slide 5: Test Publisher and Vendor Partner Web Links**

The consortia that North Carolina is a member of, along with many other states, territories, and federal agencies is called WIDA. WIDA is the assessment publisher which operates through the University of Wisconsin. They generate the screening assessments and our annual English language proficiency assessments. WIDA also completes many other assessment related activities for the consortia, but this list highlights a few.

Data Recognition Corporation, which we refer to as DRC, is a vendor who partners with WIDA, who helps manage the testing systems such as the servers and the online testing platform, all of the material management (such as shipping and receiving, scanning paper booklets for scoring, the transmission of all records, and managing the data for each member state's tests to generate student reports and state data files). DRC also completes a number of testing functions and this list highlights just a few.

#### **Slide 6: New for 2025–26**

In this segment of the presentation, we'll take a look at what's new for this year's testing cycle.

#### **Slide 7: Assessment Name Updates & Revisions**

Effective with this testing cycle, the test previously known as ACCESS for ELLs will be named WIDA ACCESS. WIDA ACCESS is available in an online and paper mode. This year the grade level clusters for Online and Paper match as outlined here on the slide.

Additionally, WIDA ACCESS for Kindergarten has been redesigned and the WIDA ACCESS has been revised for this administration cycle. The WIDA ACCESS for Kindergarten test is built with the 2020 Edition of the WIDA ELD Standards Framework. The training course for WIDA ACCESS for Kindergarten has also been updated and it was released in late September. All of the training and supporting resources align to the newly designed test structure. It's important for all WIDA ACCESS for Kindergarten test administrators to understand these administration specifics, but most especially important for veteran test administrators who have been administering this test for many years. Each test administrator needs to know how the test differs this year, from prior years.

The assessment revisions for WIDA ACCESS and WIDA ACCESS for Kindergarten will require a standard setting activity in summer 2026. We'll discuss this more in a few slides.

#### **Slide 8: 2025–26 ACCESS Test Window**

Our state testing window provides 8 weeks to test all eligible English learner students. This year's window is January 12<sup>th</sup> through March 13, 2026. Any eligible student who enrolls after March 6, is not expected to test in the upcoming ACCESS testing window. We'll talk more about eligibility and testing all eligible students later in the presentation. Beginning December 10<sup>th</sup>, public school units will have the ability to begin setting up test sessions and working with their data in WIDA AMS. Please keep in mind this data will only reflect what was captured in the state PreID file upload in November.

Please also ensure your test plans and schedules test students early in the window.

#### **Slide 9: Accommodation Updates**

There are several new accommodation features that are available this year. These include a Speaking domain for ACCESS Braille, a Kindergarten Low Vision accommodation script, and the ACCESS Online test administrator script which is available as translated ASL videos. WIDA's training materials outline each of these new items. Please reach out to your regional accountability coordinator, if you have a unique situation or questions about these accommodation updates.

#### **Slide 10: Streaming Audio-ACCESS Paper**

WIDA will continue to send CDs for all ACCESS Paper administrations. In addition to these CDs, schools may utilize the option to stream ACCESS Paper audio from WIDA AMS. This option is in response to many schools no longer having devices which play CDs. For additional information on the Paper audio streaming option, refer to the WIDA AMS Online Help.

#### **Slide 11: Standard Setting July 2026**

As a result of the revised and redesigned assessments being implemented this year, WIDA has recruited educators from across the consortia to participate as panelists for the standard setting activity in July 2026. These sessions will focus on setting new standards for WIDA ACCESS for Kindergarten and WIDA ACCESS assessments. In addition to classroom teachers, state education staff, and partners from WIDA, DRC, and the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) will be present.

WIDA has also established a plan to deliver scores and score reports without delay for this year. You can refer to Figure 1, on the bottom of page 3 in the *NC State Specific Guidance for WIDA Assessments* publication for additional details about this plan.

#### **Slide 12: WIDA Alternate Screener**

This year marks the first year of implementation for the WIDA Alternate Screener. You can find additional information on the use of the WIDA Alternate Screener in both the

State Specific Guidance for WIDA Assessments publication and on the ML/Title III Virtual Repository (which is linked here). A few important reminders that I'll highlight are:

The Alternate Screener is administered in slightly different grade bands from our other screeners. These are K-2, 3-5, and 6-12. For Kindergarten students having the Alternate Screener administered, all four domains must be administered regardless of the semester in which the screener is given.

### **Slide 13: Entrance Criteria Updates**

This slide outlines updates to the entrance criteria or scores that identify a student as EL on each respective screening tool. You'll note there are different composites utilized for WIDA Screener for Kindergarten, in each semester. This is attributed to different domains being administered in these semesters. These changes are also outlined in the *NC State Specific Guidance for WIDA Assessments*, the ML/Title III Virtual Repository, and state board policy TEST-011.

### **Slide 14: Exit Criteria Updates**

In the fall of 2024, the state board of education (SBE) adopted new exit criteria for the ACCESS assessment. This new criteria is an overall composite score of 4.5 or higher. In July 2025, the board also approved new exit criteria for WIDA Alternate ACCESS with a Proficiency Level 2 or higher.

### **Slide 15: Less Than 4 Domain Score Calculation**

One final update that I'll highlight which will be slightly different for this year's testing cycle is the application of a "**Less Than 4 Domain Score Calculation**". I'll begin by letting you know this calculation is not completely new. It was previously known as an **Alternate Composite Score Calculation** and was generated by NCDPI. This calculation was applied to students who had an IEP or Section 504 documenting a disability which prevented their participation in **one** domain of the ACCESS test.

The changes for this year as we move to the "**Less Than Four Domain Score Calculation**" include:

- WIDA will generate this calculation. Through WIDA's psychometric work and collaboration with the United States Department of Education, a defensible methodology for this overall composite is being applied through the test publisher, rather than NCDPI completing this calculation.
- Students will **now** receive an overall composite score based on the completion of **2 or 3** domains of the WIDA ACCESS test **and the WIDA Alternate ACCESS** test. Previously, this calculation was only applied to students taking the ACCESS test. Students who meet this criteria will now also receive an Individual Score Report when they complete the 2 or 3 domains that they are able to access.

### **Slide 16: Preparations Before ACCESS Testing**

In this next section of the slide deck, I'll address practices that will help you prepare for ACCESS testing before the window opens.

### **Slide 17: Test Administrator Certification**

The basis of reliable test scores centers on staff knowing and following the test publisher's administration directions. WIDA produces a Test Security publication for state education agencies, which guides the implementation of effective practices to secure the testing content throughout the testing process. In an effort to reduce irregularities and misadministrations, decrease instances of student plagiarism, and maintain uniformity in test administrations; our state has moved to WIDA's recommended annual test training certification. An annual certification process for each test's unique administration practices and applicable scoring requirements will help our state provide English Learner students with valid and reliable test scores.

This slide outlines the certification requirements for test administrators. Prior to administering any test, test administrators must complete and be fully certified to administer the test by completing the WIDA training course or courses (and then passing the associated quizzes) in the WIDA Secure Portal along with providing a certificate of completion for each test training course to their local leadership. Additionally, test administrators must complete the *North Carolina Testing Security Protocol and Procedures for School Personnel Training* video and sign and return a *Test Administrator Test Security Agreement*. This form can be obtained through your PSU test coordinator.

### **Slide 18: Support Staff-Certification**

While it is not a requirement for individuals supporting ACCESS testing to complete the training courses in the WIDA Secure Portal, it is encouraged. In doing so, these individuals better understand how the test is administered, changes that impact the current testing cycle, and they are familiar with how to access the many resources provided by the test publisher.

Individuals responsible for overseeing all aspects of the testing process (such as a public school unit test coordinators or EL Coordinators) should also complete the WIDA-created training as early in the school year as possible to be ready to complete test preparation activities. These activities will begin about 6-8 weeks in advance of the test window. Support staff should also complete the *North Carolina Testing Security Protocol and Procedures for School Personnel Training* video and sign and return a *Test Security Agreement* (for their role) during the testing window.

### **Slide 19: WIDA Secure Portal & WIDA AMS**

A WIDA account is needed to access test training and test administration resources located in the WIDA Secure Portal.

The image in the top right of the slide shows the WIDA home page and the Login button which provides access to the WIDA Secure Portal and WIDA AMS (seen in the image at the bottom left).

The WIDA homepage is linked in the box at the bottom right of the slide. Any staff who need either a WIDA account or a WIDA AMS user log in, should contact their public

school unit test coordinator to have these credentials entered into each system. If you are a new public school unit test coordinator and you need access, you will contact your Regional Accountability Coordinator to have these accounts generated.

### **Slide 20: Training Courses & Resources**

Each WIDA assessment has an associated training course found in the WIDA Secure Portal. The training courses for the ACCESS testing window are listed here on the screen. The screen shot at the bottom left shows how to access assessment training after logging into the WIDA Secure Portal and the screen shot at the bottom right shows one of the courses and the associated resources which are linked for easy access.

All of the WIDA training courses have streamlined content and may be completed anywhere as long as you have a reliable internet connection.

### **Slide 21: Test Preparation Resources**

As you begin making preparations for this year's test window, our state's specific support information, found on the NC WIDA page, might be helpful. The first screen shot at the top of this slide shows how to access this information by navigating to the North Carolina member page using the drop-down menu next to the blue log in button on the WIDA home page.

In the screen shot at the bottom left, you'll note that our state's ACCESS testing schedule and activities are listed here along with helpful resources and contact information.

One of the most helpful links that you'll see toward the middle of the page is our *2025-26 ACCESS Checklist*. This is located in the blue link in the screen shot at the bottom right. This document provides annual updates to administration details and clarifications to help public school units prepare for the opening of our state's testing window.

### **Slide 22: WIDA Roles and Responsibilities**

WIDA defines the following roles for testing: district and school test coordinators, test administrators, and district and school technology coordinators. Some of the responsibilities for each of these roles overlaps. The *WIDA AMS User Guide* outlines user roles and capabilities within the system. The three resources pictured on this slide are helpful in understanding the many tasks that are required before, during, and after the testing window. District and school test coordinators should read and be familiar with all three resources. It is helpful to download these PDFs to a device for easy access.

The district test coordinator is a vital role during the testing window. This individual works with school test coordinators to facilitate strong collaboration among everyone involved in supporting ACCESS testing. The individual filling this role is responsible for setting a positive tone for test administrators, ensuring each test administrator has the right training and materials, monitoring schedules and testing progress and ensuring all test materials are stored securely, accounted for throughout the window, and returned

on time following test completion. This individual will field questions before, during, and after the test administration for all staff who are administering or supporting the test. In addition, the test coordinator is the primary contact for DRC throughout the testing window for the district and/or school.

Test administrators are responsible for administering and monitoring the assessment. Technology coordinators are responsible for setting up and configuring the online testing software, ensuring all devices meet the specifications necessary for testing prior to the test window opening, and may also assist with troubleshooting and solving technology issues during the test window.

### **Slide 23: PreID File**

Each year in November, our state creates a PreID file that is based on all students who are currently enrolled and identified as English learners. The file is used to create Pre-ID labels for students taking paper tests, place students in registrations and generate Alternate ACCESS test material shipments. Please remember that all WIDA Alternate ACCESS test takers must have a designation of Tier T in the North Carolina Student Information System.

NCDPI will provide a second PreID file to DRC on January 9th. This will account for any students who are enrolled after the first PreID file is uploaded. Keep in mind that your public school unit test coordinator may still be required to order materials for students taking ACCESS assessments since the November PreID file is used to generate the initial material shipments. The second PreID file will not result in any material shipments. Any new students enrolling after January 9th who are eligible to take the test will also need to be manually entered into WIDA AMS. It is very important that the student's information be an exact match to keep your data clean. We'll talk more about student data later in the presentation.

### **Slide 24: Initial Materials Shipments**

Our state's initial material order contains a limited amount of paper materials due to our state requiring the online format for the WIDA ACCESS test. The WIDA AMS User Guide is helpful in learning more about viewing materials included in the initial shipment. Test coordinators have access to a Secure Material Tracking Report which is abbreviated (SMTR) in WIDA AMS.

As I mentioned previously, our state's paper materials are generated based on the number of students in our PreID file. These initial materials will include: Kindergarten ACCESS paper materials, Writing booklets for WIDA ACCESS grades 1–3 (for both tier placements), and WIDA Alternate ACCESS test materials where students have been designated with at Tier T in the SIS.

A calculated overage is also included where a minimum number of 10 students is met in each grade band. PSUs should create a local procedure for tracking all materials from receipt to return and must report any discrepancies in the material shipment to DRC Customer Service immediately.

**Slide 25: Do I have to administer ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS?**

One question our offices often receive, each testing cycle, is whether or not ACCESS tests have to be administered. The answer is yes. As required by federal law and state board policy, these tests are an annual assessment until a student identified as and English Learner exits or is not longer enrolled in school. You can see on the screen how Accountability uses the scores for growth and achievement analysis.

**Slide 26: Testing Eligible Students**

Our state's test window is January 12 through March 13, 2026.

If a student is enrolled and identified as an English learner between January 12 and March 6, schools are required to administer the appropriate ACCESS test. If a student is enrolled after March 6, the student is not required to be tested in this year's test window.

**Slide 27: Expect ACCESS Test Report-NC SIS**

An essential tool to ensure all students are tested is the Expect ACCESS test report in the NCSIS. This dynamic report will update as students are identified as English learners in the system. You can use it to verify all students are tested. It will also track students in your PreID file and students who need to be manually entered into WIDA AMS, as well as track students who have withdrawn from your school if registrars and data managers have withdrawn them. The graphic at the bottom of this slide includes the steps necessary to locate this report.

**Slide 28: Preparing for Testing in WIDA AMS**

WIDA AMS is the central nervous system for ACCESS Testing. I've highlighted some of the most popular tasks that take place in the system.

**In WIDA AMS:** you print tickets, find student tier placement, view/edit accommodations, mark students with "Do not score codes," set up and manage Central Office Services, and access/print score reports. You can also view and edit registrations, move students from one registration to a different one, or you can remove a student from a registration altogether. You may need to do this with December graduates or students who withdraw from school after our state's Pre-ID file is uploaded.

The WIDA AMS User guide is the best resource to support your work in WIDA AMS and it is linked here at the bottom of the slide.

All testing devices must have updated testing software prior to the testing window.

**Slide 29: DURING ACCESS TESTING**

We'll now transition into the information and activities that occur during the ACCESS testing window.

**Slide 30: Testing Overview**

Each test in the ACCESS suite of assessments is designed to measure the four language domains: Listening, Reading, Writing, and Speaking. Listening and Reading



domains require students to make selections from a limited set of items, while Speaking and Writing require students to generate a response. In both the WIDA ACCESS for Kindergarten and WIDA Alternate ACCESS tests, students are given multiple opportunities to provide a response to each test item and they are given opportunities for the test administrator to stop testing, once the student has reached their English language ability.

### **Slide 31: WIDA ACCESS for Kindergarten**

As mentioned at the beginning of the presentation, the Kindergarten ACCESS for ELLs test has been redesigned. The test remains a paper-based test administration that is provided in a one-on-one setting. It generally takes anywhere between 40 and 55 minutes for students to complete the test, unless their English language abilities are high. Test administrators who administer WIDA ACCESS for Kindergarten should be familiar with the scoring rubrics for student responses and have practiced for the test administration prior to test session. Test administrators are allowed to check out the secure materials prior to test day and rehearse with these materials. The materials must be checked out and checked in securely each time.

### **Slide 32: Testing Mode & Expectations**

In North Carolina, the required testing mode for the WIDA ACCESS (grades 1–12) is online. Please keep in mind that all students taking WIDA ACCESS at grades 1–3 will be administered the Writing domain in a Paper booklet. These booklets will arrive in public school units where students were enrolled and eligible at the time of our state's PreID file. The exceptions to the online testing mode requirement include when an approval from the Office of Accountability and Testing has been provided to a student who has had limited experience with technology and when students with disabilities have documented accommodations in their current Individualized Education Program or Section 504 Plan that dictate a paper test format is necessary for accessibility. Students participating in online testing at grades 4–12 who may need to take **only** the Writing domain in the paper format, are also an exception to the online testing requirement.

### **Slide 33: WIDA ACCESS (Online)**

The WIDA ACCESS online assessment is delivered using a computer or tablet with the most recent version of DRC INSIGHT installed. Students will require a headset with a functioning microphone to record a spoken response for the Speaking domain and a set of headphones for the remaining domains. Students at grades 1–3 will not require headphones for the Writing domain as this is administered in the paper mode only.

**Bluetooth headsets and headphones are not permitted at any time for ACCESS testing.**

Listening and Reading domains are administered first and are semi-adaptive; while the Speaking and Writing tier placement is determined by performance on the listening and reading domains and are non-adaptive. Each domain requires a secure test ticket to log students into the test session and these tickets must be collected after use and treated as secure test material.

The materials for this test administration are outlined in the graphic on the right. You'll note that the appropriate writing booklet must be selected for each student for the appropriate grade band and tier. The tier placement report will help you determine this prior to beginning the Writing domain. Students in grades 4–12 will have the Writing domain delivered online and only students who are an exception to testing online would require a writing response booklet.

If your site is using the test monitoring application, you'll also need the appropriate TMA code for the test session.

### **Slide 34: ACCESS Online Tier Report in WIDA AMS**

As noted in WIDA's publications and training course, Grades 4 through 12 take the writing and speaking tests online and students are automatically placed into tier A or B/C for writing.

Students in grades 1 through 3 taking their writing test in a paper booklet must complete the Listening and Reading domains to have a tier placement generated. The tier report is available in WIDA AMS in the student's test session.

As shown in the graphics on this slide, directions for exporting a tier placement can be found in DRC's Knowledge Base articles.

Please check a student's tier placement prior to providing a paper writing booklet. Providing the incorrect writing booklet is a misadministration.

Any student at any grade that places into a Pre-A tier for speaking must be tested in a one-on-one test session.

### **Slide 35: WIDA Alternate ACCESS**

The WIDA Alternate ACCESS test is designed for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. These students are eligible for the Extend1 content assessments and must have participation planned for this assessment in their current Individualized Education Program. The test is administered in a one-on-one setting and the administration provides flexibility to accommodate student needs and accommodations. The test is administered in four sessions; one for each domain with each domain taking an average of about 30 minutes. The test booklets may be adapted (such as cut apart and made tactile or enlarged) and test administrators are encouraged to use the materials to prepare and become familiar with the expectations for the test in advance.

### **Slide 36: Important Reminders-Bubbling**

This slide highlights a few reminders about bubbling student booklets.

Please keep in mind that all test administrators who work with paper test booklets **are responsible for** correctly bubbling answers and student demographic information. Those answers must be a complete bubble that fills the circle and they must be bubbled with a #2 pencil. These screenshots reflect a correct bubbling method for booklets.

Please note that a check mark is not a bubble and will not be scored, at the warehouse, as an answer.

If any **other pencil or ink** is used, booklets **will not** be scored. It's imperative that public school units assemble a team that will review booklets after they are bubbled. All information must be an exact match to the student information system and should include preferred name. The more eyes that review and check information to the student information system, the more likely mistakes will be caught prior to shipping booklets for scoring. Other common errors that occur with booklet bubbling include placing the first and last names in the incorrect boxes or flipping them and using the current year in the student's birthdate. Please ensure no student is born in 2026 when you're checking your booklets this year.

### **Slide 37: Additional Reminders**

Please train test administrators to verify test tickets and ensure each student has the correct ticket with his/her name on it. This is an especially important step when a test administrator is not the student's teacher, or you have students who may not necessarily understand to check their name.

Please refer to the WIDA Test Administrator Manual and adhere to WIDA's recommendation for the number of students in a test session. If you have questions about the number of students in a test session, please reach out to your regional accountability office to discuss your testing plan prior to beginning test administrations.

Student should also complete the test practice items on a day prior to starting the test sessions. The web page where these items are housed is linked on the slide and a screensnag of this page is displayed below.

### **Slide 38: Accommodation Resources**

Accommodations may be provided to English learners when appropriate to address a disability specified in an Individualized Education Program or Section 504 Plan. If the student is EL only, the student may not receive accommodations on any ACCESS test. Accommodations should be provided only when the student requires the accommodation to participate in the assessment meaningfully and appropriately.

The following resources on the left side of this slide show examples of the accommodations checklists, which can be found in the WIDA Secure Portal. These checklists also appear in the Appendix section of the WIDA Accessibility and Accommodations Manual. Each checklist corresponds to the specific test to be planned for a student as seen here on the screen. The checklists are helpful to teams planning participation for a student and to know what is or is not available for each domain. It's also helpful for educators to know what should be pre-selected in WIDA AMS to ensure the delivery of the accommodation at the time of testing. There is a checklist for WIDA ACCESS Paper, WIDA ACCESS Online, WIDA Alternate ACCESS, and WIDA ACCESS for Kindergarten.

This may be helpful in facilitating conversations between EL and EC teachers locally and can be provided to the test coordinator to double check what is on a student's most current Review of Accommodations or ROA form. This helps open communication between testing staff and the manager of a student's plan. This is simply another way to help track and inform all parties involved in testing and accommodations processes.

### **Slide 39: Minimum Attemptedness Criteria**

In order for a student to receive a score for a domain, the student must meet the minimum attemptedness criteria which is defined and outlined by WIDA. This criteria was established by the consortia and requires evidence that the student has engaged with a scorable test item. When there is no evidence of an attempt, a blank space will appear in the student's Individual Student Report. The tables here are broken into the minimum attemptedness criteria for each domain of each specific test. These tables are also found in the WIDA Test Administrator Manual.

### **Slide 40: Do Not Score Codes**

For students who do not complete a domain or have attempted a test and the domain should not be scored, a DO NOT SCORE CODE must be either bubbled on the student booklet or selected in WIDA AMS. Please be very careful when using a do not score code. In WIDA AMS, be sure that you are in the correct record for the student who needs the code applied. When applying a do not score code to paper booklets, be sure to indicate the correct code. When a do not score code is selected, the student will not receive a domain score and an **NA** will be reported on the student's Individual Student Report and in the state's data file.

### **Slide 41: Submitting an Incomplete Domain Test**

The submit incomplete domain process is one that is used in very rare circumstances. If a student **is able** to start the test session, but **is not** able to complete it (for example, the student does not have enough language to understand the directives and progress on) the test session may need to be submitted as incomplete. In these instances, the public school unit test coordinator should be contacted. They will work with the regional accountability coordinator to ensure this process is completed correctly. Regional accountability coordinators have directions for this process and these directions are considered secure by WIDA. Instances of submitting incomplete domain tests will result in no proficiency level score and no overall composite score, for the student.

### **Slide 42: Transcribing Student Responses**

Some accommodations and situations may require a test administrator to transcribe a student's response(s) in a standard, scorable test booklet. Student responses must be transcribed verbatim from the screen into the paper test booklet by the test administrator as soon as possible after the test is administered. North Carolina testing policy requires 3 individuals to be present for the transcription of student responses: One person is the transcriber, the second person checks or verifies the transcription, and the third individual acts as an observer for the process.

### **Slide 43: Active Monitoring**

A key responsibility of all staff involved in testing is to ensure students are actively monitored during testing and complete their own work. Active monitoring of all domains is important and particularly critical when students are responding to Speaking and Writing tasks. Please be mindful that Bluetooth earbuds can easily be concealed (under hats, hair, or a hoodie). Please remember students should not have access to these devices or personal items during the test session. Students' personal electronic devices must be powered off and collected prior to the administration of the test. Test administrators must not engage in any activity other than administering and monitoring the test session and any electronic devices belonging to the test administrator should also be turned off and should not be utilized during the test session, including breaks. The sole responsibility of the test administrator is to administer the test uniformly and to monitor students throughout the test session.

The Test Monitoring Application (TMA) is available to assist schools in monitoring test sessions. The use of the test monitoring application is **not required** and is a local decision for each public school unit. However, if schools need support in monitoring student test sessions for possible security issues and instances of plagiarism, the Test Monitoring Application may be helpful. The TMA allows an individual to be in a central location and monitor multiple student test screens at once. This individual who is watching students test through the TMA can look for instances when students are not active for a prolonged period of time and when students are logging in and out of the test platform. Additional information about the set up and use of the test monitoring application can be found in the WIDA AMS User Guide. Schools who plan to implement this application should begin developing a local plan of use and become familiar with the system. Use of the TMA will also require locally designated staff members to monitor the test sessions during the testing window.

### **Slide 44: Student Plagiarism**

Student plagiarism reports are examples of irregularities that arise when DRC finds a high degree of match between a student's Speaking or Writing response(s) and online content. DRC uses a monitoring program to screen student responses to any matching online content. Then these student responses and the matching online content are provided in a secure file and transmitted to the Office of Accountability and Testing.

In order for these instances of plagiarism to occur, students need access to an online resource with a web browser. It's critical during test sessions that test administrators have collected all student devices and ensured that they do not have access to additional devices during test session. Devices can be easily hidden or concealed and these devices include: multiple cell phones, Bluetooth headphones or earbuds under long hair or hoodies, and web enabled smartwatches have been found to be responsible for student plagiarisms instances across the consortia. Additionally, students do have the ability to log in and out of a domain test if the access code remains in the student's possession and the student is not being carefully monitored. Test administrators should be able to see student screens for the duration of the test session and ensure students are not logging in and out of the test session. **As a**

**reminder, the test monitoring application (TMA) can be utilized to monitor test sessions where students have repeated log out and log in activity.**

When instances of plagiarism are returned to the state, they are split into separate files by district or charter school. These files are shared securely with the regional accountability coordinator who then transmits them securely to the district or charter school test coordinator for a full investigation and entry into the Online Testing Irregularity System (OTISS). OTISS reports are to be completed with all documentation uploaded and returned to the NCDPI within 5 days of receiving the flagged plagiarism report. Since these reports contain some secure testing content, they are considered secure test materials and may not be transmitted through email.

#### **Slide 45: Student Alerts**

A student alert is another type of testing irregularity that may be returned to a public school unit test coordinator through notification by the regional accountability coordinator. These instances arise when DRC raters read or listen to a student response that is of concern. For example: the student may write or talk about harming themselves or others.

In these instances, DRC will send the Office of Accountability and Testing a secure file containing the testing irregularity and the student's response(s). These secure files are provided to the regional accountability coordinator who securely transmits the files to the public school unit test coordinator. Once transmitted to the public school unit, the irregularity should be documented in OTISS. Most student alerts do not require an investigation. The regional accountability coordinator will provide guidance if an investigation or additional documentation is necessary in the Online Testing Irregularity Submission System.

Instances of student plagiarism and student alerts are returned to the state as quickly as possible, but only after the student response has entered into the queue for scoring. Many states are testing at the same time North Carolina is testing and as a result, there are many student responses in line to be scored at any given time. Reporting plagiarism and student alerts does take time and is not instantaneous once a student's response is submitted to the scoring vendor.

#### **Slide 46: Proctors**

Utilizing proctors for ACCESS testing is a best testing practice to provide an additional individual to assist in monitoring test sessions. Placing proctors in test sessions is a local decision determined by each public school unit.

When proctors are used to monitor test sessions they must be trained using the *North Carolina Proctor's Training Video* and provided with a copy of the *North Carolina Proctor's Guide* to review prior to serving in this capacity. Both resources are linked here in this slide.

### **Slide 47: Remote Testing**

WIDA does not permit ACCESS tests being administered through remote administrations. In an effort to maintain test security IP addresses are monitored to ensure test scores are generated through school-based administrations.

### **Slide 48: Ordering Additional Materials**

If additional materials are needed for testing, the steps outlined on this slide are required to receive materials from the DRC warehouse.

The exact types and quantities of test materials necessary should be provided by staff to the public school unit test coordinator and the request for these materials is then emailed to the regional accountability coordinator for approval. Once the request for materials is approved through the regional accountability coordinator, the order is entered by the designated district staff into the Additional Materials tab in WIDA AMS, shown here at the bottom of this slide.

When the materials request is entered into WIDA AMS, DRC generates a list by site (daily) which is emailed to NCDPI. These are tracked in an internal document for the regional accountability coordinator to confirm/approve and the state provides an approval for each order. Once the approval is received, DRC then ships the materials to the site.

This looks and seems like “many” steps, but our state is held to a specific amount of additional material orders based upon our memorandum of understanding or MOU. These steps help our state avoid any unnecessary costs associated with additional material orders.

### **Slide 49: AFTER ACCESS TESTING**

Now we’ll transition to those activities and events that occur after testing.

### **Slide 50: Completing Student Data**

As educators complete student data after testing, either on paper booklets or in WIDA AMS; the information coded in WIDA AMS or on student test booklets must match the student’s information in NC SIS throughout the testing window to avoid data corrections.

As mentioned previously, a best practice when completing student information on paper booklets is to designate trained staff members to assist in checking all bubbled student booklets, prior to packing and returning materials for scoring.

### **Slide 51: Less Than 4 Domain Score Calculation**

PSUs will need to ensure the following steps are complete in order to generate a Less Than 4 Domain Score Calculation for eligible students.

First, public school units will need to ensure students meet the eligibility criteria as specified in the *North Carolina State Specific Guidance for WIDA Assessments* publication. If students meet this eligibility requirement and the PSU codes the

appropriate SPD code, the state will submit a file to the scoring partner, DRC, to generate the Less Than 4 Domain Score Calculation. This information must be correctly coded and any discrepancies resolved prior to the close of the Data Validation window. NCDPI will not pursue any additional calculations when this window closes and the file has been submitted for scoring.

### **Slide 52: Returning Paper Materials**

The materials return deadline in North Carolina is March 20 and schools do not need to wait for all tests to be completed before materials are boxed for return shipping. It is advised that schools begin batching and shipping paper materials as soon as possible during the testing window. Directions for the recommended order of return is found in the *North Carolina State Specific Guidance for WIDA Assessments*. Local tracking is critical to the return of materials and being able to account for materials throughout the testing cycle. **Any materials that is not returned by this deadline will not be scored and reported on time.**

### **Slide 53: Materials Late Returns**

If schools return materials after the March 20 deadline, they will be scored and processed for reporting, but a printed Individual Score Report may not be generated

It's critical to reconcile any missing materials during the late return period and as soon as possible.

### **Slide 54: Accounting For Secure Materials**

Each secure material that will arrive in public school units beginning in January is expected to be returned to the DRC warehouse at the close of the testing window. All used and unused materials must be accounted for at the close of the test window. Accounting for secure materials begins when the materials arrive in the public school unit. As mentioned earlier, the public school unit test coordinator will receive the materials and verify the shipments. They are then stored securely until the materials are scheduled for distribution. The distribution process must include a way to track the materials locally from check out to check in. When materials are missing, the public school test coordinator is the point of contact and manages the accountability for the materials throughout the testing cycle.

WIDA and DRC have created a resource to support the tracking of secure materials through a Secure Material Tracking Report (SMTR) in WIDA AMS. This report includes the status of all ACCESS materials sent to a public school unit. It is updated daily, beginning when our state's initial materials order is shipped and this reporting ends after the last late returns have been processed by DRC. As materials are returned, the report will update with any student information that's associated with a student test or response booklet. You can learn more about this report by accessing the FAQ linked here on the bottom of this slide.



You'll note the screenshots here showing locations for the Return Material Receipt Report and the Accountability Form in WIDA AMS. The Return Material receipt report is another resource that is helpful when reconciling your materials.

We'll talk more about the accountability form in just a moment.

### **Slide 55: Missing Material Reports**

Our state will also receive a missing materials report that will begin arriving about 4 weeks after our testing window has ended. This report is shared with Regional Accountability Offices for distribution to public school unit test coordinators.

When secure materials are missing, the accountability for these items is paramount and should be addressed immediately. Missing student booklets can impact a public school unit's ability to receive an individual student report and include a student's data in annual reporting.

When missing materials cannot be located there are a series of steps that must be provided by the public school unit test coordinator, to document this security concern:

First, a full OTISS investigation is completed, including written statements from all individuals responsible for the materials from check out to the identification of the "missing" status. Next, evidence for local tracking of these materials and any actions taken when the materials were determined to be missing must be uploaded to the online OTISS platform in NC Education.

In addition, WIDA requires an accountability form to be completed for each "missing material". Remember this accountability form is located in WIDA AMS, as seen in the previous slide.

### **Slide 56: Data Validation**

Our data validation process this testing cycle will continue to be managed at the state level. During the window, district test coordinators will work with the NCDPI to manage the following:

Do Not Score Codes, Less than 4 Domain Score Calculations, Accommodations that need to be changed in a student record, and any other data validation issues that the state may detect in the PSU's data. Our data validation window will occur from April 7–16, 2026.

### **Slide 57: Score Reports Availability**

This slide highlights the availability of score reports for this year. Electronic reports will be available in WIDA AMS on May 11<sup>th</sup>.

Public school units will receive a paper copy of their score reports from DRC for every student who participates in ACCESS testing and where the return materials guidelines have been met. These reports will be shipped to your designated sites between May 29<sup>th</sup> and June 1st.

### **Slide 58: Requirements for Score Reports**

When score reports arrive districts, the district has thirty days to provide these to parents or guardians. This requirement comes from the North Carolina administrative code linked [here](#). As a reminder, if public school units decide to print these score reports electronically, in order to meet end of year dismissal dates, these reports must also be provided within that 30-day window.

As you see in the screen shots here, the WIDA Secure Portal offers support resources to aid in communicating score reports to parents. There are parent letters that can be utilized for each test administration. If you have a parent or guardian who needs a Braille score report, please contact (Wendy Wooten) to make this request directly.

### **Slide 59: Post Reporting Scoring Appeals**

NCDPI has a limited number of scoring appeals. These scoring appeals will be used for very specific inquiries and once utilized, the state will not pursue additional appeals as these incur additional cost outside of the state's contract.

I want to encourage you to think about how you will manage your process to validate hand-bubbled data and records entered manually into WIDA AMS. Establishing practices to ensure student information is correct throughout the testing cycle and administering tests as directed by the test publisher, ensures students receive valid and reliable scores and schools are able to apply accurate data.

### **Slide 60: Questions and Resources**

As we wrap up this presentation, I want to share information on how to address questions that may arise and resources you can utilize in the coming weeks.

### **Slide 61: How to Direct Questions**

This slide outlines the best way to determine answers to questions as they arise in your public school unit.

Test administration questions should be directed to your school test coordinator. If answers are not clear at the school level, these should move up to your district level staff which include the public school unit test coordinator and EL Coordinator. When district level staff need additional information, these questions are moved on to the Regional Accountability Office who may then consult with NCDPI for further clarification or guidance.

If questions arise at any time: before, during, or after testing, concerning student data in NC SIS, please contact Susan Walz.

### **Slide 62: Office Hours**

One way that you can ask questions and get support before and during the test window, includes the continuation of Office Hours. Susan Walz and I will be hosting these again this year. It's a great place to join us and ask specific questions and hear how other district level staff members are planning, preparing, and managing testing tasks. We've

included the link to join the sessions here, and we'll send reminders in early January. Registration for these sessions is not necessary.

### **Slide 63: NCDPI Resources**

I've included here screenshots and the link to the Testing Students Identified as English Learners webpage and the NCDPI ML/Title III webpage for easy access.

### **Slide 64: Prepare for School-Based Sessions**

As mentioned at the beginning of the presentation, this content was designed to highlight specific elements of the ACCESS testing cycle that will assist you in thinking about your local preparations.

A few examples of topics that you'll want to address locally will include:

- how will test administrators complete the testing security training and the testing security agreement,
- how and when will test administrators submit their WIDA training certificates prior to testing,
- who and how will secure material check in and out be organized and communicated to all staff who are responsible for testing,
- who will be responsible for printing and tracking student test tickets within a school and within the district,
- who is responsible for filtering and ensuring all English learner students are tested at each school site,
- who will add students into WIDA AMS if they are not in your PreID file,
- who will assign individuals to check bubbled information on student booklets, and when and where will this secure check process take place, and then
- who will train test administrators to deliver any accommodations that students require in an Individualized Education Program or Section 504?

Be sure to begin thinking about how your district will collaborate and prepare for these essential tasks and schedules to create the framework for a smooth ACCESS testing window.

### **Slide 65: Thank you for your time!**

In order to have a successful state testing cycle, it takes many hands to do this work.

I want to thank you again for your dedication and service to our multilingual students and for your contributions to a successful ACCESS testing cycle!