



January 7, 2013

Dear Parents,

Each year the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education requires that school districts assess students' developing English skills. All Wachusett Regional School District students who are English Language Learners will be assessed over the next few weeks using ACCESS for ELLs<sup>®</sup>. The district will begin ACCESS<sup>®</sup> testing on January 10<sup>th</sup> and conclude by February 13<sup>th</sup>.

ACCESS for ELLs<sup>®</sup> (Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners) is a secure large-scale English language proficiency assessment given to all Kindergarten through 12th grade students who have been identified as English language learners (ELLs) in the state of Massachusetts. This is the first year that Massachusetts is using this test; replacing the former two assessments called MEPA (Massachusetts English Proficiency Assessment) and MELA-O (Massachusetts English Language Assessment – Oral).

The ACCESS<sup>®</sup> test includes four components: *Listening, Reading, Speaking* and *Writing* - and is done in small groups (for Listening, Reading and Writing) and individually (for Speaking) for students in grades 1 – 12. Kindergarten students take the complete assessment individually, which also includes the four components: *Listening, Reading, Speaking* and *Writing*.

ACCESS for ELLs<sup>®</sup> will be administered by our ELL teaching staff, qualified teachers, and administrators in your child's school. They have all participated in specialized training in order to administer this assessment.

Student's scores will be prepared and sent to schools and homes before the school year ends. The Parent/Guardian Report will provide information about a student's English Language Proficiency Level. The report will identify a child's language skills in both social and academic English. Social language is used to communicate for everyday purposes. Academic language is used to communicate in the content areas of language arts, mathematics, science and social studies. The Wachusett Regional School District will be able to use this information to effectively plan for your child's educational program for the 2013 to 2014 school year. If you have any questions with respect to ACCESS<sup>®</sup> testing or English Language Learner instruction, please do not hesitate to call your building principal, or the Central Office at #508-829-1670 x 247.