

# ASSESSMENT & ACCOUNTABILITY NEWSLETTER

Issue 54, October 2020



## Updates...

### Note from the Director



Welcome back! As we move into the 2020-21 school year, we understand districts are navigating multiple learning

platforms and student schedules, while ensuring student and staff safety. We sincerely appreciate the continued hard work and dedication of our districts, schools, and educators as we begin this school year.

The assessment team has been hard at work developing plans for assessment that balance the need for valid data serving school improvement and equity, and the challenges districts are facing related to safe and effective instruction during the ongoing pandemic. Our assessments are reliable tools that provide information about what students know in core academic areas and whether they can apply what they know. The tests provide valuable information for educators and families, and feed important school improvement systems such as WISE and Title I supports, among others.

We will continue to provide assessment and accountability related timely updates through our weekly DAC Digest communication. Thank you for your relentless efforts towards our students' education during these unprecedented times and we look forward to continuing our collaborative work in this school year!

*Viji Somasundaram*

Director, Office of Educational Accountability

## Calendar...

### Important Dates

2020	
October 15	NAEP - schools register for MyNAEP and complete the Provide School Information form
October 29	ACT - Accommodations webinar
November 2	ACCESS - Private School Pre-ID Upload Window closes
November 2	ACCESS - DPI Uploads Public School Pre-ID Roster
November 2	ACT PANext Test Administration portal opens
November 10	ACCESS Test Setup Window opens
November 12	Forward Technology User Guide Available
November 12	ACT - Test Administration webinar
November 18	Forward District Technology Coordinator training videos available
November 24	ACCESS - districts receive materials
November 27	ACT deadline for schools to verify shipping address in PANext
December	NAEP - Complete <i>Prepare for Assessment</i> tasks on MyNAEP
December 1	ACCESS for ELLs Test Window Opens (Tuesday)
December 7	ACT - Begin site readiness
December 10	ACT - Online Testing Site Readiness webinar
December 21	DLM - Instruction and Assessment planner closed for maintenance until January 1, 2021
2021	
January 25 - March 19	NAEP test window for grades 4 and 8 (for select schools only)
February 26	ACCESS test window closes
March 9	ACT test window 1 (paper administration)*
March 9-19	ACT test window 1 for students testing with accommodations (paper administration)*
March 9-11 & March 16-18	ACT test window 1 (online administration)*
March 22 - April 30	Forward test window - ELA and Mathematics Grades 3-8, Science Grades 4 and 8, and Social Studies Grades 4, 8, and 10
March 22 - April 30	DLM test window - ELA and Mathematics Grades 3-11, Science Grades 4 and 8-11, and Social Studies Grades 4, 8, and 10
April 6 - May 6	ACT Aspire Early High School Grades 9-10

\*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.

## Forward Exam Update



The [Forward Exam calendar webpage](#) has been updated with the 2020-21 test administration timeline/key dates. Please refer back to the calendar webpage regularly for any updates.

A Forward Exam Technology Training webinar will take place in November. More information will be available in the DAC Digest as the training approaches.

The 2021 version of the [Forward Exam Accessibility Guide](#) is available. It is critical that all staff, particularly Special Education teachers and IEP teams, be aware of the allowable supports and accommodations for the Forward Exam.

The Forward Exam test vendor, Data Recognition Corporation (DRC), has released a technology bulletin with information about what is new and changing for the upcoming 2020-21 administration. This bulletin is available on the [Forward Exam Technology Requirements webpage](#).

The new Forward Exam for Social Studies was due to be launched in the spring of 2021, giving educators a few years to teach to the new standards prior to testing. This new Social Studies exam will be aligned to the new [Social Studies Standards](#) that were released in 2018. However, with the cancellation of the spring 2020 Forward Exam, DRC was unable to field test additional items needed to create the new Social Studies test. Therefore, for spring 2021 we will continue to administer Social Studies assessments aligned to the previous standards. The new Forward Exam for Social Studies will be delayed until the spring of 2022.

2021 permission to the DRC INSIGHT Portal will be given to DACs in November 2020. Permissions for district and school staff users do not need to be assigned until January or February at the earliest. Information about how to assign user permissions will be available in the DRC INSIGHT Portal Guide

available in January 2021. DACs should remove portal access for individuals who are no longer employed by the district and adjust user roles to sync with staffing changes.

There are several [practice test options](#) available for student use prior to the Forward Exam. These practice tests are available year round, may be used in a virtual setting, and provide students the opportunity to become familiar with the Forward Exam and its different components. All students should be given the opportunity to use the practice tests prior to actual testing. Students may perform better and with less anxiety if they are familiar with the format of the test and with the types of questions they will be required to answer. The practice tests are not scored and are not intended to determine how students will perform on the Forward Exam.



## ACT High School Assessments Update



Eleventh (11) grade students will be administered the ACT® with writing in spring 2021. DPI is offering districts the opportunity to administer the ACT in both paper and online formats. Online testing allows more flexibility for districts, including additional testing dates. Dates for the spring 2021 ACT assessment can be found on the [ACT Calendar webpage](#). Students in grade 9 and 10 will be required to complete the ACT Aspire® (online) assessment in the spring. Dates for Aspire testing can be found on the [Aspire Calendar webpage](#).

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## ACT High School Assessments Update (continued from page 2)

The Test Accessibility and Accommodations system (TAA) for ACT opened on September 14 and is now accessed through [Success.ACT.org](https://Success.ACT.org). Additional required tasks for ACT will begin in early November, with Pearson Access<sup>next</sup> (PANext) opening on November 2. Schools and districts will receive further communications about testing tasks and training opportunities in fall. 2020-21 ACT and Aspire resources will be available on the state's [ACT Website](#) as well as the corresponding [DPI Assessment webpages](#).

2019-20 ACT reports were provided to school districts in late spring. Profile reports are available in [PANext](#). Schools should download the reports as soon as possible if they have not done so. Student scores received after April 30 and those participating in summer/fall National testing will be available late winter.



## Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) Update



The Instruction and Assessment Planner (formerly Instructional Tools Interface)

became available on September 14. The Instruction and Assessment Planner supports the teaching and learning of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities including the process of administering assessments and using results to guide next steps. Prerequisites to planner use include rostered students, trained teachers, and first contact surveys entered.

New for 2020-21, DLM will be rolling out a parent portal which will enable parents to view their students' score reports online. Also new this year is the Student Roster and First Contact Survey Status Extract. This new data extract will provide testing readiness information for students all in one place. The extract will include the student's enrolled grade and subject areas, and the First Contact survey status and completion date.

Test administrators should begin planning for the required training through Moodle and complete their test security agreements. For a detailed timeline/key dates refer to the [DLM calendar webpage](#). For more information about DLM refer to the [DLM webpage](#). Contact [Mike Peacy](#) with any DLM related questions.

## ACCESS for ELLs® Update



For the 2020-21 school year, WIDA has released a version of their ELP screener that can

be administered remotely. The WIDA Remote Screener and training can be found in the WIDA Secure Portal. DPI has released guidance on how to make EL identifications using this new tool as a supplement to the EL Policy Handbook.

The 2020-21 ACCESS for ELLs test window has been extended through February 26, 2021. Given the uncertainties that COVID-19 brings, please plan to test as early as possible, and reserve the extension for emergency use. We'll be updating the [ACCESS for ELLs Calendar](#) as more information becomes available.

On-track information for ELs has been added to WISEdash for Districts. You can find this information in the ACCESS Results by Subgroup dashboard, as well as within each EL's student profile under Assessments then under ACCESS. Instructions for how to find these data will be posted to the [ACCESS for ELLs Data and Reporting](#) page.

WIDA plans to release the [2020 Edition of their English Language Development standards](#) in early winter. Throughout the spring they will release additional resources and eLearning modules to help educators incorporate the updated language functions and expectations into their lesson plans.

## Assessment of Reading Readiness Update



For the 2020-21 school year, the requirement remains to assess annually each 4-year-old kindergarten to 2nd grade student in a school district or in a charter school for reading readiness. [Wis. Stats.](#)

[118.016](#) requires each school board and the operator of each charter school to select the appropriate, valid, and reliable assessment of literacy fundamentals to be used. The school board or operator shall ensure that the assessment evaluates whether a pupil possesses phonemic awareness and letter sound knowledge.

In addition to the requirement to administer a literacy screener, the following conditions apply:

- The department shall pay to the school board or operator the per pupil cost of the selected assessment.
- The school board or operator of the charter school shall report the results of a pupil's assessment to the pupil's parent or guardian.
- The school board of the school district or operator of the charter school in which the pupil is enrolled shall provide a pupil whose assessment indicates that he or she is at risk of reading difficulty with interventions or remedial reading services, as described under [Wis. Stats. 121.02\(1\)\(c\)](#).

As many schools are considering blended models of instruction for this school year, additional guidance that may be helpful includes the following:

- **When to Screen:** DPI does not have a state mandated screening window. Districts are free to establish their own screening window. Keep in mind that some vendors may utilize a screening window and have established benchmarks based on students being screened during the vendor-prescribed window.
- **How Often to Screen:** Districts are required to screen each student at least once per year. There is no upper limit on the number of times a student may be screened.

- **Virtual Screening:** Each district is authorized to determine the method in which screening may take place. Several vendors allow for virtual administration of their screener. Users of purchased screeners should verify with the vendor the conditions upon which virtual screening should occur.
- **Who Should Administer:** It is highly recommended that classroom teachers administer the screening to each student. Classroom teachers typically have received training and have the most experience with administering a Reading Readiness screener. In general, the most accurate and informative results will be obtained when the classroom teacher administers all parts of the screening.
- **Interventions and Remedial Services:** Students who are identified as at risk of reading difficulty should continue to receive high-quality core instruction. In addition, targeted small-group and individual interventions may be necessary based on the obtained results. Teachers are also encouraged to work with other professionals (other classroom teachers, reading specialists, special education teachers, EL teachers, psychologists and principals) to develop intervention plans. The [Rtl Center](#) provides guidance for how to develop a tiered system of instruction and support.

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



## NAEP Update



The National Center for Education Statistics has determined that NAEP will be administered this school year. The national sample of schools has been reduced by about half, several subject areas have been removed from the schedule for this year, and the test window has been extended to allow for additional time that might be needed to assess students. The reduced sample size will have some impacts on reporting the results. Most noticeably, there will be no large urban district results. Administration of the test will be similar to previous years, but with extra safety protocols: NAEP field staff will bring all materials including tablets to schools, and they will administer the test to sampled students. Stay tuned to the weekly DAC Digest for updates about when notification emails are sent to districts and schools selected to participate this year during the last week of September and first week of October.

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



## State Accountability

The [2019 Wisconsin Act 185](#) prohibits the release of school and district accountability report cards in the 2020-21 school year. There will be no 2019-20 report cards, but the accountability staff are busy preparing for other accountability related activities this fall.

We have been working with an Accountability Advisory Group and other state and national experts and stakeholders on design changes for report cards. These include visual design changes, new course data, and changes to the Closing Gaps priority area. We are planning to securely release accountability preview reports to schools and districts via SAFE (the Secure Access File Exchange) this winter in the new year. These preview reports will use data from prior years (i.e., 2018-19 assessment results) to demonstrate the report card calculation and data changes that we have been working on and will supplement the data available in WISEdash for Districts.

Among the changes included in the preview reports will be the inclusion of postsecondary preparation (often referred to as “college and career readiness”) and arts course data. The reported data will be for informational purposes only and will not be scored. Additionally, the data are for grades 9-12 only (including in district-level reports) and will only be reported for public schools, as these data are not yet available for choice schools.

The preliminary secure release of the preview reports will take place in January/February of 2021 and specific dates will be announced in the DAC Digest when determined. There will be no public release of the preview reports.

If you have questions about state accountability, please contact us at [oeamail@dpi.wi.gov](mailto:oeamail@dpi.wi.gov).



## Federal Accountability Update

DPI was granted a federal waiver by the U.S. Department of Education in March, which provided relief from ESSA testing, accountability, and reporting requirements. This means that there will be no federal identifications issued during the 2020-21 school year, as these identifications are based on data from school year 2019-20. Schools with identifications in the 2019-20 school year will retain those identifications in the 2020-21 school year.

ESSA accountability reporting is part of a coordinated joint federal notification effort in support of [continuous improvement](#) in schools and districts. Preliminary secure joint federal notifications are typically released in early December, and include IDEA LEA Determinations, ESSA Accountability Reports, and ESSA Progress to Exit Reports. This year, ESSA accountability will be informational only, and we will be releasing reports that contain available updated data to inform ongoing continuous improvement efforts. Annual ESSA Accountability Reports will be converted this year to informational reports that include only new data. This means that reports will be shortened from 20 to a couple pages. ESSA Progress to Exit Reports will also be updated with new data where available. These reports are only for schools with identifications and, while schools cannot exit following 2020-21, new data are relevant for future years when it will be possible to exit. We will share more information regarding final informational reports and support in the coming months.

If you have any questions about ESSA accountability in the meantime, please email [oea@dpi.wi.gov](mailto:oea@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](mailto:osamail@dpi.wi.gov) and Accountability at [oea@dpi.wi.gov](mailto:oea@dpi.wi.gov).



## FAQ ...

**Reminder** – Each assessment has an FAQ webpage with scenarios/issues related to that specific assessment

- [ACT/Aspire/WorkKeys FAQ](#)
- [Forward Exam FAQ](#)
- [DLM FAQ](#)

**Q. Will there be 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 Information for Families brochure for each assessment available under each assessment's resource page. These resources are available in English, Spanish, and Hmong.

**Q. My school was selected to participate in NAEP this year. Do we have to participate?**

Your school is required to participate if your district receives Title I funds. In accepting the federal funds, one of the assurances your district agreed to was for your schools to participate in grades 4 and 8 reading and mathematics NAEP if selected.

**Q. What is Success.ACT and how do I access it?**

[Success.ACT](#) is ACT's new online reporting system that houses school and district ACT data as well as the Test Accessibility and Accommodation System (TAA). Once a user account has been set up through Success.ACT, a user will request additional administrative access to reports or TAA through the online system. The Trusted Agent (TA) for the organization will then authorize access to the users. TA access codes were sent to each organization's Superintendent in April. Please contact [Nikki Braconier](#) if you did not receive you TA access code. Resources: [Success.ACT Training Tutorial](#), [Success.ACT Reporting User Supplement](#).

**Q. What quick assessments can I use to gather data about student learning?**

Formative assessment practices are a great way to gather evidence of student learning quickly. They are designed to quickly inform instruction by providing specific and immediate feedback through daily, ongoing instructional strategies that are student- and classroom-centered, and that answer "what comes next for student learning?" These practices can be used in person inside the classroom, or in virtual learning settings. Please watch the video [Identifying Effective Formative Assessment Practices](#) to learn more about formative practices.



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 which contains assessment related COVID-19 resources, 2019-20 COVID updates, and any 2020-21 updates that may arise.

## Building Assessment and Data Literacy

### The Importance of Strategic Assessment Systems in 2020-21

Given the disruption that both students and educators have experienced, it is critical educators identify high quality assessment strategies to produce expedient, asset-based information to determine students' access points to learning. Schools and districts can use Strategic Assessment Systems to help make databased decisions about student learning.



#### Strategic Assessment Systems Emphasize:

- The purposeful alignment of assessments and their use in the data inquiry process.
- The primary role that formative assessment plays in driving the teaching and learning.
- The importance of identifying high quality assessments to produce information about students' readiness for college and career with the least amount of testing.

Student learning progress should be monitored using multiple data sources, which can include teachers, families, and students; embedded formative assessments; classroom summative assessments; and district-wide interim/benchmark assessments. All of these data, with **emphasis on formative assessment data**, should be used together to design instruction, adjust curriculum, identify targeted supports, and develop flexible groups to ensure that both the in-depth grade level instruction and just-in-time learning of essential content from the prior grade occur simultaneously.

### New Resource: Assessment Strategies to Inform Instruction In 2020-21

The [Assessment Strategies to Inform Instruction in 2020-21](#) resource provides considerations for district and school leaders to use in identifying initial student needs and monitoring ongoing student learning from an equity lens to ensure every student has what they need to learn when they need it. It offers a process and sources of data to identify and align the unfinished learning students need to advance on grade-level standards within the current/upcoming unit of study.

### E-Learning Professional Learning Opportunities for Educators

Strong assessment and data literacy knowledge and skills are more important than ever this year for educators. The Assessment and Data Literacy Modules are great professional development opportunities because they can be accessed as online E- learning modules. The following units highlighted below may be helpful for educators in planning for assessments and using data to make strategic decisions about student learning in the 2020-21 school year.

#### Assessment Literacy

- [Unit 2: Know Why and What You are Assessing](#) - Discover and explore the integral part that assessment plays in student achievement. You will be able to determine the why and what you are assessing in your classroom or setting.
- [Unit 3: How am I Assessing?](#) - Learn why multiple assessment approaches are crucial for providing equitable opportunities in the classroom while increasing the depth of understanding of student abilities.
- [Unit 6: The Role of Students in Assessment](#) - Discover the role of the student in the assessment process.

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### Data Literacy

- [Unit 2: Effective Data Use](#) - Explore the fundamentals of effective data use within an organization and how they support a process for continuous improvement.
- [Unit 3: Data-Literate Educators](#) - Build a foundation of data-literate practices that impact student learning and professional growth.

### Strategic Assessment Systems

- [Unit 2: Formative Assessment Practices](#) - Walk through the formative assessment process and learn the fundamentals of implementing quality formative assessment practices.

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**Carolyn Stanford Taylor, State Superintendent**

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