



The DAC Digest

Assessment & Accountability Updates

January 28, 2026

Accountability

New:

Joint Federal Notification (JFN) Preliminary Release

The preliminary release of the Joint Federal Notification (JFN) packets is planned for **late February 2026**. This release will include preliminary versions of the 2024-25 Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) accountability reports. The specific date of the release will be announced in a future DAC Digest.

More information and resources on ESSA Accountability are available on the [OEA Federal ESSA Accountability webpage](#). Questions about ESSA accountability may be directed to oeaemail@dpi.wi.gov. Questions regarding IDEA accountability may be directed to [Mai Choua Thao](#) from the Office of Continuous Improvement.

Assessment

Reminder:

District Assessment Coordinator (DAC) Confidentiality Agreement

DACs from districts administering the WIDA ACCESS who have not already completed the 2025-26 [DAC Confidentiality Agreement](#) should do so now and submit to OEA as soon as possible. The form may be completed electronically and signed electronically using Acrobat Reader. Be sure to read the terms for each assessment and **select only the boxes that apply to your district** on the ACT/PreACT Secure agreement prior to signing. The entire document needs to be submitted to OEA once signed by March 1. All other confidentiality forms (SACs, DTCs, STCs, etc.) may be completed electronically and once completed are to be retained at the school/district level.

WIDA ACCESS

Reminders:

Test Window Closing

The 2025-26 WIDA ACCESS test window ends **January 30**.



Materials

Please send materials back as soon as possible. All materials are due back to DRC by February 10. **Please make sure all secure materials are packaged in the supplied bags.** Secure materials should not be returned in the large yellow boxes used for boxed orders. Instead, please return them using the individual boxes in which the orders were originally packaged.

Under Reporting Services > Published Reports, you may access a secure material tracking spreadsheet showing what DRC has sent you and what they have received back. They update this on a regular basis as material returns come in.

UPS Labels can be ordered in the Additional Material section of the WIDA AMS. If you need additional yellow District/School labels to place on booklets you bubbled in, please reach out to [Jesse Roberts](#) with the district, school, and number of labels needed.

ACT

Reminders:

Verify Student Rosters in PearsonAccess^{next} - January 26-30

Schools now have access to their ACT student rosters in [PearsonAccess^{next}](#). Testing staff will have until **January 30** to verify student enrollment. Instructions on how to complete this task are outlined in the [January 15 DPI ACT Program](#) email and resources can also be found under [Step 2, Configuration: Verify Enrollment Counts on the Wisconsin ACT webpage](#).

IMPORTANT: ACT Accommodations - Due January 28

The last day to request ACT Accommodations and EL Supports for Test Window One is **January 28**. Resources on how to enter accommodations can be found on the [Wisconsin ACT Website, Step 3 - Accommodation](#). Please reach out to [Nikki Braconier](#) immediately if you are having difficulties with an approval.

PreACT Secure

Reminders:

PearsonAccess^{next} Opens January 26

The 2026 PreACT Secure portal is now open in [PearsonAccess^{next}](#) (PAnext). DACs received access to the portal on January 26 and will need to create accounts and grant user access for all testing staff. Instructions on how to create accounts and/or update existing accounts can be found in the [PersonAccess^{next} User Guide for the PreACT Secure](#).



Student Roster Upload

PreACT Secure student rosters are now available. Schools can begin verifying rosters and entering accommodations. Instructions and resources on how to complete these tasks can be found on the [Wisconsin PreACT Secure webpage](#) under Step 2, Configuration: Verify Enrollment Counts and Step 3, Accommodations: Set Up Accommodations and EL Supports.

DLM

New:

Field Test

Every year, Test Administrators are asked to work with students to complete field tests during the assessment window. Field testing is an essential part of the test development process. Students may see up to four field test items in science this year. We ask that you encourage your teachers to complete these field test items, so we have as many completed as possible.

Reminders:

Training

In order for a teacher to be able to administer the DLM, they need to complete the required teacher training. Teachers who are new to DLM or who did not complete training last year need to complete the new teacher training. Returning teachers who completed the training last year need to complete the returning teacher training this year. Please encourage teachers to complete the training as soon as possible.

Rosters and Users

Please make sure that all Test Administrators and students have been added and updated in Educator Portal. In order for teachers to complete the first contact surveys, students need to be rostered to the teachers. Please also confirm users are up to date and that any users that do not require access are removed. If you have any questions about rosters and users, please contact [Mike Peacy](#).

Forward Exam

New:

Read Aloud (Human Reader) Accommodation Prior Approval

The Read Aloud accommodation is only available to a student with a visual impairment who is receiving instruction in contracted braille but not yet proficient, and whose need is documented in an IEP or 504 plan. The student must meet all five criteria on the [Request for Read Aloud Accommodation Form for the Forward Exam](#). The DAC must submit the request form to the Office of Educational Accountability. DPI will review the request, and if approved, activate the process. After receiving DPI approval, the DAC must assign the accommodation in the DRC INSIGHT Portal for the student prior to printing test tickets.



Students who do not meet all criteria but require Read Aloud (a human reader) should use the Read Aloud designated support.

Stacked Translation

Schools should determine which stacked translation should be assigned to a student prior to testing by allowing the student to use the Forward Exam Practice Test with Stacked Translation with English (STE) audio and Spanish (STS) to decide which would be more beneficial during actual testing. The stacked translation assignment cannot be changed in the portal once a student has started testing. It is not possible to have both the English and Spanish audio on the same test form. Please refer to the English Learner (EL) Support Decision Tree for additional EL support assignment options. For students assigned STS, Test Administrators may opt to use the Spanish version of the Test Administration Script available on the [Forward Exam Resources webpage](#). NOTE: Translation is not permitted for the ELA exam.

Reminders:

Ed-Fi API Student Data Exchange System

New this year, DPI and DRC (Forward Exam Vendor) have set up a data exchange system, or API, to share student roster information regularly before and during the test window. DPI already uses this type of data system to receive information from all school districts in the state, through the Student Information Systems (SIS). The districts' SIS send data about student enrollment nightly to DPI WISEdata. Now that the secure information exchange is in place with DRC, districts just need to ensure that their SIS is up to date throughout the testing window. Any changes to student information and enrollment made in a district's SIS will be automatically updated in the DRC INSIGHT Portal each night. Districts will no longer need to request student transfers through the DRC Help Desk. Districts should still review data in the DRC INSIGHT Portal to ensure accuracy. If errors are found, updates should be made in the district SIS. If data are not updating in the portal, districts should fill out a [DPI helpdesk ticket](#).

Forward Exam Test Set-up and Accessibility Assignment

Beginning February 9, districts will have access to their student data and test set-up features (i.e., accessibility, registrations, and test tickets) in the DRC INSIGHT Portal. At that time, District and School Assessment Coordinators will be able to begin entering designated supports and accommodations for students. This may be done using import management or entering them on an individual student basis. As a reminder, Text-to-Speech is a Universal Support for all students and does not need to be assigned in the Portal. Instructions are available in the [DRC INSIGHT Portal Guide](#).

Forward Exam Q&A Webinar

On February 4 at 1pm, a Q&A webinar session will take place. This webinar is an opportunity for District and School Assessment Coordinators (DACs/SACs) and District and School Technology Coordinators (DTCs/STCs) to ask DPI and DRC staff questions about Forward Exam test set-up, administration, or technology that may have come up after reviewing the training videos and other resources. Participants may pose questions live or submit questions ahead of time by completing the [Forward Q&A webinar](#)

[Form](#). Please share this information with your DTCs, SACs, and STCs. The webinar will be recorded and posted on the [Forward Exam Trainings webpage](#) for those who cannot attend the live session. To join the webinar on February 4, please use this [Forward Exam Q&A webinar session Zoom link](#).

Extended Testing Hours

Forward Exam testing is accessible from 7am - 5pm, Monday through Friday. DPI is offering optional extended testing hours for the 2025-26 Forward Exam. Districts may opt to test students, in-person, on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday evenings until 8pm, and on Saturdays from 8am to 4pm during the testing window. Districts should be aware that no help desk or technical support will be available from DRC or DPI for testing during extended hours. DACs must complete and submit the [Forward Exam - Extended Testing Hours Request Form](#) for their district. The request form must be submitted a minimum of one week prior to the planned extended hour testing day. Upon approval from DPI, DRC will open the testing application for the extended hours requested by the district.

NAEP

(for selected districts and schools only)

Reminder:

The NAEP Assessment Window is Now Open

NAEP began testing in schools around Wisconsin and the country this week. Schools should complete their preassessment tasks in the [NAEP AMS](#) before their scheduled test date. Additional instructions are available for each task on the NAEP AMS. Field staff have less availability during the test window as they are in the field conducting the assessments.

See the [NAEP webpage](#) for information and resources. Please contact [Angela Dugas](#) with any questions.

Reading Readiness – Early Literacy Assessment

Reminders:

Mid-Year Testing Window Closing Jan. 30

The mid-year administration for Act 20 screening will end **January 30**. Support resources and contact information can be found on the [Wisconsin aimswebPlus Act 20 website](#) as well as the [aimswebPlus Help website](#). Please reach out to Pearson or DPI for any questions as we wrap up this screening window.

Wisconsin WISE Help Desk

- (608) 267-9115
- <https://dpi.wi.gov/wisedata/help/request>



Pearson aimswebPlus Support

- (866) 313-6194
- aimswsupport@pearson.com

Set 'Student Not Tested' (SNT) Status by February 13 for Mid-Year Act 20 Screening

Pearson has created an indicator within the aimswebPlus platform that allows users to indicate when a student has not tested on an Act 20 screener as well as the reason why (for example, absent, advanced to diagnostic, etc.). Release Notes and accompanying screenshots can be found on the [aimswebPlus Help Site](#).

Indicating an SNT reason will be required beginning with the 2025-26 mid-year administration. **Districts should plan to indicate the SNT reason for students who did not screen in the mid-year window by February 13.** A district should mark an SNT status if a student did not complete and receive a score for any of the measures required for that administration. If a student completed and received a score for some measures but not all, plan to indicate a not tested status.

WISE-Only Rostering Districts: Homeroom Indicator for Classes Beginning March 16

Districts who are rostering for Act 20 using only WISE (not multi-source) should begin using the Homeroom Indicator in the district's Student Information System to indicate which classes should be imported into aimswebPlus for Act 20 screening. Beginning March 16, Pearson will import only the classes that have the Homeroom Indicator marked, which will help reduce the number of unnecessary classes imported into the aimswebPlus platform from WISE. For assistance in how to mark the Homeroom Indicator in your Student Information System, please contact your SIS vendor.

On-Demand Replay of Key Webinars Available

As a reminder, districts can access the on-demand replay of the [Optimizing Classroom Decisions through Data-Driven Insights](#) and [Empowering Individualized Student Decisions through Data Analysis](#) webinars. As we have concluded the fall administration and are moving toward mid-year, schools may find this information especially useful.

Pearson Office Hours Available

Pearson hosts Office Hours every other Tuesday from 11:30 am – 12:30 pm CT. Please see the [Wisconsin Office Hours list of dates](#) and use this [Zoom link](#) to join each session. This offering is specific to Wisconsin, and districts may use the time to ask questions about the aimswebPlus platform, how to access materials and screen in aimswebPlus, how to access score results, viewing reports, and more.



New Resources

As new resources are posted to our website, we will include them here for your convenience for a few weeks. This is NOT an exhaustive list but meant to highlight resources with significant relevance to our upcoming test windows.

Resource	Description	Assessment
Test Administrator Training Video	Training that is required for all TAs and covers all information TAs need to prepare for and administer the Forward Exam.	Forward
DAC/SAC Training Video	Training for DACs/SACs that covers all aspects of Forward Exam administration.	Forward
Test Administration Manual	This manual provides Forward Exam TAs with information about policies and procedures, student and classroom preparation, troubleshooting, and the test administration script for TAs.	Forward
DRC INSIGHT Portal Guide	Guide to help DRC INSIGHT Portal users manage user permissions, student information, and testing responsibilities.	Forward

Important Dates to Remember

Be sure to refer to each specific assessment calendar for a complete list of key dates.

Date	Event	Program
January 26	NAEP assessment window opens	NAEP
January 26-30	Verify ACT student rosters in PANext	ACT
January 27	PreACT Secure Test Admin #1 Training Webinar	PreACT Secure
January 28	Deadline to enter accommodations in TAA for ACT	ACT
January 30	Test Window Closes	ACCESS

Date	Event	Program
January 30	Mid-year Testing Window closes	aimswebPlus
February 3	Test Administration #2 Webinar	ACT
February 4	DAC, SAC, DTC Q&A Webinar	Forward
February 9	Test set up opens - access to DRC INSIGHT Portal Test Sessions, Accessibility Features, Test Tickets	Forward
February 10	All materials due back to DRC for scoring	ACCESS
February 10	Online Technical Readiness Training	PreACT Secure
February 17	Office Hours - Testing virtual students	ACT
February 18	Data Validation Window Opens	ACCESS



This publication is available from:
 Division of Student and School Success
 Office of Educational Accountability
 (608) 267-1072

<https://dpi.wi.gov/assessment/correspondence>

January 2026 Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

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