

## **ACCESS for ELLs™**

**The ACCESS for ELLs is a state mandated test that will be administered between 03/22/2015 through 04/24/2015.**

For students in grades K through 12, and ACCESS for ELLs™ proficiency level of 4.5 or higher is recommended for exiting a program if multiple criteria support the decision.

**Individual *Harrison Township School District* student score reports will be mailed home in July.**

### **Background Information**

Pursuant to the federal *No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001* schools are required to annually assess the English language proficiency of their English Language Learners (ELLs) in kindergarten through grade 12 using a standards-based instrument that is common throughout the state. In response to this mandate, the federally funded WIDA (World-class Instructional Design and Assessment) Consortium currently a group of 19 states, created English language proficiency (ELP) standards that are aligned to the consortium member states' academic content standards. The assessment, ACCESS for ELLs™, was then developed based upon the WIDA ELP standards.

The WIDA *English Language Proficiency Standards for English Language Learners in Kindergarten through Grade 12* (known as the WIDA ELP Standards) are available on the WIDA website at [www.wida.us](http://www.wida.us). These standards exemplify the second language acquisition process, and they are innovative in the field because they focus primarily on *academic language* relevant for academic success in the major content areas of language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies.

Commercially available tests of English language proficiency are typically not tied directly to any state standards, and they tend to focus on social English and a generic conception of academic English as it relates to language arts. Thus, they do not meet the stringent requirements of *NCLB*, nor do they align with the standards among the consortium states. Consequently, the WIDA Consortium developed the ACCESS for ELLs™ English language proficiency test.

The ELP standards and the ACCESS for ELLs™ meet the federal requirements of assessing ELLs' proficiency levels in the domains of Speaking, Listening, Reading, and Writing. ACCESS for ELLs™ provides reliable, valid and useful information on ELL progress in learning academic English for use by schools, teachers, students and parents.

## Purposes of ACCESS for ELLs™

The ACCESS for ELLs™ English language proficiency test has six main purposes:

- to identify the English language proficiency level of students with respect to state-wide performance standards
- to identify students who may be candidates for English as a second language (ESL) and/or bilingual education services
- to assess annual English language proficiency gains using a standards-based assessment instrument
- to provide districts with information that will help them evaluate the effectiveness of their ESL/Bilingual programs and determine staffing requirements
- to provide data for meeting federal and state statutory requirements with respect to student assessment, and
- to provide information that enhances instruction and learning in programs for English language learners.

Like the PARCC, NJ NJASK and HSPA tests, **ACCESS for ELLs™ is a secure test**. Only the teacher-administered Speaking part (and the entire kindergarten form) of the test will be scored on site. The other sections of the test will be administered and returned to MetriTech, WIDA's vendor for scoring and reporting.

## Bilingual/ESL Education

