

ASSESSMENT & ACCOUNTABILITY NEWSLETTER

Issue 55, March 2021



Updates...

Note from the Director



Greetings! Thank you for your extraordinary efforts in helping our students during this

uniquely challenging time. Thanks also, to the many educators who have participated in our team's trainings and presentations.

Over the last couple of months, we have submitted an addendum and three waivers to the United States Department of Education (USDE), seeking flexibility regarding the 95% test participation and most federal accountability requirements. Our appreciation to everyone who offered your perspectives and comments through the public comment opportunities! Our staff are working diligently to incorporate testing flexibilities by reducing the test times and extending the test windows to help with the test administration. Please stay tuned to our weekly DAC Digest communication for timely assessment and accountability updates.

We look forward to our continued collaboration to help advance our students' education!

Viji Somasundaram

Director, Office of Educational Accountability



Calendar...

Important Dates

2021	
February 22- April 30	ACCESS test window
March 5	ACT - Last day to enter late requests for accommodations/ELL supports
March 5	Aspire - Last day to enter Aspire paper accommodations to receive barcodes
March 6-18	ACT - Prepare test sessions and pre-cache test content
March 8	Forward test set-up available – enter accessibility features, update demographics
March 9	ACT test window 1 (paper administration)*
March 9-12 & 15-19	ACT test window 1 for students testing with accommodations (paper administration)*
March 9-11 & March 16-18	ACT test window 1 (online administration)*
March 10	ACT – Return March 9 test materials to ACT
March 22	ACT – Return accommodation/online test window 1 materials to ACT
March 22 – May 14	Forward test window – ELA and Mathematics Grades 3-8, Science Grades 4 and 8, and Social Studies Grades 4, 8, and 10
March 22 – May 14	DLM test window – ELA and Mathematics Grades 3-11, Science Grades 4 and 8-11, and Social Studies Grades 4, 8, and 10
March 22-26	NAEP 2021 Monthly School Survey
April 5 – May 19	ACT Aspire Early High School Grades 9-10
April 19-23	NAEP 2021 Monthly School Survey
May 24-28	NAEP 2021 Monthly School Survey
June 21-25	NAEP 2021 Monthly School Survey

*For Additional ACT test windows see the ACT Calendar webpage.

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

Testing Requirements

Requirements for the 2020-21 administration of statewide assessments remain unchanged under state and federal law. All districts and schools should be planning for in-person testing if the local health orders allow students and staff to be in school buildings safely. Please note that remote (virtual) testing options are not available for statewide assessments.

DPI Submitted Federal Waiver Applications

DPI has submitted the following waivers from the U.S. Department of Education. The U.S. Department of Education has 3-4 months to respond to our requests.

- ESEA Addendum and TSI Waiver - DPI has submitted a waiver requesting an addendum to the Wisconsin ESEA plan that would delay Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) and Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI) identifications and shift long-term goals by one year. DPI is also requesting a waiver to delay Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI) identifications by one year.
- ACCESS for ELLs - DPI has submitted a federal waiver from requiring an annual ELP assessment of every EL, and from using the Progress in Achieving English Language Proficiency Indicator in Wisconsin's ESSA accountability system for the 2020-21 school year.
- ESSA Required Academic Assessments: DPI has submitted a waiver seeking flexibility for situations where testing every student will not be possible. Schools and districts are still required to administer the statewide assessments following infection control and mitigation protocols and as permissible by local health departments. DPI is seeking to waive the requirement to have an accountability indicator in 2020-21 that measures the achievement of at least 95 percent of all students.

The waivers would not affect state testing requirements so plan to assess your students safely.



Forward Exam Update



In order to provide districts with additional time and flexibility to administer the assessment to students in-person safely, the test window has been extended from six weeks to eight weeks. The 2021 Forward Exam test window opens on March 22 and now closes on May 14. In addition to the longer test window, DPI is offering optional extended testing hours (normal testing hours are Monday through Friday, 7:00 am - 5:00 pm) for the 2020-21 Forward Exam. Districts may now opt to test students in-person on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday evenings until 8:00 pm, and on Saturdays from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm, during the test window. Districts should be aware that no help desk or technical support will be available from DRC or DPI for testing during extended hours. Assessment Coordinators should have local technology staff and back-up plans in place prior to any test administration during extended hours. In order to utilize the extended hours, **District Assessment Coordinators (DACs) must complete and submit the [Forward Exam - Extended Testing Hours Request Form](#) for their district** a minimum of one week prior to the planned extended testing day.

In an effort to reduce the workload on students and educators, two one-year changes have been made to the 2020-21 Forward Exam that will shorten student testing times and still produce valid student scores.

(continued on page 3)

Forward Exam Update (continued from page 2)

- Field test items (questions that have no impact on student scores being tested for possible use on future exams) have been removed from ELA, mathematics, and science sessions.
- The Text-Dependent Analysis (long-write essay) session of ELA has been removed.

These changes will reduce testing times by a minimum of 70-80 minutes depending on grade level.

All Forward Exam training and administration resources are now available on the Forward Exam webpages. Training videos are available on the [Forward Exam Training webpage](#) including the DAC/SAC Pre-test training and the Test Administrator Training. The 2020-21 Test Administration Manual and DRC INSIGHT Portal Guide are posted on the [Forward Exam Resources webpage](#).

There are several resources for student test preparation available on the [Forward Exam Practice Test and Sample Items webpage](#). These practice resources are available to the public using a Chrome browser, so students and families can access these resources at home. These practice tests provide students the opportunity to complete sample test items using the same online platform and tools they will use to take the actual test.



ACT with Writing Update

ACT® Schools will begin testing ACT with writing for grade 11 students starting March 9 (Test Window 1) and will have three test windows to complete testing. Dates for the spring 2021 ACT assessment can be found on the [ACT Calendar webpage](#). DPI is offering districts the opportunity to administer the ACT in both paper and online formats, which allows more flexibility including additional testing dates.

In case of a weather emergency on testing dates, please see the [Emergency and Inclement Weather Plan](#). Schools may use March 23 or April 13 for paper make-up testing or can use the online testing format during any open online testing date available during Test Windows 1-3. Materials ordering windows for Test Windows 2 and 3 can be found in the ACT Schedule of Events on the [DPI ACT Calendar webpage](#).

Materials for Test Window 1 have shipped. Schools should continue to manage their student roster within PearsonAccessNext and order additional materials as needed until all planned testing is complete. If a student is enrolled at your school but does not take the ACT, test coordinators should enter the appropriate not tested code in PANext for State Use Question #1 for ACT. The window for ACT-Approved Accommodations Late Considerations is open until March 5. Late consideration is applicable only to newly enrolled students, newly identified disabilities, or sudden onset of a medical condition.

ACT Aspire Update



The Aspire test window for grades 9 and 10 is April 5

through May 19. Aspire is a computer-based test that uses TestNav. Technology Coordinators should access the [Aspire Technology Requirements webpage](#) to view the latest information on the TestNav app and to update systems where necessary.

Please refer to the [Aspire Schedule of Events](#) for specific dates for student roster availability, student transfers/enrollment, Personal Needs Profiles, test sessions, proctor caching, and materials.

The ACT Aspire will be holding training webinars in early March. Registration for these webinars and recordings of past webinars are available on the [DPI ACT Aspire Trainings webpage](#).



It is important that districts complete all required training, data entry, and validation at least two weeks prior to the opening of the assessment window. Teachers who are administering the DLM need to complete the required training. If a teacher completed training the prior year, they only need to take the refresher training. All other teachers need to complete the new teacher training. Training, rostering, and First Contact Surveys all need to be completed before testlets will be released to the students. The recommended deadline for these tasks is March 8. While there is not a data lockdown period scheduled, DLM strongly encourages all data be as static as possible prior to the opening of the test window.

Districts are asked to encourage test administrators to securely upload any writing samples that students produce to the Educator Portal. This is an important step to assure the validity of the assessment. Field tests will be provided for the students after they have completed testlets in a given subject. Though field tests are optional, test administrators are encouraged to have students complete as many as possible if time allows.

DLM is working to offer a Parent Portal option to districts that may be interested in providing parents secure access to their child's score reports. Score reports will be available for each year that the student took the DLM assessment. Currently, DLM is looking for districts that are willing to try out the Parent Portal and provide feedback. If your district is interested, please contact [Mike Peacy](#).

Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) Update



The DLM test window, March 22 - May 14, is quickly approaching. In an effort to help districts safely test all

students, the DLM test window has been extended. Evening and weekend testing is also being allowed for additional flexibility.





ACCESS for ELLs® Update



ACCESS testing is in full swing, and we thank you all for your efforts in this extraordinary school year. As the test window currently runs through the end of April, students unavailable for testing at the current time may be available later in the spring. Plan to reassess who is available for testing as the test window goes on. Please box and return completed materials as soon as boxes are full.

This winter WIDA released [new ELD Standards](#). DPI is reviewing the standards for adoption and will likely transition to them by 2023. A new eLearning course, *The WIDA ELD Standards Framework*, is available in the WIDA Secure Portal.

On March 30, WIDA will release the WIDA Screener for Kindergarten. The new screener is safari themed, and includes “full body response” questions, where students act out the movement of animals. It will be available to print in color or black and white, as a free download from the WIDA website. Training will be housed in the WIDA Secure Portal.

Districts may begin using the new screener as soon as it is released. This instrument will eventually replace the K W-APT, which we will phase out by the end of the 2021-22 school year.

Assessment of Reading Readiness Update



For the 2020-21 school year, the Reading Readiness assessment requirement to screen all 4-year-old kindergarten through grade 2 students remains in place. It is expected that by this point in the school year, most students will have already been screened at least once. District assessment coordinators (DACs) and reading specialists are encouraged to work with their teachers to ensure that all students are screened and appropriate interventions or remedial reading services are provided where appropriate and that the results for all students be used to help guide instructional practices.

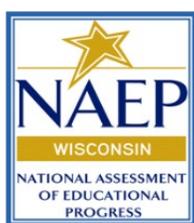
The Department will be sending out reimbursement forms to DACs in each district in the next couple of weeks. Districts will be asked to indicate the screener or screeners used at each grade, the number of students screened and the amount the district is seeking for reimbursement. Once all reimbursement requests have been received, department staff will determine whether the appropriation is sufficient to reimburse the full amount requested by each district. If the appropriation is sufficient, each district will be reimbursed the full amount. If the appropriation is insufficient, payments to districts will be prorated. It is anticipated that all payments will be electronically distributed prior to the end of the school year.

More information on the Reading Readiness requirements can be found on the [Reading Readiness Overview webpage](#). If you have additional questions, please contact [Duane Dorn](#).





NAEP Update



The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), in the U.S. Department of Education, oversees the administration of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). NCES made the decision to postpone NAEP 2021

student testing from the 2020-21 school year to the 2021-22 school year. More information about how this decision was reached can be found on the [NCES COVID-19 webpage](#).

In place of student testing, NCES is conducting two special studies in the schools that were originally included in the NAEP 2021 sample. The first special study is the NAEP 2021 School Survey, which is a monthly data collection in response to an Executive Order from the White House to understand the impact of COVID-19 on schools across the nation, including the status of in-person learning. Schools complete a 30-minute survey at the end of each month, and data will be publically reported each month through the end of the school year.

The second study is the NAEP 2021 School and Teacher Questionnaires study, which includes the questions that principals and grades 4 and 8 reading and mathematics teachers answer during a standard NAEP administration. There are additional questions about the impact of COVID-19 on teaching and learning. The one-time set of questionnaires should

take about 30-40 minutes to complete. This study is still in the final stages of government approval, which has caused a delay in the notification to schools and the opening of the study window.

If you have any questions, please contact [Angela Dugas](#), Wisconsin's NAEP State Coordinator.

State Accountability

In January, the Office of Educational Accountability (OEA) released secure "preview reports" directly to districts and schools in [SAFE, the Secure Access File Exchange](#). The preview reports are **not** report cards - they use data from prior years (i.e., 2018-19 assessment results) to demonstrate future report card calculation and data changes that we have been working on in order to make the report cards more user-friendly, actionable, and equitable.

The release of the preview reports opened up an inquiry period, in which schools and districts could connect with OEA to review the data in the reports further. We received many great questions, in particular questions on the new Target Group Outcomes priority area and Course Data pages.

OEA also updated our [Accountability Resources webpage](#) with new resources to help you understand and explain the preview reports. These include updated versions of familiar guides (e.g., Data At-a-Glance), as well as new resources covering the new features found in the preview reports (e.g., Target Group Outcomes Guide).

The resources page also contains "**sample**" **preview reports**. As a reminder, school and district specific preview reports are only available securely in SAFE. Finally, we have posted a survey to the [Accountability Resources webpage](#) in order to gather feedback on the preview reports. Please take this short survey if you have time.

We will continue to move forward in gathering feedback on the preview reports to inform future report cards. Currently, statewide accountability requirements are still active for the 2020-21 school year. If you have questions about state accountability, please contact us at oeamail@dpi.wi.gov.

Federal Accountability Update

In December, OEA released ESSA Informational Reports and Progress to Exit Reports via SAFE containing applicable data in absenteeism, graduation, and progress towards English language proficiency. These reports, part of Joint Federal Notifications, are for informational purposes, meant to support and inform school and district continuous improvement. Final versions of these reports, including IDEA LEA Determinations and Racial Disproportionality reports, will be released in March.

As mentioned on page 2, DPI has submitted an ESEA Addendum and TSI Waiver to the U.S. Department of Education that would shift ESSA identifications and long-term goals back by one year. In addition, USED has recently indicated its intent to provide flexibility from federal accountability. OEA will send updates in the DAC Digest on any federal accountability changes that may take place as a result of these waiver requests.

If you have any questions about ESSA accountability in the meantime, please email oeamail@dpi.wi.gov.



We hope you find this newsletter and its contents beneficial. As the Office of Educational Accountability (OEA) works to improve and refine this communication tool, we appreciate feedback and suggestions on the layout and content. Please contact Assessment at osamail@dpi.wi.gov and Accountability at oeamail@dpi.wi.gov.



FAQ ...

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

Q. Will there be a sample letter available to send home to parents about upcoming assessments that includes specific information about the 2020-21 administration?

Yes, template letters specific to each statewide assessment to address testing during COVID-19 are available on the [DAC Resources webpage](#). These templates can be modified to fit each school or district's specific communications needs. School or district assessment plans to safely assess students can accompany this letter to families. There is also an Information for Families brochure for each assessment available under each assessment's resource page. These resources are available in English, Spanish, and Hmong.

Q. Teachers did not complete their DLM training last year because tests were not administered. Do they need to complete the new teacher training for 2020-21?

Any teacher who completed the required training, even if they did not administer the assessment, only need to complete the returning teacher training. Teachers who did not complete the training in the 2019-20 school year do need to complete the new teacher training.

Q. Who may proctor a statewide assessment?

A qualified test administrator/proctor (TA) is an employed district staff member (including administrators, teachers, and paraprofessionals) who has been trained in test administration, test security, and appropriate use of test accommodations. This may also include student teachers who normally have responsibility for supervising students. Parent volunteers should not be allowed to proctor the examination. School personnel who are parents or guardians should not be allowed to proctor their own children. Please refer to specific assessment FAQs for additional requirements as they pertain to

Q. Is there an online testing option for students who are learning 100% virtually?

There is no remote (virtual) option for statewide assessments.



OEA has created two webpages to keep you updated and informed. Please bookmark these pages and the main [DPI COVID-19 page](#), which contains COVID-19 information for schools beyond assessment and accountability.

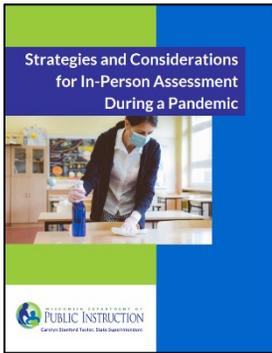
[COVID-19 - Accountability Updates and Resources](#) webpage with summary information on the impact of COVID-19 on school accountability in Wisconsin.

[COVID-19 - Assessment Updates and Resources](#) webpage that provides assessment related COVID-19 resources, 2020-21 COVID updates, and a COVID Assessment FAQ.

Building Assessment and Data Literacy

New Assessment Resources

OEA has created several new resources to help districts plan for and administer statewide assessments this year. Check out the new [COVID-19 Assessment FAQs](#) website to answer some common assessment related questions on topics such as testing requirements, administration, data, parent opt-out/parent refusal, and accountability. An additional FAQ template has been developed specifically for district and school staff to answer questions they may have about their role in test administration during the pandemic. This FAQ includes pre-populated questions and answers and is customizable so that districts can include information they feel is important to share with staff.



To help districts safely administer assessments this spring, OEA created the *Strategies and Considerations for In-Person Assessment in 2020-21* resource which provides suggestions on scheduling, preparing the building and classrooms, technology preparations, and staff preparation to name a few. This resource can be used as a planning outline or checklist by a team of district staff.

In addition, the *Notification of Upcoming Assessment* for 2021 parent letter templates have been updated. The letters are now assessment specific to highlight the grade levels and content areas being assessed. Information about safe assessment and space for district specific assessment plans are also included.

All of these resources, along with others, are available on the [Assessment COVID-19 Resources webpage](#).



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