

English Language Proficiency (ELP) Annual Assessment Student Management Changes in 2026–27

Overview

Student Management for ELP annual assessments will be updated in 2026–27 and those updates will have a significant impact on test administration and the annual test administration window. This publication outlines those changes and provides directions for implementing the changes.

Background

The Student Management changes follow a series of yearly updates to the management of student records during ELP annual assessment. When Washington first began using the WIDA ACCESS assessments in the 2021–22 school year, district users manually added student records to the test delivery platform, WIDA Assessment Management System (WIDA AMS).

To reduce administrative burden on districts, validate student records, and increase the accuracy of student records, Washington moved to an automated system of student record management in 2024–25. This nightly upload process triggers the creation of a new student profile in WIDA AMS if any of the six unique student criteria are changed in the Comprehensive Education Data and Research System (CEDARS) in the Education Data System (EDS) with the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI): Student First Name, Student Last Name, District, School, Grade Level, and SSID.

This automated process continued in 2025–26 and included an addition to the WIDA ACCESS Spring Registration options in the Washington Assessment Management System (WAMS) in EDS. Previously, Spring Registration meant selecting a Mode of Administration for students who are Multilingual Learners (MLs) and have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or 504 plan. Modes of Administration options included the WIDA Alternate ACCESS for students with significant cognitive disabilities and the WIDA ACCESS Paper (Tier A or Tier B/C) for students requiring paper accommodations.

In 2025–26, Domain Exemptions were added to the Spring Registration options in WAMS as WIDA assumed management of how Less Than Four Domains (LT4D) are calculated. Therefore, instead of district users identifying students for domain exemptions by selecting Do Not Score (DNS) codes in WIDA AMS under student test records, domain exemptions were selected in WAMS as part of Spring Registration, and the ability to manage DNS codes in WIDA AMS was disabled for all users.



Student Management Changes

As Student Management becomes increasingly more automated for ELP annual assessment, the following WIDA AMS permissions will be disabled for all users in 2026–27:

- Participant – Add/Edit
- Registration – Add and Register Student

This means that users will be unable to manually add a student profile directly to WIDA AMS, and the only way a student profile will be created in WIDA AMS is through the nightly upload of student records from CEDARS to WIDA AMS that was initiated in 2024–25.

Additionally, because these permissions have been removed from user permissions, users will also be unable to add accommodations to student profiles directly in WIDA AMS within the Manage Students page. Selecting accommodations for student profiles has now moved to WAMS as a third part of Spring Registration.

The Impact of the New Changes on Test Administration

These incoming changes will have an immediate impact on the coordination of ELP annual test administration in 2026–27.

Impact on Student Management

Because districts cannot create student profiles in WIDA AMS and because student profiles are only created in WIDA AMS using the nightly upload process based on student records in CEDARS, it is imperative that the following occurs for every student identified as ML in a district:

- The student is correctly entered as ML in the district's local Student Information System (SIS), with particular attention paid to the accuracy of the six unique student criteria that create a new student profile in WIDA AMS: Student First Name, Student Last Name, District, School, Grade Level, and SSID.
- The ML record is successfully submitted to CEDARS and correctly identifies the student as ML in CEDARS, which can be verified by checking the ELP Assessments list in WAMS under Pre-ID.

Failure to do ensure these two requirements for every ML student in the district will prevent student profiles from being created in WIDA AMS. Additionally, if the student has accommodations, a different mode of administration, or a domain exemption on their IEP or 504, the student's record in CEDARS must also reflect placement in Special Education services or in a 504 program. The student will not be visible in Spring Registration in WAMS if this does not occur.

Impact on User Management

It is important to note that user roles and responsibilities may be impacted by these changes. There are three primary types of users in ELP assessments:

- District Assessment Coordinator (DAC)
- School Coordinator (SC)
- Test Administrator (TA)

While districts decide who will be assigned what level of permissions when managing ELP assessments, there are two common management strategies employed when coordinating accommodations for students taking the ELP annual assessment:

- **Centralized Management Before Student Management Changes:** The DAC may request IEP/504 information from the SC. The DAC then enters the accommodations selection for students in WIDA AMS.
- **Delegated Management Before Student Management Changes:** The DAC may delegate accommodations to SCs to input directly into WIDA AMS using permission sets allowed within WIDA AMS.

The new Student Management changes will impact user permissions in WIDA AMS, which will necessitate a change in how these two management strategies are utilized. This is primarily because WAMS access is typically limited to DACs, while WIDA AMS access can be extended to SCs. Therefore, managing accommodations will be primarily handled by a district-level user with WAMS access because users will no longer have access to editing accommodations directly in WIDA AMS. With these changes, the two primary management styles may look like this:

- **Centralized Management After Student Management Changes:** The DAC requests IEP/504 information from the SC and enters the accommodations selections directly into WAMS using either the individual or bulk upload options.
- **Delegated Management After Student Management Changes:** The DAC downloads the bulk upload template and sends it to SCs. SCs gather IEP/504 information, input it into the bulk upload template, and return it to the DAC for upload to WAMS.

The Rationale for the New Changes in Student Management

It is important to note that, while district systems might need revision to accommodate these changes, there are also immense benefits to the increasing automation that these changes bring to Student Management. Ultimately, increasing automation in Student Management will prevent issues with data validation and data quality that impact student placement in English Language Development (ELD) services.

Additional reasons for the changes in Student Management in 2026–27 include:

- Students were being added to WIDA AMS to test who should not be tested, either because they are not ML or because they already exited ELD services by meeting exit criteria.
- When users created students in WIDA AMS manually, duplicate and sometimes triplicate records were created because the nightly upload was also adding students to WIDA AMS.

- There is no validation of demographic information or SSIDs when students are added manually to WIDA AMS, nor is there any form of validation when accommodations are added. Moving both processes to an automated system ensures that students are only added to WIDA AMS if they are correctly identified as ML, and students will only appear in WAMS for Spring Registration if they are correctly identified as ML and have either an IEP or 504 plan.

By increasing the automation of student records for ELP annual assessments between CEDARS and WIDA AMS, student records will be validated and remain consistent between the district's local SIS, CEDARS, and WIDA AMS, from test record to data validation and score report. This helps ensure accurate data that best supports student placement in ELD services.

Preparing for the New Changes in Student Management

To prepare for the new changes in student management, it is helpful to consider user roles and responsibilities in the district and what systems currently exist to manage student records. Additionally, it is helpful to consider communication between the different groups that comprise the ELP assessment ecosystem: assessment, multilingual education, special education, student information systems, and technology. Increasing communication between users in these different groups is vital to ensuring that student records are kept accurate between the SIS, CEDARS, and WIDA AMS, and that accommodations information is collected and reported accurately, as well.

Guiding Questions to Consider

- Who manages and tracks internal ML records in the district?
- Who inputs ML records in the SIS and ensures they are accurately reported to CEDARS?
- How is Spring Registration information (Mode of Administration, Domain Exemptions, Accommodations) typically collected and who manages inputting it into WAMS?

Systems Considerations

It is also important to consider timelines when looking at implementing these changes. Using the Pre-Identification deadline as an end point, districts can backwards plan internal deadlines to support information collected by the Pre-Identification deadline. Consider requesting information by late November to give DACs time to enter information into WAMS in Spring Registration.

While information can be updated through the end of the testing window in March, it is important to note that materials are impacted by the Pre-Identification deadline. The more information that can be entered correctly by the Pre-Identification deadline, the less work will be needed later in the test administration window.

Managing Student Transfers

The one function that will not be impacted by these changes is the transfer of student records. Districts can still transfer students between schools and between districts in WIDA AMS. Additionally, accommodations will not be impacted by either type of transfer. The accommodations will follow the student when the transfer is initiated, whether school to school or district to district.

- **Student Transfers Between School Sites:** Because the student is already enrolled in the district, once the accommodations are applied in WAMS, the accommodations stay with that student's record. However, because a new profile will be created due to the change in school site, it is important for district users to move the new profile to the District Level Additional Materials Ordering (DLAMO) on WIDA AMS and update the old profile to reflect the new school site. This will prevent split records and merge the student's record. The accommodations will remain intact.
- **Student Transfers Between Districts:** When a student transfers between districts, either the sending or receiving district must complete a Student Transfer Form in WIDA AMS. DRC will send the test record to the receiving school, along with the accommodations. The receiving school should move the second record, created when the district criteria changed, to the DLAMO and use the old record, which will have the accommodations and the tested records.

Managing Duplicate Records

Duplicate records may still occur with the nightly upload process. Any time one of the six unique student criteria change in CEDARS, a new student profile will be created in WIDA AMS within 24–48 hours. If the student does not change district, the accommodations will be added with the student's profile. If the student changes districts, there will be no accommodations movement with the student's profile.

Therefore, it is important to be aware when there is a change in a student's six unique criteria and to catch the duplicate record once it is created within WIDA AMS. Once it is created, the actions taken depend on if the student has a tested record already located on WIDA AMS:

- **If there is a tested record:** Update the student's old profile to match the criteria on the new profile and move the new profile into the DLAMO.
- **If there is no tested record:** Move the old profile to the DLAMO and have the student test on the new profile. Ensure that accommodations are accurate.

Spring Registration in 2026–27 in WAMS

WIDA ACCESS Spring Registration in WAMS will be redesigned to accommodate the Student Management changes. WIDA ACCESS Spring Registration will now feature three options:

- Mode of Administration

- Accommodations
- Domain Exemptions

Mode of Administration

District users can use Mode of Administration to identify students for the WIDA Alternate ACCESS and the WIDA ACCESS Paper. These students must be identified by the Pre-Identification window.

Types of Materials

The following accommodated test forms will be the only items available for selection in the Mode of Administration on WAMS:

- WIDA Alternate ACCESS
- WIDA ACCESS Paper – Tier A
- WIDA ACCESS Paper – Tier B/C

Requirements for Identification

Students must be identified as ML in CEDARS and have either an IEP or a 504 in order to be selected for one of these Modes of Administration.

- **WIDA Alternate ACCESS:** Students must be identified for alternate assessment to qualify for WIDA Alternate ACCESS. Additional information about alternate assessment can be found here: [Guidelines for Statewide Accountability Assessments](#).
- **WIDA ACCESS Paper:** To determine which tier should be selected for a student needing WIDA ACCESS Paper, WIDA provides the following resource: [WIDA ACCESS Paper Tier Placement Protocol](#)

Importance of the Pre-Identification Deadline

To receive materials with the initial materials order, it is important that Modes of Administration are selected in WAMS by the Pre-Identification deadline in December. Once the Pre-Identification deadline is passed, any needed materials must be ordered in the Additional Materials Ordering window. Modes of Administration must still be marked through the end of the test window in WAMS.

Accommodations

The accommodations page in Spring Registration on WAMS will be new for 2026–27.

Types of Accommodations

WIDA accommodations available for selection in WAMS includes the following options:

- NEW in 2026–27: BR – Braille (All domains). Must select one of the following four options for type of Braille kit.

- NC (UEB Contracted ACCESS Grades 1–5, UEB with Nemeth Grades 6–12)
- NU (UEB Uncontracted ACCESS Grades 1–5, UEB with Nemeth Grades 6–12)
- TC (UEB Math/Science Contracted)
- TU (UEB Math/Science Uncontracted)
- ES – Extended Speaking Test Response Time (Speaking only)
- EM – Extended Testing of a Test Domain Over Multiple Days (All domains)
- IR – In-Person Human Reader (Listening, Speaking, Writing only)
- RP – Repeat In-Person Human Reader (Listening, Speaking, Writing only)
- SD – Interpreter Signs Test Directions in ASL (All domains)
- NEW in 2026–27: LP – Large Print (All domains)
 - Mode of Administration must be P and Paper Tier must be populated. Include options for Tier A and Tier B/C
- MC – Manual Control of Item Audio (Listening, Speaking, Writing only)
- RA – Repeat Item Audio (Listening, Speaking, Writing only)
- SR – Scribe (Listening, Reading, Writing only)
- RD – Student Responds Using a Recording Device (Writing only)
- NS – Test May be Administered in a Non-School Setting (All domains)
- WD – Word Processor or Similar Keyboarding Device to Respond to Test Items (Listening, Reading, Writing only)
- LV – Low Vision Test Administrator Script (WIDA ACCESS for Kindergarten Only) (All domains)
- NEW in 2026–27: AT – Assistive Technology
- NEW in 2026–27: STT – Speech to Text

Requirements for Identification

As with Modes of Administration and Domain Exemptions, students must be identified as a ML in CEDARS and have either an IEP or a 504 in order to be selected for any of these accommodations.

Importance of the Pre-Identification Deadline.

Some accommodations selections will also require materials. New in 2026–27, Washington will offer the WIDA ACCESS Braille and Large Print assessments for students who are blind and visually impaired. Students must be identified for either Braille or Large Print in the Accommodations page of WAMS, and to receive materials in the Initial Materials Order, districts must identify these students by the Pre-ID deadline in December. If students are identified after the Pre-ID window has passed, districts can order these materials in the Additional Materials Order window. All Additional Materials Orders must be approved by OSPI.

In addition, for Large Print, districts must also identify WIDA ACCESS Paper in Modes of Administration for any student requiring Large Print accommodations.

Domain Exemptions

Domain exemptions are used to identify students for LT4Ds through April. This is the only way that LT4Ds are calculated. WIDA will calculate up to two domains and produce a score report with their score release, and OSPI will calculate up to three domains by August.

Types of Do Not Score Codes

It is important to remember that as part of this process, users may no longer use the DNS codes in WIDA AMS. This function is disabled for users in WIDA AMS, and the only way to apply a DNS is to submit an ARMS request to OSPI. Additionally, the only DNS code that may be applied is the DNS – Invalidation (INV) code.

There are two scenarios where a DNS – INV code might be used. The first is if there is a need to invalidate a test due to an error in test administration or test mode. These requests must be submitted to ARMS and applied by OSPI.

The second scenario is in the event of a test incident submitted to ARMS that results in a state decision to invalidate the test. OSPI will apply the DNS - INV code to the impacted domain and allow the remaining domains to be scored. Depending on the impacted domain, it is the district's choice to continue testing the student or to cease testing activities, as there will be no overall composite score given once a single domain is marked Do Not Score.

Requirements for Identification

As with the Modes of Administration, students must have either an IEP or a 504 to qualify for a domain exemption, and the domain exemption must be documented in their IEP or 504 before test administration. More information on domain exemptions can be found on the [Guidelines on Tools, Supports and Accommodations for State Assessments - GTSA](#).

The Pre-Identification Deadline

Unlike Modes of Administration, the deadline for identifying domain exemptions remains open through April, when Pre-Reporting Data Validation opens. Once the window closes, districts may no longer identify students for domain exemptions.

Managing Accommodations in 2026–27

District users will have one of two options for managing accommodations in WAMS:

- **Individual:** Add accommodations student by student based on district, grade level, and IEP or 504 drop-down menus. This option will remain open through the end of the test window.
- **Bulk:** Download a template, add accommodations on a spreadsheet, and upload the template to WAMS as a bulk upload. This option will remain open through the Pre-Identification deadline.

Because accommodations are not part of the six unique student criteria that generates a new student profile through the nightly upload, accommodations can be adjusted as finalized and the update can be expected on the existing student profile in WIDA AMS within 24–48 hours. There will be no new creation of a student profile when accommodations are changed.

Individual Identification of Accommodations

The individual option for accommodations will function much like Mode of Administration and Domain Exemption. Students are selected by grade level and by group (IEP or 504), and the list of students will be displayed on the WAMS page. Radio buttons are available to select the accommodations, which are listed vertically by their abbreviation, and when selections are finished, the page is submitted to retain changes. There is a handout available that explains the abbreviation of each accommodation that can be used during this process.

It is important to remember that individual selection can be made at any time through the end of the test administration window. Allow 24–48 hours for the changes to appear in WIDA AMS on the student's profile. Transfers will not affect the accommodations. The only changes that will be made to accommodations are the ones a district applies in WAMS.

Bulk Upload Identification of Accommodations

The bulk upload process is a separate page within accommodations on WAMS. Once on that page, users can download the template and save it to a location that is easily found. The template should not be altered in any way, and districts have two options for its use:

- **Centrally Managed:** Districts can choose to develop a system where the DAC obtains accommodations information from others, inputs the information into one master spreadsheet, and then uploads that spreadsheet for the district.
- **Delegated:** Districts can choose to download the template and send it to SCs. SCs can be responsible for gathering the accommodations information, adding it to their school spreadsheet, and then sending their finished spreadsheet to the DAC. The DAC can then review all site-based spreadsheets from SCs and upload an infinite number to WAMS by the Pre-Identification deadline.

It is important to note the following about using the bulk upload option:

- SSIDs are mandatory identifiers on the spreadsheet.
- Use Y to identify an accommodation and N to remove one.

Once the file is uploaded in WAMS, look for the blue text that accepts the file after validating SSIDs and student status as ML with either an IEP or 504. If the file is rejected by WAMS, it means that one of the following was true:

- The SSID was incorrect.
- The student is not ML or does not have an IEP or 504.
- The file was formatted incorrectly.

Once those issues are fixed, the file can be resubmitted to WAMS.

Last Resort: Parallel Process in WIDA AMS

There is a parallel process that will remain available in Test Management on WIDA AMS where users can add accommodations at the student level. Any user with the appropriate permissions in WIDA AMS can do this, including School Coordinators and Test Administrators. However, these must be added student by student and domain by domain.

Additional Support Available

For questions and support with this new change to Student Management, contact OSPI's ELP Assessment Office:

- ELP Assessment Coordinator: Sharon Coward
- Email: Sharon.Coward@k12.wa.us