

ASSESSMENT & ACCOUNTABILITY NEWSLETTER

Issue 70, January 2025



Updates...

Note from the Director



Happy new year! We hope you had a wonderful winter break and holiday season.

The 2024-25 assessments have begun with the opening of the ACCESS for ELLs testing window on December 2. Test windows for the ACT, Forward Exam, DLM, and PreACT Secure assessments begin in March. Our staff have been busy finalizing and releasing the 2025 trainings and manuals on the [Assessment webpages](#). Key assessment dates and deadlines are posted on the calendar webpages of each assessment.

We would like to encourage you to look into the [Forward Exam Educator Involvement Opportunities](#). These events are important steps in the development of the Forward Exam and wonderful professional development experiences for educators.

If you have not already done so, please submit your district's annual [District Assessment Coordinator \(DAC\) Confidentiality Agreement form](#) to OEA as soon as possible. This form is required by March 1.

Thank you for all you do to support and inspire the students of Wisconsin. We look forward to collaborating with you throughout the year.

Viji Somasundaram

Director, Office of Educational Accountability

Calendar...

Important Dates

2025	
Date	Event
January 27	PreACT - PearsonAccess ^{next} opens
January 27	PreACT - Schools begin verifying rosters and entering student accommodations
January 27-31	ACT - Schools verify ACT rosters
January 27 - February 28	DLM - Data validation and revision period
January 27- March 7	NAEP - Field Test assessment window, grades 4, 8, and 12 (for selected schools only)
January 29	NAEP - 2024 Results released
January 29-31	ACT - Schools verify enrollment rosters in PANext
January 31	Early Literacy - Mid-year Administration window closes
January 31	ACCESS - Test window closes
February 5	Forward - DAC, SAC, and DTC Q&A webinar
February 10-21	Forward - Optional add accessibility features
February 11	ACCESS - Deadline to ship materials back to DRC
February 19-27	ACCESS - Pre-reporting data validation
February 28	ACT - Last day to order additional testing materials for Test Window 1
March 3	Forward - Access to DRC INSIGHT Portal test sessions, student information, and accessibility features
March 11	ACT - Test window 1 (Paper Administration)
March 11-21	ACT - Test window 1 for students testing with accommodations (Paper Administration)
March 11-21	ACT - Test window 1 (Online Administration and Online Accommodations)
March 16	NAEP - Long-Term Trend age 9 assessment window closes (for selected schools only)
March 16	Early Literacy - Spring Administration test window opens for grades 4K-3.
March 17 - April 25	PreACT Secure - Online Administration, grades 9-10
March 17 - April 25	Forward - Test window for ELA and Mathematics grades 3-8, Science grades 4 and 8, and Social Studies grades 4, 8, and 10
March 17 - April 25	DLM - Test window for ELA and Mathematics grades 3-11, Science grades 4 and 8-11, and Social Studies grades 4, 8, and 10
March 17 - May 23	NAEP - Long-Term Trend age 17 assessment window (for selected schools only)

Dates may be subject to change. Check the Assessment calendar webpages for the most current dates throughout the year.

For Additional ACT test windows see the [ACT Calendar webpage](#).

Forward Exam Update



The 2025 Forward Exam test window will open on March 17 and close on April 25. Schools are responsible for notifying families of upcoming assessments in a format that is accessible to them (i.e., meets

their language or accommodation needs). Family notification resources, including a template letter and Forward Exam informational brochure, are available on the [Forward Exam Resources webpage](#).

Training resources for Technology Coordinators, as well as the DRC INSIGHT System Requirements are now available on the [Forward Exam Technology Resources and Requirements webpage](#).

The required Forward Exam training videos, including the District and School Assessment Coordinator (DAC/SAC) Training and the Test Administrator Training (TA), are available on the [Forward Exam Training webpage](#). Schools should ensure all Test Administrators are familiar with the [Test Administration Manual](#) and [Accessibility Guide](#) prior to testing.

All students should be given the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the test including the different question types, online tools, and the testing environment by practicing with the Forward Exam Practice test available on the [Forward Exam Practice Test webpage](#). Student preparation should include the use of the Text-to-Speech (TTS) universal support (now available to ALL students to use if they choose) and any assigned accessibility features (e.g., Spanish Stacked Translation, Video Sign Language). Educators should familiarize themselves with how to use the accessibility features for the Forward Exam by viewing the accessibility related [Administrator Tutorials](#).

Questions regarding the Forward Exam may be directed to [Alison O'Hara](#) or [Jennifer Teasdale](#).



Forward Exam Educator Involvement Opportunities

DPI is currently recruiting a diverse group of educators from all over Wisconsin (including English learner and special education teachers) to participate in two separate Forward Exam Educator Involvement Opportunities. These events are important steps in the development of the Forward Exam. This is a great opportunity to be a part of Forward Exam development, have detailed input on the exam, and take knowledge back to your district about the processes.

- **Alignment Study** - Participants will work alongside national subject-area experts to ensure the alignment of the 2024 Forward Exam for English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics to the Wisconsin Academic Standards using the Webb Alignment Model. The primary role of each participant is to review the items (questions) on the ELA and mathematics exams and judge the depth-of-knowledge (DOK) level of each item and to identify the standard to which each item is aligned.
- **New Item Review** - Participants will review new ELA, mathematics, science, and social studies test questions created for the exam for content, grade level appropriateness, alignment to correct standard, cultural inclusivity, and bias/sensitivity issues prior to placement on the exam.

More information about each opportunity, including how to apply, is available on the [Forward Exam Educators Involvement webpage](#).

The ACT with writing Update

ACT[®] OEA would like to thank all educators who participated in the 2024 ACT Standard Setting Workshop and Performance Level Descriptor Workshop this past summer and fall. The work of educators at these events is incredibly valuable and we appreciate the time, commitment and expertise they provided to OEA and the Wisconsin ACT assessment.

The first ACT test administration window will begin on March 11. Districts are able to choose the delivery mode of the ACT (paper or online) and should begin preparing their testing sites accordingly. 2025 test administration and technical resources have been posted to the [Wisconsin ACT website](#). School and district testing staff should familiarize themselves with the website and pay close attention to the testing tasks and deadlines outlined in the Schedule of Events. 2025 training opportunities will continue through March. All upcoming trainings and recordings of past trainings are posted to the [ACT Training webpage](#).

Free ACT test preparation resources are available for all students on the [ACT Practice Test and Sample Items webpage](#). Questions about The ACT may be directed to [Nikki Braconier](#).

PreACT Secure Update

PreACT Secure[®] The test window for the PreACT Secure is March 17 - April 25. The 2025 PreACT Secure Schedule of Events (SOE), administrative and technical resources have been posted on the [Wisconsin PreACT Secure website](#). Beginning January 27, testing staff will be able to access the PreACT Secure Portal (PearsonAccess^{next} – “PANext”) to update testing staff and verify addresses. Please refer to the SOE for a complete list of all upcoming testing tasks and deadlines.

ACT and DPI will host several webinar trainings for the PreACT Secure 2025 administration. Information about these trainings is available on the

[PreACT Secure Training webpage](#). All trainings and office hours will be recorded and available on demand.

PreACT Secure test preparation resources are available for all students on the [PreACT Secure Practice Test and Sample Items webpage](#). Questions about the PreACT Secure may be directed to [Nikki Braconier](#).



Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) Update



The Dynamic Learning Maps test window is open March 17 through April 25. At this time, Test Administrators

should begin planning for the assessment administration by completing their required annual training through Educator Portal and completing their test security agreements. Districts should ensure that students are uploaded and rostered, and teachers’ user accounts are up to date.

Districts are strongly encouraged to complete the following tasks by February 23:

- Enrollment, user, and roster uploads for participation in the spring DLM assessment.
- Required DLM test administration and security training.
- First contact and Personal Needs and Preferences (PNP) Profile for participation in the spring DLM assessment.

For a detailed timeline and key dates refer to the [DLM Calendar webpage](#). More information about DLM is available on the [DLM webpage](#). Questions regarding DLM may be directed to [Mike Peacy](#).

ACCESS for ELLs® Update



2023-24 saw the first administration of the new test, a standard setting was held in

July of 2024, and the new reports based on the new standards and cut scores were released this past September.

In late December, we have an approved our initial Exit criteria for the Alternate ACCESS. Students scoring a five on the Overall Composite should be exited from English Learner (EL) status, starting this school year, based on results from the 2023-24 administration.

This summer, DPI will look at two years of data from the Alternate ACCESS to determine if we can support exiting below a five, potentially with a specially designed Multiple Indicator Protocol (MIP) for this population of students.

This summer, WIDA will also release an Alternate English Language Proficiency (ELP) screener, a missing component for equitable EL identification of all students.

As a reminder, students are only eligible to take alternate assessments (content and ELP) if they are identified as a [student with the most significant cognitive disabilities](#), and this is indicated in their Individual Education Plan (IEP).

Questions about the Alternate ACCESS or the ACCESS for ELLs may be directed to [Jesse Roberts](#).



Reading Readiness – Early Literacy Assessment Update



The mid-year administration test window will come to a close on January 31. We would like to thank all of the district and school staff for their work to understand the requirements of ACT 20 and administer this new assessment.

The spring administration test window will open on March 16. This will be the **first required administration for 4K students**. All students enrolled in 4K at a district or independent charter school – whether in a district 4K or a community approach 4K – must complete an early literacy screening during the spring administration. Per Wisconsin statute, spring administration must be completed on or before the 45th day prior to the last day of school. Diagnostic assessment and personal reading plans are not required in 4K. Information about setup, training, and test materials is available on the [aimswebPlus-Wisconsin website](#).

During fall, mid-year, and spring administrations of the early literacy screening, schools must notify parents/caregivers about their child's screening performance within 15 days of administering the screener. The communication must include the following and be provided in the parents'/caregivers' preferred language:

- The student's score and percentile rank score (if available) on the Reading Readiness assessment.
- The student's score in each early literacy skill category assessed by the reading screener.
- The definition of "at-risk" and the score on the Reading Readiness assessment that would indicate that a student is at-risk.
- A plain language description of the literacy skills the reading screener is designed to measure.

Letter templates, including translations, are available on the [ACT 20 Resources webpage](#).

In 5K through grade 3, [early literacy diagnostic assessment](#) is required for any student scoring below the 25th percentile on aimswebPlus. Diagnostic assessment is meant to inform the [personal reading plan](#).

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Reading Readiness – Early Literacy Assessment Update

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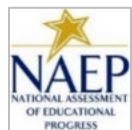
- In 5K, a student is at-risk if their composite score (comprised of letter naming fluency and letter word sounds fluency) is below the 25th percentile.
- In grade 1, a student is at-risk if their composite score (comprised of oral reading fluency) is below the 25th percentile.
- In grades 1 and 2, a student is at-risk if their oral reading fluency score is below the 25th percentile.

Questions about the assessment, setup and training may be directed to [Pearson Customer Service](#).

Questions about the early literacy assessment and ACT 20 may be directed to early.reading@dpi.wi.gov.



NAEP Update



NAEP 2025 testing is going well in Wisconsin. Testing is completed for the Long-Term Trend age 13 assessments, and we are currently in the Long-Term Trend age 9 test window. The NAEP Field Tests for grade 4, 8, and 12 opened yesterday. There will be one more test window this school year for the Long-Term Trend age 17 starting in March.

NAEP 2024 results for the nation, all states, and participating large urban districts will be released on January 29. Keep an eye on [The Nation's Report Card](#) for more information. Questions related to NAEP may be directed to [Angela Dugas](#).

State Accountability Updates



The final 2023-24 school and district report cards were released publicly on November 19. Information regarding the 2023-24 report card release is available in the [DPI news release webpage](#). As a reminder, all schools and districts are required to share their most recent report cards with parents. Further details can be found on the [Notification Requirements webpage](#). Questions about report cards may be directed to reportcardhelp@dpi.wi.gov.

The Target Group Preview Dashboard is available for 2024-25, showing the likelihood of students appearing in the target group of the 2024-25 report cards, based on 2024 assessment results. Please note that this dashboard is a “forward facing” tool used to inform continuous improvement efforts that is only available to school, district, and CESA staff with access to [WISEdash for Districts](#).

The Target Group Outcomes priority area of the report cards is designed to help schools see their own “gaps” between students scoring in the lowest quartile and the rest of their student body. To support schools and districts in identifying and serving their lowest-performing students, students who are *likely* to be in the target group in future report cards at a district- and school-level are displayed securely on WISEdash for Districts. For more information, please see the [WISEdash for Districts - Target Group Preview Dashboard webpage](#).

Federal Accountability Updates



The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) to identify schools and student groups for support and improvement. The ESSA and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) reports will be available in late February and April as part of the Joint Federal Notification (JFN) packet. You can find ESSA accountability resources, including the new [Guide to ESSA Accountability](#) on the [Federal ESSA Accountability page](#).

ESSA accountability questions may be directed to oeamail@dpi.wi.gov. For questions regarding IDEA accountability, contact the [Special Education team](#).



FAQ...

Reminder – Each assessment has an FAQ webpage with scenarios/issues related to that specific assessment: [ACCESS for ELLs FAQ](#), [ACT FAQ](#), [DLM FAQ](#), [Forward Exam FAQ](#), [Pre ACT Secure FAQ](#).

Q. Is there a sample letter available to send home to parents about upcoming assessments?

Yes, there is a sample letter available about upcoming assessments available on the [DAC Resources webpage](#). There is also an informational brochure for families about each assessment available under each assessment's resource page. These resources are available in English, Hmong, and Spanish.

Q. Are headphones required for the Forward Exam?

Yes, headphones are required for all content areas of the Forward Exam because Text-to-Speech is now a Universal Tool all students have access to.

Q. Where can I find the technology requirements for each assessment?

Each assessment has a technology requirements webpage in its submenu that is specific to that assessment. More information about each specific assessment's technology requirements and resources may be found on those pages.

Q. When can a school schedule make-up testing for the ACT?

Schools that administer the ACT on paper must schedule make-up students for one of the next available paper testing dates in any remaining test window. Paper ACT testing can only be administered the first Tuesday of each test window. Schools may also use online testing in place of paper for make-ups. This allows a school more flexibility for make-ups, as students can be tested on any online testing date in any window.

Q. How do I prepare for online testing for the ACT and PreACT Secure?

It is important that every school have a Technical Coordinator assigned to assist with online site readiness. The Technical Coordinator and Test Coordinator should review all of the technical requirements and resources for each assessment to ensure their school equipment and technology meet all specifications and a mock administration must be performed.

Q. Where do I find testing resources for the ACT and PreACT Secure?

Resources can be found on the [Wisconsin ACT website](#) under each assessment page.



We hope you find this newsletter and its contents beneficial. Questions may be directed to the [Office of Educational Accountability](#).

Jill K. Underly, PhD., State Superintendent



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