



The DAC Digest

Assessment & Accountability Updates

March 5, 2025

Accountability

Reminder:

Preliminary Joint Federal Notifications - Now Available in SAFE

Preliminary joint federal notifications were provided to schools and districts in [SAFE, the Secure ACCESS File Exchange](#) on February 27. For more information on the JFN preliminary release, please refer to the [District Administrator communication from Deputy State Superintendent Tom McCarthy](#). For questions about ESSA, please contact [Sam Bohrod](#). For questions about IDEA, please contact [Courtney Reed Jenkins](#). You can also [reserve a time slot for a JFN technical assistance call](#).

Assessment

New:

Writing Rich Classrooms: Unit Plans

The [Greater Madison Writing Project](#) (GMWP), in partnership with the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) and Wisconsin educators, has developed instructional resources to support the sustainability of writing-rich classrooms. These resources are aligned with the Wisconsin Academic Standards for English Language Arts (ELA) Overarching Statement for Writing, which states that students, “Write routinely for a range of culturally sustaining and rhetorically authentic tasks, purposes, and audiences over extended time frames (time for inquiry, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames.” ([Wisconsin Standards for ELA, 2020](#).)

The project has produced over 20 units for grades 3–8, emphasizing regular, low-stakes, high-impact writing practices across all writing genres (informative, narrative, and opinion/argumentative).

These instructional units include:

- Teacher Guides: Comprehensive strategies for identifying, unpacking, and teaching standards-aligned, rhetorically authentic effective writing prompts.
- Slide Decks: Ready-to-use visual materials for classroom instruction.
- Writing Prompts: Designed to mirror Forward Exam short-write prompts.
- Examples of Student Writing: Several units are accompanied by student writing that has been assessed using forward short-write rubrics.



These resources are available on the [English Language Arts in Wisconsin](#) website. Additional resources will be added every two weeks and educators will also have access to free virtual, asynchronous professional learning modules soon.

Reminder:

District Assessment Coordinator (DAC) Confidentiality Agreement

All DACs who have not yet submitted the 2024-25 District Assessment Coordinator (DAC) Confidentiality Agreement should do so by **March 6**. The form may be completed and signed electronically using Acrobat Reader. Be sure to select the appropriate options on the ACT/PreAct Secure agreement prior to signing. The entire seven-page document needs to be submitted to OEA once signed. All other confidentiality forms (SACs, DTCs, STCs, etc.) remain individual forms, may be completed electronically, and once completed are to be retained at the school/district level.

ACCESS for ELLs

See the [ACCESS for ELLs webpage](#) for calendar dates, information, and resources.

ACT

New:

Test Window 1 Dates

ACT testing is quickly approaching. Below are the test administration dates for Window 1.

- March 11: Paper Standard Administration
- March 11-14, 17-21: Paper Administration for Accommodations
- March 11-14, 17-21: Online Testing (Standard and Online Accommodations)

Note: The [2025 ACT Schedule of Events](#) lists all tasks and deadlines for each test window and type of administration (paper/online). It is important that all schools review the Schedule of Events prior to testing to ensure all tasks and deadlines are met.

Test Administration Reminders

Below are important ACT administration reminders. Please forward this information on to all applicable testing staff.

- Test Window 1 begins March 11. All testing staff must be trained prior to administration and a staff briefing session must be held the day of testing.
- Test books and approved accommodation materials are specific to each test date/window. You must test accommodated students with approved accommodated materials sent by ACT. Each type of administration (paper, online, timing codes) requires its own room and failure to test separately will result in a misadministration.



- Schools testing online can prepare online test sessions beginning March 7. DPI strongly encourages running a mock administration and preparing test sessions early.

Accommodations: Pre-Recorded Audio Hyperlinks (paper testing)

ACT began emailing Test Window 1 pre-recorded audio hyperlinks and instructions to Test Coordinators on Monday, March 3. If you do not receive an email by Thursday, March 6, please reach out to ACT Accommodations at (800) 553-6244, ext. 1788. Please see [ACT's Pre-Recorded Audio Guidelines](#) for further information.

Reminders:

Online Testing Readiness

Districts testing online during Test Window 1 should have begun online site readiness tasks. Please review the [ACT Updates email sent on February 24](#) for **Technical Tips**. All online site readiness resources are on the [Wisconsin ACT Website, Step 2 - Configuration, Complete Site Readiness for Online Testing](#).

Accommodations - Qualified Exception to the Deadline

The final day to submit a Qualified Exception to the Deadline (late consideration) for accommodations is **March 7**. A [Qualified Exception to the Deadline Form](#) must be completed and submitted with all requests. Resources on how to enter accommodations can be found on the [Wisconsin ACT Website, Step 3 - Accommodation webpage](#).

PreACT Secure

New:

Test Window

The PreACT Secure testing window begins March 17 and runs through April 25. Please make sure you download and reference the [2025 PreACT Schedule of Events](#) for all assessment tasks and deadlines.

Preparing Testing Staff - Testing Staff Training Session

DACs or Test Coordinators are required to host a training session for all testing staff prior to testing. This training is separate from the briefing session on test day. The Staff Training section of [PreACT Secure Test Coordinator Information Manual](#) (p. 20) outlines information that should be included in your training. DPI also encourages staff to view the recordings of our PreACT Secure training webinars and Office Hours which can be found on the [DPI PreACT Secure Training webpage](#).

Reminder:

Online Testing Readiness

Districts should be completing online site readiness tasks for PreACT Secure. Technical readiness resources are on the [Wisconsin PreACT Secure Website, Step 2 - Complete Site Readiness](#). Please review the [ACT Updates email sent on February 24](#) for **Technical Tips**.



DLM

New:

Data Validation

Districts should be reviewing their data to make sure that students have been entered into the Educator Portal correctly. A student's enrollment record affects many parts of Educator Portal including test assignment, end of the year score reports and aggregate reports. Please verify the following information for accuracy, if you have any questions, please contact [Mike Peacy](#):

1. Student state identifier
2. Student names spelled correctly
3. Students are enrolled in correct grade
4. Duplicate enrollments are identified and corrected
5. Students are enrolled in correct district and school
6. Students are rostered to the correct subjects for their grade

Reminders:

Data Extracts

Please monitor the data extracts in Educator Portal to ensure that students and teachers are ready for the test window to open. Under “reports” in Educator Portal extracts to monitor training, rosters and First Contact Survey completion can all be downloaded and monitored in real time.

First Contact Surveys

First Contact Surveys are an important part of the test preparation process and determine the linkage level at which the student's assessment will begin.

Forward Exam

New:

Important - Chromebook OS Update

During ACCESS testing, there was an intermittent text rendering issue that some Chromebook devices experienced when testing in DRC INSIGHT, where letters appeared spaced out or pushed together (overlapping), and a portion of some tables and graphics extended beyond the visible screen. This text spacing issue has been resolved with ChromeOS Version 133.

DRC recommends that **ChromeOS devices should be updated to ChromeOS Version 133** to avoid this issue during Wisconsin Forward testing. If sites choose not to update Chromebook devices to ChromeOS Version 133 for any reason, they should be aware of the following troubleshooting steps. If a student experiences text spacing issues while testing, the test administrator (TA) should immediately pause

testing for the student and follow the steps on the [Chromebook Rendering Issues and Troubleshooting Steps Tech Bulletin](#). Once resolved, the student may resume testing.

iPad Update

In DRC INSIGHT, when a test is launched on an iPad device, students may see a "Confirm App Self-Lock" notification appear on top of the welcome/verification page. Students must select 'Yes' in order to continue to the welcome/verification page. If the student selects 'No', DRC INSIGHT will produce an error message that says "AAC Assessment Failed". To resolve this error, the device needs to be rebooted and upon launching the test again in DRC INSIGHT, the student must select 'Yes' when prompted. This applies to both the Practice Test and Forward Exam.

Technology System Requirements

DACs and DTCs should review the hardware and operating system requirements documentation for the 2024-25 administration to ensure student devices meet the minimum requirements for testing. Be sure to review the COS Service Device configurations and required bandwidth. Updated 2025 technology system requirements (updated in February) are available on the [Forward Exam Technology Requirements webpage](#).

Short-Write Rubrics and Resources

The grade-level rubrics and additional resources for the short-write tasks are available on the [Forward Exam Resources webpage](#) under the section Forward Exam Question Types. Additional resources are described above in the section "Writing Rich Classrooms: Unit Plans".

Reminders:

2025 Forward Exam Required Trainings

With the test window quickly approaching, be sure staff view required training materials.

- All Test Administrators (TAs) are required to view the DPI provided Forward Exam Test Administrator Training video available on the [Forward Exam Trainings webpage](#).
- District Technology Coordinators (DTCs) should refer to the DTC training videos, available on the [Forward Exam Technology Resources and Requirements webpage](#), prior to the setup of testing devices.
- District and School Assistant Coordinators (DAC/SAC) are required to view one of the DAC/SAC training videos available on the [Forward Exam Trainings webpage](#).

Technology Set-up and Device Readiness

A Site Technology Readiness Checklist is available on the [Technology Resource and Requirements webpage](#). Technology Coordinators should also verify:

- Device resolution is 1024 x 768 or better (see testing device requirements in the [System Requirements](#)) and that the zoom is 100% to allow test questions to render correctly.
- "Allow App to Manage Power" is turned off (see [Technology User Guide Volume III](#), p. 42, Step 20) to prevent Chromebooks from going to "sleep" during testing.



- The necessary URLs are allowed on firewalls and content filters.
- The DRC INSIGHT software is installed on testing devices and is up to date. If local firewalls are used on COS Service Devices and/or testing devices, make sure they do not restrict testing traffic.
- The right test content is downloaded and up to date using COS Content Management.
- A system readiness check is performed on student devices prior to testing.
- The onscreen keyboard is disabled for the short write tasks.
- The keyboard is set to “US Keyboard”.
- All apps running in the background are stopped or temporarily disabled prior to testing ([DRC Technology User Guide Volume I](#) p. 22). These apps include but are not limited to:
 - Automatic Operating System Updates
 - Intelligent personal assistant (IPA) software (e.g., Siri, Cortana)
 - AI features and chatbots (e.g., Microsoft Copilot, Apple Intelligence, Google Gemini, ChatGPT)
 - Collaboration tools (e.g., Zoom, MS Teams, Google Chat, Google Meet)
 - Other Background Processes – (e.g., virtual keyboards, grammar tools (e.g., Grammarly), classroom monitoring tools)
 - Screen capture software
- Ensure sufficient COS Service Device capacity for the number of concurrent testers by reviewing [System Requirements](#) (System requirements p. 3, example configurations p. 4). Also review the [Tech Bulletin: Maximizing COS-SD Performance for Wisconsin Forward Testing](#). As a reminder, there are increased Service Device requirements as a result of Text-to-Speech (TTS) being available as a universal support, which began with the spring 2024 administration. Remember that the System Readiness Check does not validate sufficient COS-SD capacity because it does not know how many concurrent testers there will be. This is something that must be verified separately.

Testing Checklists

The Prior to Testing Checklist is currently available on the [Forward Exam Resources webpage](#). This is not a comprehensive list to get ready for testing, only a quick double check prior to testing to make sure you are on track. Comprehensive checklists for District/School Assessment Coordinators and Test Administrators are available on the [Forward Exam Resources webpage](#).

NAEP and International Assessments

(for schools selected to participate in 2024-25 assessments only)

New:**Updates for Each NAEP Assessment**

Each of the NAEP assessments this year have different timelines and tasks. DACs can review emails from [Angela Dugas](#) or look at the NAEP Assessment Management System ([NAEP AMS](#)) to confirm which of their schools are in each assessment program.

Here's a summary of where we are in each of the assessment programs (**new updates in bold**):

NAEP Assessment	Test Window	Task Summary
NAEP Long-Term Trend (LTT) age 9	January 6 - March 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All testing in Wisconsin schools has concluded. Thank you to the participating schools!
NAEP Field Test (grades 4, 8, and 12)	January 27 - March 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All testing in Wisconsin schools has concluded. Thank you to the participating schools!
Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) (age 15)	March 17 - May 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The MyPISA website is down and we are waiting for information about the status of the PISA program. Please stay tuned for updates. In the meantime, please direct questions to PISAHELP@westat.com.

See the [NAEP webpage](#) for information and resources. Contact [Angela Dugas](#) with any questions. For help with the [NAEP AMS](#), contact the NAEP Help Desk at NAEPHelp@westat.com or (800) 283-6237.

Reading Readiness – Early Literacy Assessment

New:**Spring Administration Begins in Seven School Days**

The spring administration begins March 16. As we approach the start of the administration, we'd like to share a few support resources available.

- [Wisconsin aimswebPlus website](#): This site provides answers to many frequently asked questions for training, data management, administration, accessibility, and more.
- Pearson Customer Support: Pearson customer support is available via online request, email, and phone.
- Submit a help request online using the [Contact Us form](#) on the Pearson Assessment website.

- Call Customer Support (Monday – Friday, 6am to 6pm CT) at (866) 313-6194. Select option 1 for general support, or option 2 for technical support.
- Email Customer Support at aimswsupport@pearson.com.

Act 20 Spring Braille Materials Available to Order

Districts are now able to order accommodated braille materials for the spring administration. Materials can be ordered using the [Act 20 2024-2025 Braille Survey form](#). At this time, we ask that districts only request materials for registered students that utilize braille in the classroom. Materials should be ordered based on a current need, not an estimate of anticipated future need. If spring materials were previously ordered and Pearson has already confirmed your spring order via email, there is no need to re-submit that order unless additional materials are needed.

Accommodations and Modifications Guidance Document Posted

A new document, [aimswPlus Best Practices for Accommodations and Modifications for Act 20 Screening Measures](#), has been posted to the aimswPlus Help site. This document can also be accessed in the Help site by following the click path: Additional Research and State Resources > Wisconsin Act 20 Reading Screener Files > Administration and Scoring Guides. The purpose of this document is to discuss the appropriate use of accommodations and modifications as well as provide accommodations guidance by measure.

Reminders:

March Customer Forum

The March Customer Forum will be held on March 12. During the Customer Forum, you can engage with other users and the aimswPlus team for learning, feedback opportunities, and updates. Recordings and certificates of attendance are posted in Help within aimswPlus after each session. Register using the [aimswPlus Customer Forum form](#) to attend.

2025-26 School Year aimswPlus Administration Dates

The 2025-26 administration dates for the Act 20 Early Literacy Screener are listed below.

- Fall: August 1 - October 24, 2025
- Mid-year: December 1, 2025 - January 30, 2026
- Spring: March 16 - May 8, 2026

Beginning in 2025, the fall administration will now be a required administration for grades 4K – 3. The fall screener should be administered no more than 45 calendar days after the beginning of the district's school year. The spring screener should be administered on or before the 45th day prior to the last day of school for the year.

Assessment Professional Learning and Coaching Series

Reminder:

The Assessment Professional Learning Series is going virtual!

The Assessment Professional Learning Series is now being offered virtually to offer more opportunities for educators, schools and districts to take advantage of this [FREE virtual learning](#). These sessions offer dedicated time for synchronous virtual professional learning with educators around the state provided by CESA Assessment Specialists. Participants will also have access to resources for asynchronous learning between sessions. In addition to this learning, in-district coaching support is also available within each local CESA. Please register by April 30.

Topics and dates:

- Performance Based Assessments: March 6, March 13, April 10 and April 24; 3:30-5pm
- Formative Assessment Practices: April 8, April 15, April 29 and May 6; 3:30-5:30 pm
- Classroom End of Unit Assessments and Data Use: April 30, May 14 and May 28; 3-5pm
- Educator Created Interim Assessments: June 12 and June 17; 8am-12pm

Contact [Renee Jadin-Rice](#) for more information.

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
System Requirements	Updated System Requirements.	Forward
Educator Involvement Application	Educators may apply for Alignment Study and/or New Item Review.	Forward

Important Dates to Remember

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

Date	Event	Program
March 3	Access to DRC INSIGHT Portal test sessions, student information, and ability to assign individual student accessibility features	Forward

Date	Event	Program
March 7	NAEP Field Test (grades 4, 8, 12) assessment window closes <i>(for selected schools only)</i>	NAEP
March 11	ACT Test Window 1: Paper standard testing date	ACT
March 11-14, 17-21	ACT Test Window 1: Administer online and accommodated testing (paper and online)	ACT
March 12	Return all standard paper testing materials from March 11 test administration	ACT
March 14	NAEP Long-Term Trend age 9 assessment window closes <i>(for selected schools only)</i>	NAEP
March 17	Forward, DLM, and PreACT Secure test windows begins	WSAS
March 17 – May 9	PISA Test Window <i>(for selected schools only)</i>	NAEP
March 24	Return all paper accommodated test materials for Test Window 1	ACT



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

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

March 2025 Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

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