

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: West Virginia Principals

FROM: Michael J. Martirano, Ed. D.
State Superintendent of Schools

DATE: January 26, 2015

SUBJECT: WESTELL Administration



West Virginia's English Language Learner (ELL) students will be participating in an assessment of their English language skills during the **testing window of March 16 - April 24, 2015**. This assessment, the West Virginia Test of English Language Learning (WESTELL), has been developed to meet the requirements of Title I and Title III of *No Child Left Behind*. Both Title I and Title III require schools to show that their ELL students are making progress in learning English according to an annual English language proficiency assessment. The WESTELL will be administered by trained test administrators under the guidance of your county Title III Director.

I am requesting your assistance in ensuring that this assessment is administered under the best possible conditions at your school. Specifically, some areas that require your support include: providing appropriate testing sites; ensuring that students are excused from their regular schedules to complete the assessment; and communicating with faculty, staff, and parents regarding the upcoming assessment. For your convenience, I am attaching a summary of "Frequently Asked Questions" that will assist you in your communications.

The WESTELL will provide schools with detailed information about ELL students' language proficiency and help ensure that our students make progress toward achievement in all of the content areas. Your assistance in this process is both invaluable and greatly appreciated.

MJM:MI:dr

Enclosure

Frequently Asked Questions

West Virginia Test of English Language Learning (WESTELL)

What is the WESTELL?

The WESTELL is an annual statewide assessment designed to measure the progress of students in learning the English language who are not native English speakers or do have a home language other than English.

Who will be participating in the WESTELL?

According to federal and state requirements, all English Language Learner (ELL) students in grades K-12 will participate in the WESTELL. There are approximately 2,200 ELL students in West Virginia.

Why are we administering the WESTELL and what are its benefits?

The WESTELL meets the federal requirements of *No Child Left Behind* which was passed by Congress and signed into law. Those requirements include the need to show annual progress in English acquisition, involve all ELL students in English language proficiency assessments, and report a measure for comprehension.

It measures proficiency in social and academic language proficiency skills, as required by Title III of *No Child Left Behind*.

Why do students have to take the General Assessment and WESTELL? Isn't that double testing?

Each of these two assessments measures different skills in different ways. The General Assessment measures students' achievement in the content areas. The WESTELL measures ELL students' achievement in English Language proficiency.

For ELL students, this second test will measure how well they are progressing in learning English; and, since English is the language of instruction in the classroom, this test will also inform how well they are able to access the regular content. Although it will require some students to be excused from their regular classes for a longer than normal time period, please understand that the extra time and effort teachers and students give to this project now will ultimately result in a better assessment that will help a countless number of people in the future.

What if I have more questions?

Please feel free to contact the West Virginia Department of Education, International Education Coordinator, Mami Itamochi (304-558-7805 or mitamochi@k12.wv.us) or your local Title III director for further information.