

Use of the WIDA-ACCESS Placement Test™ (W-APT) for English Language Proficiency Screening, Program Placement, and ACCESS for ELLs Tier Selection

The Basic Education Circular (BEC), Educating Students With Limited English Proficiency (LEP) and English Language Learners (ELL), April 14, 2009, requires LEAs to use the WIDA ACCESS Placement Test (W-APT) to assess students for potential placement in language instruction educational programs (LIEP) for English language learners (ELL). The W-APT is an identification and placement assessment which is aligned to the required annual state English language proficiency (ELP) assessment. It is an initial measure of a student's English language proficiency and informs placement in an English as a second language (ESL) or bilingual program in Pennsylvania. W-APT results are also used to determine the tier, if necessary, on the annual state English language proficiency assessment.

The W-APT is administered only to **newly enrolling** students who have been identified as potentially needing ESL or bilingual education, based on the results of the home language survey. These newly-enrolling students would be those who have recently arrived in the U.S. and/or those who are first enrolling in a particular school. Students already in ESL programs are assessed annually using Pennsylvania's English language proficiency assessment, ACCESS for ELLs 2.0®. Students are **NOT** assessed annually using the W-APT.

The W-APT measures the English language proficiency of the student and is used, in combination with other multiple criteria, to help to determine whether or not a child is in need of English language development instruction. Local education agencies (LEA) may choose to use other formal, standardized assessments for additional information, but identification and placement must be based on the W-APT scores. LEAs are encouraged to use the WIDA MODEL™ series of assessments, available from WIDA as additional information and as formative assessment tools; however, the W-APT remains the required placement testing tool.

Please note that parent permission to assess is **not** required. However, consultation with parents regarding the educational needs of their children is recommended. Parent notification of student assessment results and placement in an ESL/Bilingual education program is required within 30 days of the beginning of the school year. When a student is assessed and placed in an ESL/Bilingual education program during the school year, parent notification is required within 14 days.

For additional information regarding the use and administration of the W-APT visit the ESL Toolkit at the following link: <http://www.eslportalpa.info/identificationplacementexit-criteria/placement/>.

Training Requirements for W-APT Screener Administrators

Since the W-APT is teacher-scored, annual review of training material is required to ensure validity and reliability of the results. Starting with the 2015-16 school year, W-APT Screener Administrators are required to review the following training resources available through the WIDA website at the following link: <https://www.wida.us/assessment/w-apt/>.

2014-15 Grades 1-12 W-APT Webinar
2014-15 Kindergarten Test Webinar
W-APT Speaking and Writing Tests Webinar

Administering the W-APT Grades 1-12 Power point
Administering Kindergarten W-APT

The W-APT Screener training resources are secured, so login to the WIDA website through a personal user account is required. Your ELL Coordinator/ACCESS Test Coordinator can provide you with a personal user account and login information. If you are a newly assigned ELL Coordinator/ACCESS Test Coordinator and cannot gain access to the WIDA website to create personal accounts, please contact the PDE for assistance. The W-APT Screener training resources are available throughout the year.

Accessing the W-APT Screener Materials

The W-APT Screener is a semi-secured test and it is important to maintain security and confidentiality of all testing materials. W-APT Screener materials should be maintained in locked storage before or after testing and should never be left unattended during testing. All W-APT Screener materials must be accessed and downloaded from the secure portion of the WIDA website.

LEAs' ELL Coordinator/ACCESS Test Coordinators have been provided with password access to the W-APT Screener materials. Please contact your LEA's ELL Coordinator/ACCESS Test Coordinator for the W-APT Screener materials. If you are a newly appointed ELL Coordinator/ACCESS Test Coordinator and cannot gain access to the W-APT Screener materials, please contact the PDE for assistance.

All W-APT Screener materials are made available in PDF formats. When downloading electronic files of the tests, please remember to download and reference the W-APT Test Administration Manual for the grade level cluster you are testing. The W-APT Test Administration Manual provides valuable information for administering and scoring the W-APT.

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) recommends that LEAs follow the guidance in the WIDA W-APT Test Administration Manuals (Kindergarten and Grades 1-12) in connection with the test components that should be administered at a given grade level.

Scoring the W-APT Screener

- The scoring sheet provides an answer key for the multiple choice Listening and Reading items.
- The Speaking section of the W-APT Screener is scored by trained test administrators to determine whether a student's response approaches, meets, or exceeds expectations based on a given rubric.
- The Writing section of the W-APT Screener is scored by trained test administrators using a given rubric.
- Test administrators use guidelines on the W-APT Screener scoring sheet to determine an overall composite proficiency level score encompassing all four domains of the test
- Test administrators of the W-APT Screener for grades 1-12 can choose to use the W-APT Score Calculator tool to calculate Speaking, Reading, Writing and Listening scores, along with the CPL and a grade-adjusted CPL. Unfortunately, the W-APT Score Calculator cannot be applied to Kindergarten scores at this time. The tool can be

Determining Student Eligibility and Placement for an LIEP

Grades 1-12

When using the W-APT for identification and/or placement, **a composite proficiency score of 4.6 or higher meets the minimum requirement for a student to be exempted from an English language instructional program.** Scores of 4.5 and below are an indicator that a student is in need of an English language instructional program. In either case, additional criteria must inform the identification/placement decision. The additional criteria must include current or previous grades and performance on state assessments and LEA assessments (formative and/or summative).

Instructional placement of ELLs must be age and grade appropriate. Educators must take into consideration the state's English language proficiency levels described within Pennsylvania's English Language Proficiency Standards when placing students in an instructional program for ELLs.

Kindergarten

The Kindergarten W-APT Test Administration Manual provides guidance for administration of test components for Pre-K and entering K students to take only the Listening and Speaking components, which are combined in one test that uses pictures to alternate between speaking and listening tasks. A student entering in the second half of the Kindergarten year would take all four components: Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing, **or** only the oral portion (Listening and Speaking). For first semester, first grade students, it is required that these students take all four components of the Kindergarten W-APT.

In connection with the Kindergarten W-APT:

- When using the K W-APT for identification and/or placement of kindergarten students, a raw score for listening and speaking of 15 or higher meets the minimum requirement for a student to be exempted from an English language instructional program. Scores of 14 and below are an indicator that a student is in need of an English language instructional program. **However, the W-APT should be considered as only one element in the decision making process. Additional criteria must inform the identification and/or placement of these students. Additional criteria can include current or previous grades/progress reports, standardized tests, oral interviews and observations.**
- First semester, first grade students are required to take all four components of the K W-APT. PDE has not yet provided reading and writing raw scores needed to make placement decisions for first semester, first grade students. At this time, Reading and Writing raw scores are local decisions. PDE is in the process of reviewing its policy concerning placement decisions in connection with the K W-APT and will provide guidance as soon as it is available. In the interim period, it is **imperative** to use **multiple criteria** in making placement decisions when using the K W-APT. LEAs may use, in addition to the K W-APT, other assessments, including standardized tests, oral interviews and observations as additional evidence to determine if the student may be a candidate for ESL instruction.

Determining ACCESS Tier Placement

For ELLs in grades 1-12 being administered the online ACCESS 2.0, no tier selection is necessary. For ELLs in kindergarten or who are being administered a paper-based ACCESS assessment as an accommodation, the following guide must be used for tier selection:

W-APT Grades 1-12

W-APT Composite proficiency score	Tier
1.0 - 2.4	A
2.5 - 4.0	B
>4.0	C

Kindergarten W-APT

The K W-APT is not tiered, so using the K W-APT will not provide a tier placement for the annual ACCESS for ELLs assessment. PDE suggests that educators allow some time in the classroom to observe students' performance and progress BEFORE assigning a tier placement. An informed decision can be made when ACCESS testing materials are ordered in November.

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