

Assessment News Alert- Sept. 16, 2025

This message was sent to assessment coordinators, WIDA contacts, and EL/Title III coordinators in public school districts and several approved programs and non-public school systems.

Good morning! We're highlighting important training opportunities this week, including today's SD-ACT Accommodations webinar, along with fresh SD-ELP updates. Hope you have a fantastic week ahead!

SD-ACT Updates

[SD-ACT Accommodations Webinar – TODAY](#)

Sept. 16, 2 p.m. CT, online – This session, hosted by ACT and tailored for South Dakota public school Assessment Coordinators, administrators, and special education teachers, will provide valuable information on accommodations for the SD-ACT, helping ensure all public-school juniors have the support they need to succeed. For questions, email DOEassessment@state.sd.us.

Upcoming ACT Trainings Provided by ACT

While South Dakota high schools use ACT results to help students gain access to postsecondary programs, the data can do so much more. [Join ACT for a free, in-person workshop](#) with [Jerome Williams](#) to learn how to use ACT data to drive student success and inform classroom instruction.

- Tea Area School District – Oct. 13 – 1-4 p.m. – contact Madison.Stahl@k12.sd.us to register to attend.
- Rapid City Area School District – Jefferson Building – Oct. 14 – 9-11:30 a.m.
- Pierre – Capital City Campus – Oct. 15 – 9-11:30 a.m.
- Sioux Falls – Southeast Technical College – Oct. 16 – 9-11:30 a.m.

General Assessment Updates

Regional Assessment Coordinator Trainings

This training will cover South Dakota's state assessments: SD-ACT, grades 3-8 required assessments, alternate assessments, and ACCESS for English Language Proficiency. Participants will also receive detailed training on TIDE 18.0 for test administration and management, as well as handling supports and accommodations. Register for an upcoming training using one of the following links. All trainings will go from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. local time.

- [Sept. 18 - Faith](#)
- [Sept. 24 - Rapid City](#)
- [Sept. 25 - Pierre](#)

Interim Assessment Training Opportunity

The Office of Assessment & Accountability is providing Interim Assessment trainings for teachers and administrators. **Forward this opportunity to your teachers and administrators.** They can use the links below to register for a training.

- [Sept. 19 - Clark](#) from 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. CT
- [Sept. 26 - Centerville](#) from 1-3 p.m. CT
- [Oct. 7 - Sioux Falls](#) from 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. CT
- [Oct. 8 - Rapid City](#) from 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. MT

SD-ELP (ACCESS Updates)

Professional Learning

We are excited to share upcoming professional learning opportunities offered through the Title III office and facilitated by WIDA. These sessions are designed for *all* educators—not just those with ENL endorsements. **Please share the information with all staff in your buildings.** For questions about either of these opportunities, contact Shari.Lord@state.sd.us.

- [WIDA Self-Paced Professional Learning Courses](#)

Are you looking to build your skills and deepen your understanding of how to effectively support English learners? The Department of Education is offering 12 WIDA self-paced professional learning courses designed for K–12 educators who work with ELs across all content areas. These courses cover a wide range of topics and are designed to be flexible, allowing participants to work at their own pace throughout the 2025–26 school year – from Sept. 1, 2025-Aug. 31, 2026. Those who complete the course will receive 15 Continuing Education Contact Hours.

All the information pertaining to course and requirements, including the Zoom links, can be found in the Canvas course.

- [Engaging Secondary Newcomers in Content Literacy](#)

April 15, 2026, Pierre, MacKay Building – In this one-day onsite workshop, educators will explore key factors that influence literacy development in content areas, focusing on how to engage students in content learning. Participants will learn strategies to analyze newcomers' literacy strengths and identify areas for growth. Through practical application, educators will gain tools for scaffolding instruction to ensure secondary newcomers can engage with grade-level content in reading and writing, promoting their academic success. This workshop is geared for grades 6-12.

WIDA Screeners

Attached is information previously shared this summer regarding the WIDA Alternate Screener. Please review so you are familiar with when and how it should be administered.

Shari has also received questions about the WIDA Kindergarten Screener certification course and thinking that it is not available until Sept. 26. This certification and date is actually referring to the Kindergarten ACCESS. All WIDA Screener certifications are updated and available to complete.

SD-ACT for English Learners

As a reminder, all juniors will take the SD-ACT this spring. A few clarifications:

- Juniors can still exit the EL program based on ACT results. Students will receive a level between 1–4 depending on their composite score. We will continue to use the criteria of a 4 on ACCESS and a 3 or 4 on the state assessment (which is now SD-ACT). The exact score ranges for each level will be determined at a later date.
- First Year in Country (FYIC) EL students may still be exempt from the English language arts portion of the SD-ACT. Districts must submit a test irregularity form for each qualifying FYIC junior, available on the ACT website. More details to come.