south dakota
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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Assessment News Alert- Feb. 11, 2026

This message was sent to assessment coordinators and WIDA contacts in public school districts and several approved programs and non-public school systems. If you have any questions email doeassessment@state.sd.us.

SD-ELP (ACCESS Updates)

Testing Window
- Testing window closes on Friday, Feb. 27, 2026

Newly Identified English Learner Students
- Any student who comes into your district during the testing window will need to be either added to DRC or transferred in DRC from another SD school. Follow the New Student Upload Process.
- When administering WIDA ACCESS Online, ensure students are entered in the appropriate registrations and accommodations are added if needed.

Test Materials
- SD DOE orders all materials for the ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS assessments. If additional materials need to be ordered, you will need to place an Additional Order.
- Please make sure that you check for overage of materials before placing an additional order.
  - Last day to place an additional order will be Friday, Feb. 20 at 3:30 p.m. CT

Returning Materials
- Must be Postmarked by March 9, 2026
  - DRC would like items returned ASAP
- Items that MUST be returned
  - All test booklets (collected in plastic bags)
  - All ACCESS Paper Test Administrator Scripts
  - ACCESS Online Test Administrator Scripts for grade 1 and grades 2-3
  - Listening and Speaking Test CDs
  - All large print, braille, Kindergarten ACCESS (including low-vision) and Alternate ACCESS test materials

General Assessment Updates

Summative Assessment Winter Roadshow
This professional development equips Assessment Coordinators to effectively train district staff on administering required spring assessments. Each training will go from 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. local time. Register using the links below.
- Feb. 12, 2026 – Timber Lake
- Feb. 18, 2026 – Sioux Falls
- Feb. 19, 2026 – Sioux Falls
- Feb. 23, 2026 – Watertown
- Feb. 24, 2026 – Pierre
- Feb. 25, 2026 – Rapid City

TOPIC	Time
Background & Assessment Requirements	10:00 – 10:45 a.m.
Cambium Assessments (grades 3-8)	10:45 – 11:30 a.m.
Alternate Assessments (grades 3-8 & 11)	11:30 a.m. – Noon
LUNCH	12:00 – 1:00 p.m.
Tools, Supports, and Accommodations (Grades 3-8)	1:00 – 1:45 p.m.
SD-ACT (Grade 11, public schools only)	1:45 – 2:45 p.m.
Questions and 1-1 Support	After 2:45 p.m.

State General Assessment Accommodations for Grades 3-8
Recommended deadline for submitting forms (through TIDE) is **Feb. 1, 2026**. TIDE forms include:
- Assessment Non-Embedded Accommodations Request
- General Assessment Print on Demand Request
- General Assessment Reading Passages Request
- Special Accommodation Consideration Request
- Speech-to-Text and/or Word Completion Request Form

It may take a week for the state to review and complete these requests, depending on the number of requests received.
If you have questions, contact Beth Schiltz.

SD-ACT Updates (for public-school districts only)

Accommodations for SD-ACT

Districts should be finishing up with requesting accommodations for the SD-ACT. District staff will need to create an account in Test Accessibility and Accommodations (TAA), which is in ACT Success. If staff create the TAA account, it may take ACT three to five business days to verify the account. Here are some resources to help with the process:
- How to Create an Account to Request Accommodations
- TAA User Guide
- South Dakota-Specific Accommodations Training Recording and Resources
- DOE Made SD-ACT Tools, Supports, and Accommodations
- List of available accommodations for SD-ACT
- If district staff need additional support, they can reach out to ACT's accommodations team at actstateaccoms@act.org or at 800.553.6244, ext. 1788

Hard deadlines for accommodations are:
- Test Event 1 (Feb. 24-Mar. 6): **January 14 CLOSED**
- Test Events 2 (Mar. 10-20): **January 28 CLOSED**
- Test Event 3 (Mar. 24-Aprl. 3): **February 11**

Relatives and/or Athletic Coaches with SD-ACT
Athletic Coaches (any head or assistant coach of any high school or college athletics program, whether or not the sport is in season at the time of testing) and
Relatives (children, stepchildren, siblings, spouses, parents, and persons under your guardianship or anyone who resides in your household):

> May NOT serve as test coordinator
> MAY assist in ACT Now but shouldn't have the Test Coordinator (TC) role. They MAY help the temporary TC with the tasks.
> MAY help train staff
> May NOT have access to secure test materials before or after testing.
> > - Secure test materials include Secure materials include MyACT Instructions for Students, student authorization tickets with students' individually assigned username and passwords to access the tests, and any used scratch paper.
> MAY serve as a room supervisor, but may not supervise one-to-one testing for a relative or athlete
> Check out the ACT policy for more guidance
> If a school or district is struggling to identify a plan to accommodate these policies, ACT can provide support, if needed. Let us know if you need ACT support.

SD-ACT Student Upload
We updated the students in ACT Now last night. The update is from 2/10/26. You will need to check your roster and assign students to the correct test window. Assigning students to the correct test windows will ensure they get their test materials on time. FYI, you can always print the students' MyACT instructions that were not shipped due to late adds. To do this, log into ACT Now, click on the

Students Tab, click Reports, and click to generate the MyACT Instructions. See screenshot below. If you see students in your ACT Now that should not be testing (seniors, alternate assessment takers), please mark them as "Will not test" within ACT Now.

SD-ACT To-Do List
This list was sent to testing coordinators yesterday from ACT. We wanted to make sure you saw it:
1. Prepare students for testing:
    1. Provide *MyACT Instructions for Students* form to students.
    2. Provide the *Taking the ACT* booklet to students.
    3. Provide the Information for Examinees web page link to students. It contains test preparation resources, a practice test, and information about what to expect on test day.
2. Prepare materials for test day:
    1. **Paper Testing (for approved accommodations only):** School test coordinators prepare answer documents.
    2. **Paper Testing (for approved accommodations only):** Students complete answer document demographics (must be completed before testing begins).
    3. **Paper Testing (for approved accommodations only):** Students must complete required information as outlined in the task cards (verbal instructions) even if there is a barcode label on the answer document. If there is no barcode label, the school test coordinator must also fill in the ACT Student Code on the answer document.
    4. **Online and Paper Testing:** Students complete non-test information in MyACT. MyACT account creation is recommended but not required.
3. Read the ACT policies and review the resources on your ACT-hosted web page or in ACT® Test Center Manager™ (ACT®TCM™).
4. **Verify that all students who will be testing are registered in ACT® Now and a test event has been assigned.** Verify the **Delivery Format** is appropriately set as **Online**. Confirm students' grade level and other identifying information is accurate.
5. If testing online, confirm the correct version of the TestNav application is installed on every testing device.
6. Verify that students testing with accommodations have the correct accommodations information associated to their registration. Prepare materials for each student based on approved accommodations on the Decision Notification.
7. Use the Test Day Activities Checklist to help prepare yourself and your staff for test day. School test coordinators and room supervisors should review the document to understand what to do in ACT TCM for paper and online testing, including:
    1. Logging in to ensure access to ACT Now and ACT TCM
    2. Opening and closing test rooms
    3. Monitoring student testing activity

Note: The South Dakota Department of Education requires all standard-time testing to be administered online. Any reference to paper testing applies to approved accommodations only.

Helpful District Tools
Here are a couple resources provided for district use.
- **Grade 11 Sample Parent Letter**- hot off the press- posted to the DOE assessment webpage under the Parent Communication and Resources section.
- **Parent/Guardian Guide** – This document is intended for communication with parents and guardians. It provides an overview of the SD-ACT and offers guidance on how they can best support their children.
- **SD-ACT Accommodations** – This quick-reference document is designed to assist districts in requesting appropriate accommodations for students.

Don't forget to check out the SD-ACT Website for resources, webinars and office hours, and other helpful information.

MSAA Updates
The MSAA System is open! Please note the below dates for district TC preparations:

Feb. 9:
- TCs accounts were activated; contact Stacy Holzbauer if you have not received your TC activation email.
- TCs should create district TA accounts by **EOD Feb. 16**.
- TCs review students in the MSAA system; contact Stacy Holzbauer to have students added or removed.

Feb. 17:
- DOE will assign the **NEW shortened 2026 Refresher Training** to TCs and TAs who successfully completed the full 2025 Training Modules.
- 2026 Training Modules (or 2026 Refresher Training for those eligible) will be available to TCs and TAs.
- TAs must complete their training before their students' test will open for administration.
- TAs can show students MSAA Sample Items to become familiar with the system.

March 9
- MSAA Test Administration (ELA-alt & Math-alt) window begins; closes April 24.

Upcoming Educator Opportunities!

ELA & Math Review Opportunities (Please share with your ELA and Math teachers!)

There are some upcoming educator reviews for **ELA** item development for South Dakota:
- February: Passage Review
- May: Item Review

Please fill out the application below to be considered for these opportunities or any other ELA reviews.
- ELA: https://smarterbalancedassessment.wufoo.com/forms/zxukdhe181k55t/

There will be **Math** item reviews available later this year as well. Please fill out the application at the following link to be considered for them.
- Math: https://smarterbalancedassessment.wufoo.com/forms/zttngoi0skqmfo/

K–2 Educator Involvement Opportunity for English Language Arts and Math Resource Development (Please share with your K-2 teachers!)

Smarter Balanced will soon begin developing ELA and Math lesson plans for Kindergarten, 1st grade, and 2nd grade (K–2). All lesson plans will include formative assessment and accessibility strategies, and they will be available on the Tools for Teachers website.

We are looking for K–2 teachers to assist in the development of these new resources—specifically, current K–2 classroom teachers with strong expertise in grade-level expectations and experience supporting the unique needs of young learners. Compensation will be provided upon resource publication.

If you would like to participate, please complete the Virtual SNE Workshop Interest Survey to share your availability.

3-8 and 11 Educator Involvement Opportunity for English Language Arts and Math Resource Development (Please share with your 3-8 and 11 teachers!)

We are looking for grades 3-8 and 11 teachers to assist in the development of new resources. All lesson plans will include formative assessment and accessibility strategies, and they will be available on the Tools for Teachers website.

Compensation will be provided upon resource publication.

If you would like to participate, please complete the Virtual SNE Workshop Interest Survey to share your availability.