

ASSESSMENT & ACCOUNTABILITY NEWSLETTER

Issue 71, March 2025



Updates...

Note from the Director



Thank you for the successful administration of the 2024-25 ACCESS for ELLs assessment.

The first ACT window opened on March 11, and the Forward Exam, DLM, and PreACT Secure test windows are beginning next week. I appreciate the work the district and school staff are doing to prepare their educators and students for the 2025 spring test administration. Student and staff training and preparation resources are available on the Assessment webpage for each assessment.

Districts and schools should plan to schedule the majority of their testing early in the window, which will allow time for make-up sessions. Taking advantage of the test window in this manner will allow schools to meet their participation goals, ensuring all students enrolled in tested grades take part in statewide assessments. I would also like to remind districts to work with their virtual schools to ensure all students are able to participate.

We appreciate the educators' involvement in the Forward Exam Alignment Study early this month. The Office of Educational Accountability (OEA) is continuing to recruit Wisconsin educators for the upcoming [Forward Exam New Item Review](#). This is an important step in the development of the assessment and meaningful professional development for educators.

[OEA staff](#) are ready and available to assist with assessment and accountability matters and look forward to working with schools throughout the spring.

Viji Somasundaram

Director, Office of Educational Accountability

Calendar...

Important Dates

2025	
Date	Event
March 3 - April 25	Forward - District clean-up of individual student demographic data and assignment of individual student supports and accommodations in the DRC INSIGHT Portal
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 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 31- April 25	Forward - Window for districts to request to opt-out of receipt of paper Individual Student Reports (ISRs)
March 31 - May 23	PISA Test window (for selected schools only)
April 28	ACCESS - Electronic reports and data downloads available
May 8	ACCESS - Post-Reporting Data Validation Window Opens
May 8	ACCESS - Paper reports delivered to districts
May 22	ACCESS - Post-Reporting Data Validation Window Closes
May 27	Forward - ISRs and Summary Data available in the DRC INSIGHT Portal

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



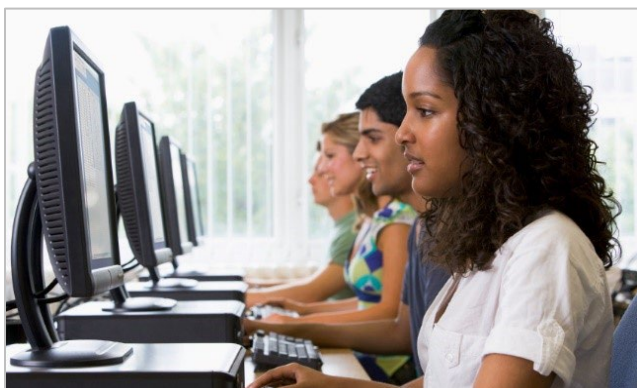
The 2025 Forward Exam test window will open on March 17 and close on April 25. Schools are responsible for notifying families of upcoming assessments in a format that is accessible to them (i.e., meets their language or accommodation needs). Family notification resources, including a template letter and Forward Exam informational brochure, are available on the [Forward Exam Resources webpage](#).

Technology Coordinators should review the most recent [DAC Digest](#) to ensure they are aware of all Forward Exam technology updates.

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) and any assigned accessibility features.

To provide additional scheduling flexibility, schools may again utilize extended testing hours upon request on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday until 8pm and Saturday from 8am to 4pm. More information on extended testing hours is available on the [Assessment Forms webpage](#). Schools interested in extended testing hours should contact their DAC.

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



Forward Exam Educator Involvement Opportunity

DPI is currently recruiting a group of Wisconsin educators (including English learner and special education teachers) to participate in a Forward Exam New Item Review. This important step in the development of the Forward Exam is a great opportunity to be a part of test development, have detailed input on the exam, and take knowledge back to your district about the processes.

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

The ACT with writing Update



March 11 was the first administration date of the three ACT test windows for grade 11 students. Districts may administer the ACT on paper or online for students who did not test on the initial test date. Additional 2025 ACT assessment testing windows are available on the [ACT Calendar webpage](#).

Schools should continue to manage their student roster within [PearsonAccess^{Next}](#), order additional testing materials, and complete all tasks for online testing site readiness. Refer to the [ACT Schedule of Events](#) for a list of assessment tasks and deadlines.

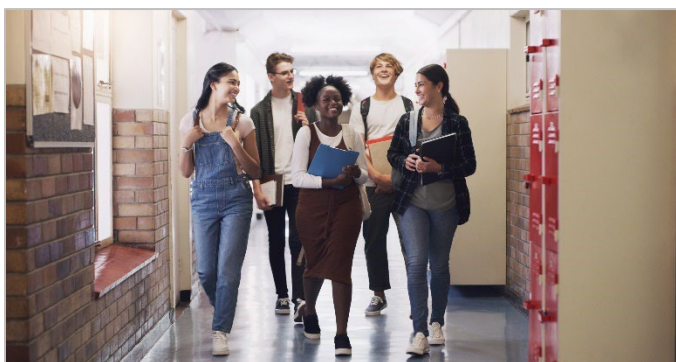
ACT shipped [Taking the ACT test booklets](#) and individualized copies of [MyACT Non-Test Instructions](#) for each student. Schools should distribute these materials and have students complete their MyACT account registration within

(continued on page 3)

The ACT with writing Update (continued from page 2)

two days of testing. MyACT is ACT's online registration site that allows students to manage their ACT scores, demographic information, high school resume, and college plans.

Free ACT practice tests can be found within students' MyACT accounts once registered. Additional free practice tests and resources are available on the [ACT Practice Tests and Sample Items webpage](#). Questions about the ACT may be directed to [Nikki Braconier](#).



PreACT Secure Update



The PreACT Secure test window for grades 9 and 10 is March 17 through April 25.

Schools should be aware of the technology requirements and perform all online testing site readiness tasks prior to testing. Site readiness resources are located on the [Wisconsin PreACT Secure webpage](#). Please refer to the [PreACT Secure Schedule of Events](#) for a list of assessment tasks and deadlines.

Trainings for the PreACT Secure assessment have begun and will continue throughout the month of March. All training opportunities and recordings are available on the [PreACT Secure Trainings webpage](#).

A free PreACT Secure practice test can be found on the [PreACT Secure Practice Tests webpage](#). Questions about the PreACT Secure may be directed to [Nikki Braconier](#).

Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) Update



The DLM test window is March 17 through April 25. DPI recommends that

preparation for DLM testing be completed as soon as possible. Districts and schools should confirm they are prepared for testing by ensuring:

- portal data is verified,
- student rostering is finished,
- First Contact Surveys are submitted and
- educators have completed training.

Test Administration Training Modules are required for all educators who will be administering the DLM to students. All training requirements must be completed before the Test Administrator will have access to the student's Kite login information to be able to administer the DLM.

First Contact Surveys are filled out by educators who are most familiar with the students, and it is the educator's responsibility to ensure student First Contact Surveys are completed and accurate. The surveys are used to collect background information including communication methods, assistive technology devices, motor and sensory impairments, and academic performance for students eligible to participate in DLM assessments. The DLM is a computer-delivered assessment that adapts to the appropriate academic level for the students, so the surveys are a crucial part of the assessment set up processes; it allows the system to correctly place the student at the correct linkage level for each Essential Element. More information is available in the Educators Portal User Guide.

District staff have the opportunity to participate in DLM educator involvement events including yearly item writing, item review, and scoring of student writing samples. Individuals who are interested in taking part in DLM events are encouraged to create a profile on the [DLM website](#).

More information about DLM is available on the [DLM webpage](#). Questions regarding DLM may be directed to [Mike Peacy](#).

ACCESS for ELLs® Update



After several years of planning and implementing the new [English Language Development \(ELD\) Standards](#), ACCESS will fully incorporate them in the 2025-26 school year. This revised version of ACCESS will largely look and feel the same as the current version, although the Kindergarten ACCESS will be in a new format, with less materials.

There will be new individual student reports, along with additional materials designed to better link assessment to instruction. Visit [WIDA's Revised ACCESS landing page](#) for more information regarding the changes to ACCESS.

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



Reading Readiness – Early Literacy Assessment Update

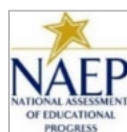


The spring administration test window is now open. This is the first required administration for 4K students. All students enrolled in 4K at a district or independent charter school – whether in a district 4K or a community approach 4K – must complete an early literacy screening during the spring administration. 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](#).

Schools must notify parents/caregivers about their child's screening performance within 15 days of administering the screener. The communication must be provided in the parents'/caregivers' preferred language. Letter templates, including translations, are available on the [ACT 20 Resources webpage](#).

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



2024-25 NAEP Testing has concluded in Wisconsin schools. Thank you to all the schools that participated, and thank you to the districts that provided support to your schools. Questions related to NAEP may be directed to [Angela Dugas](#).

The Assessment Professional Learning Series is Going Virtual



The free Assessment Professional Learning and Coaching Series has helped over 100 districts increase teacher and leader capacity in understanding how to create and use different types of classroom assessments. Watch educators, administrators and CESA staff share their experiences in [The Assessment Professional Learning and Coaching Series Highlight Video 2023-2024](#) to learn more about this important work. Due to its popularity, statewide virtual sessions will take place this spring and early summer 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.

(continued on page 5)

The Assessment Professional Learning Series is Going Virtual

(continued from page 4)

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.



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 informed by research-based practices set by the [National Writing Project](#) (NWP), to support the sustainability of writing-rich classrooms. Wisconsin educators who are also teacher consultants through the National Writing Project were invited to work with the GMWP to create these resources. 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 webpage](#). Additional resources will be added in the coming weeks and educators will also have access to free virtual, asynchronous professional learning modules soon.

ELA instructional content questions may be directed to [Bianca Williams-Griffin](#), DPI ELA Consultant. Assessment related questions may be directed to [Lauren Zellmer](#), DPI Standards Based Assessment Consultant.



Federal Accountability Updates



Preliminary Joint Federal Notifications were provided to schools and districts in [SAFE, the Secure Access File Exchange](#) on February 27. Every school received a preliminary ESSA Accountability Report, which includes data on schoolwide and student group performance and indicates whether or not the school is identified for an [ESSA federal identification](#). Schools with existing Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) or Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI) identifications also received a Progress to Exit Report with available data.

The preliminary Joint Federal Notifications release also included District Summary Reports containing ESSA Identifications and IDEA LEA Determinations for all schools in the district.

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

Test Participation and Accountability



The Office of Educational Accountability (OEA) would like to provide districts and schools with some reminders on the impact of test participation on state and federal accountability. Please see below for more information.

Federal Accountability (ESSA)

ESSA requires Academic Achievement calculations to be based upon the greater of 95% of students enrolled for the full academic year or the actual number of students tested. Hence, schools that have student groups with lower than a 95% test participation rate have their scores reduced. Wisconsin's ESSA system applies this requirement by adjusting the denominator of the points-based proficiency rate calculation to the 95% tested level for schools testing below the required 95% rate.

For example, if a middle school serving students in grades 6-8 had 100 full academic year students, but

only 90 of these students participated in state assessments, the school's points-based proficiency rate is calculated by dividing the number of points by 95 (minimum participation required by ESSA) rather than 90 (the actual number of students tested). This results in a lowered achievement score for that school.

State Accountability

DPI publishes school and district test participation on school and district report cards for informational purposes only. That is, test participation has no impact on report card scoring. This rule has been effective since the 2016-17 report cards. Please note that a minimum two years of 20 full academic year tested students are required to generate a report card score.

Accountability questions may be directed to oeaemail@dpi.wi.gov.





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. Is a public school or district responsible for testing a home-schooled student if the parent requests that?

No. Public schools do not have the authority to administer the statewide assessments to home-schooled students, including those enrolled in their district for two or fewer classes per day.

Q. Where can I find a list of allowable accommodations for the Forward Exam?

Allowable accommodations and supports can be found in *The Accessibility Guide* Available on the [Forward Exam Accommodations and Supports webpage](#).

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.



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

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