

Monthly SPED Webinar

Special Education Programs
2026-2027 School Year
October 20, 2026



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Kelly Whiting,
LRP

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The South Dakota Department of Education partners with LRP Publications to provide all districts in the state with access to **Special Ed Connection®**



With **Special Ed Connection** www.specialedconnection.com you get:

- Legal, regulatory and practical guidance that is necessary to ensure that students with disabilities receive the services to which they are entitled
- Action steps to individualize student services
- News, updates, the latest special education trends
- Ready-made resources that can be used for in-house professional development, staff meetings and in-service activities
- Easy to understand explanations of IDEA, ADA, FERPA and other laws impacting special education



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Special Ed Connection...



- Each district has its own unique username/password to log into *Special Ed Connection*
- The POC for each district's *Special Ed Connection* account is the Special Education Director
- POCs are permitted to give access to *all staff* via a User List Spreadsheet. User lists can be updated at any time throughout the year. Send to the *Special Ed Connection* Training Team - SECTraining@lrp.com.
- Each person on your user list will also be signed up to receive the daily eConnections email that comes as part of your subscription
- If you have questions or need your login information contact the *Special Ed Connection* Training Team - SECTraining@lrp.com
- Your subscription includes *unlimited training sessions for you and your staff!* Scheduling a training is a great way to encourage your staff to use this valuable resource. Sessions can be scheduled before, during or after school, or for your next professional development / in-service day. Contact the Training Team to schedule - SECTraining@lrp.com



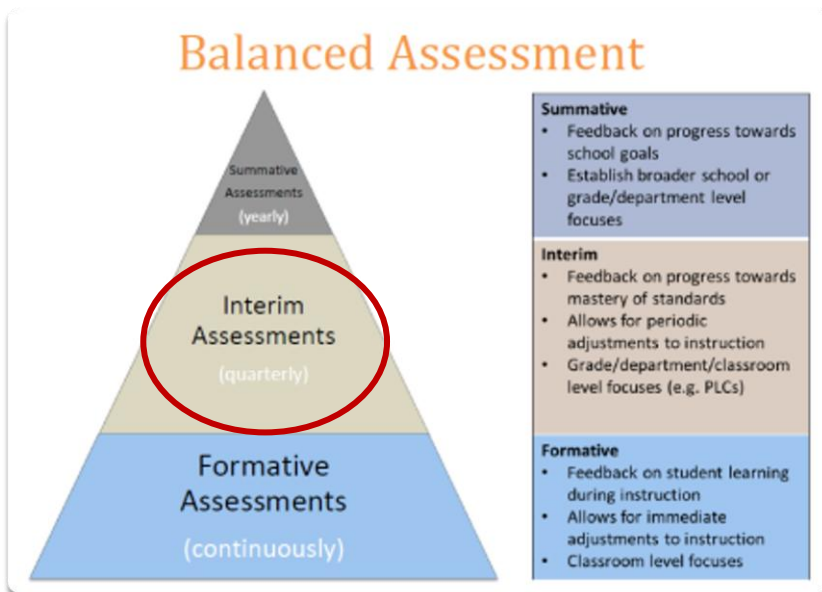
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Interim Assessments

Rebecca Frerichs,
Assessment Specialist
DOE Office of Assessment

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Assessment Big Picture:

Balanced Assessment System

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Interims at a Glance

INTERIM ASSESSMENTS AT A GLANCE

Interim Comprehensive Assessments

Assess a broad range of targets, similar to the summative

Examples:

- Grade 3 ELA
- Grade 3 Math



Interim Assessment Blocks

Assess 3–8 targets in ELA/literacy or Math

Examples:

- Grade 3 ELA, *Read Literary Texts*
- Grade 3 Math, *Operations and Algebraic Thinking*



Focused Interim Assessment Blocks

Assess 1–3 targets in ELA/literacy or Math

Examples:

- Grade 3 ELA, *Research: Use Evidence*
- Grade 3 Math, *Time, Volume, and Mass*



Find more information at: contentexplorer.smarterbalanced.org

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Interim Assessment Process

Begin Instruction

Grade-level instruction and
Tools for Teachers Formative Strategies



Grade-level Smarter Balanced
Focused Interim Assessment Blocks (FIABs) or Interim Assessment Blocks (IABs)



Informed Instruction

Tools for Teachers Interim Connections Playlists and continued grade-level instruction

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Interim Assessment Item Portal (IAIP)

- **Standardized**
 - Educators assign students an interim assessment to take individually and can use their results to determine next steps
- **Non-Standardized**
 - Educators can use interim assessments by displaying items to a class and having the students answer on paper, in small groups, or as a class discussion
 - Educators can conduct instructional activities such as drawing evidence from students using peer feedback, white boards, or from items students complete in small groups
- Can view individual test questions from Interims through this
- Each Connections Playlist links directly to the corresponding interim assessment questions
- How will it help you?
 - Access and view interim items
 - Choose how to use interim items with students to support learning
 - Learning more about the content and the types of questioned used (can see the accessibility tools embedded)

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Reporting System for Interims

Total	5 Items on which Students Performed the Best	5 Items on which Students Performed the Worst	Total Items															
Performance	Item Numbers and Points Earned					Item Numbers and Points Earned					Item Numbers, Max Points							
	1	3	5	7	15	8	10	12	13	14	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	1 pt	1 pt	1 pt	1 pt	1 pt	1 pt	1 pt	1 pt	1 pt	1 pt	1 pt	1 pt	1 pt	1 pt	1 pt	1 pt	1 pt	1 pt
n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Percent Count 40%10%50% 415 1	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.7	0.7	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.7	0.6	0.7	0.6	0.8	0.6	0.7	0.5
Percent Count 40%10%50% 415 1	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.7	0.7	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.7	0.6	0.7	0.6	0.8	0.6	0.7	0.5
Percent Count 40%10%50% 415 1	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.7	0.7	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.7	0.6	0.7	0.6	0.8	0.6	0.7	0.5
Above Standard	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1

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Questions?

To learn more about Interim Assessments OR
To schedule an Interim Assessment Training in your area

Contact:

- Rebecca.Frerichs@state.sd.us
- DOEassessment@state.sd.us

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**Effective
Practices**

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SPED Connection for Public School Districts



+ Online platform that provides technical assistance on special education topics:

- Education policy
- Legal developments
- SmartStarts – topics in special education and requirements

+ Subscription is for all Public School District special education staff

+ Contact your public school district special education director for login access.

If you have any questions about your subscription access, please contact Wendy.Trujillo@state.sd.us.

LRP SPED Connections subscription is required to access the following resources:

- + [End avalanche of AI generated emails](#)
- + [Everything you need to know about students with dyslexia](#)
- + [Calm aggressive behaviors in students with autism](#)
- + ['It's not a dissertation': PLAAFP writing basics for directors, IEP teams](#)
- + [Bridge gap on placement disagreements](#)
- + Productive IEP meetings and Conflict Engagement
 - + [Demolish deadlock at IEP meetings](#)
 - + [Watch your words at IEP meetings](#)
 - + [Use IEP notes section to describe parent's input.](#)

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Accommodations for Interim Assessments

- Add to the [TIDE](#) (Test Information Distribution Engine)
- Accommodation request form in TIDE for:
 - Non-embedded accommodations
 - Special Accommodations
 - Print on Demand (assurances need to be yes)
 - ELA reading passages (requires a brief summary and assurances need to be yes)
 - Speech-to-text and/or Word Completion (requires a brief summary)
- If put in now, will be there for the spring assessment
- May need to work with Assessment Coordinator in your district

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Accountability

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Working to Improve Student Behavior



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Things to Consider with Behavior Plans and Goals

- The Behavior Plan is part of the IEP
- For Manifestation Determination purpose-Is the Behavior Plan being implemented correctly?
- Do the behavior plan and the student's goals address the missing SKILLS?
 - What is the current behavior we need to focus on?
 - Why is this the student's "go to" behavior?
 - What do we want them to do instead?
 - What SKILLS do we need to teach them?

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Billy



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What behavior is the student displaying that is getting him in trouble?

- + Blurting out inappropriate things or at inappropriate times

What is the student having trouble doing?

- + Gaining attention appropriately, self-regulating outbursts, maintaining focus

What is this behavior trying to tell me?

- + I want attention, I'm bored, I can't regulate my behaviors, I'm not aware of my actions

What skill(s) might this student need?

- + Regulating emotional responses, regulating activity levels, expressing needs/concerns, considering likely outcomes

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Needs Skills: Socially appropriate way of gaining attention
Regulating emotional responses
Expressing needs/wants

Needs Baseline: 10 consecutive days, Billy blurted out an average of 17 inappropriate comments per day across all classes during both lecture and independent work time.

Goal: When Billy has a comment he wants to say out loud in class, he will first use the previously taught "pause, think, write, decide" method to refrain from disrupting the class to gain attention with fewer than five inappropriate comments per day for 8 out of 10 consecutive days.

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What Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) Happens During Billy's Service Time?

Area	Frequency	Duration	Location
Behavior	5 x per week	15 minutes	Special Education room

- + Staff will introduce Billy to the notebook he will be using to track his thoughts
- + Staff will give Billy scenarios where he can practice what he will write (make note of which step is hardest for Billy to follow, pause, think, write, or decide)
- + Staff will help Billy decide if the comments are appropriate and should be shared by raising his hand to be called on, or if they should be shared privately with friends at a later time
- + Staff will review Billy's comments daily during SDI time
- + Staff should let Billy know the thoughts in his notebook/tracking form will not be graded or judged as long as they are not considered dangerous by staff.

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What to Include in the Behavior Impedes Learning (BIL) Section

- + Antecedent: Both lecture and independent work time
- + Behavior: Billy blurts out inappropriate phrases/questions
- + Consequence: Both teacher and peer attention

Educator prompts: Before class begins, an educator in each class should remind Billy of his "pause, think, write, decide" procedure and make sure he has his notebook to write in.

If Billy blurts out an inappropriate word or phrase during class, the educator should record the incident on the provided data collection form and prompt Billy back to his notebook.

If Billy goes without blurting or corrects himself back to his procedure, staff should quietly reinforce these behaviors and note them on the data collection form.

Functionally Equivalent Replacement Behavior- How can Billy still get peer/staff attention? This needs to be agreed upon with the classroom teachers. Frequent turn and talks, two minutes at the end of class to talk to whole class or with a friend, earn lunch with favorite staff or group of friends, etc.

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Reminder!

If you have a student on an IEP who is placed in a JDC/prison

- Please contact the sped director in the district where the JDC/prison is located within 48 hours to ensure the student receives their IEP services ASAP
- Please contact the sped director within 24 hours after the student has returned to your district to avoid staff going to the facility to provide services
- Districts where the JDC/prison is located should have an agreement with JDC/prison to communicate- doesn't always happen in a timely manner

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Writing IEPs for Students with Significant Needs (1 of 3)

The following are Key Points from recent workshops. A virtual training will be developed!

- **Present Levels of Academic Achievement & Functional Performance:**
 - Academic strengths/needs are separated into Reading/Writing/Math.
 - Gather skills-based data or observations through work samples, checklists, etc.
 - Behavior and Adaptive Behavior are separate areas.
- **Annual Goals with Benchmarks/Short-term Objectives**
 - If student is taking alternate assessment, then all academic goals must include **objectives** (subtasks like puzzle pieces) or **benchmarks** (milestones like steps on a ladder).
 - Every goal AND objective/benchmark must contain: Condition, Target Skill, Criteria.
 - Keep grade-level content in mind: Core Content Connectors (CCCs). Student is not **achieving** the same as peers, so instead they **access grade-level content** through AAAS/CCCs. Embed academics with daily living/life/transition skills.

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Writing IEPs for Students with Significant Needs (2 of 3)

➤ Description of Services

- Document Specially designed instruction (SDI) on annual goals versus Alternate Curriculum/Classes
- For example, student is in Life Skills Math for 60 minutes of math instruction at their ability level, but only 10 minutes will be SDI to address their Math goal.

➤ State/District Alternate Assessment

- [Alternate Assessment Participation Form](#) - Student must meet all three criteria. IEP decisions must be made in the best interest of the student; districts cannot enforce a local 1% cap.
- [District-wide Assessment Guidance Policy](#) - District must provide alternate district assessment.

➤ Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

- Accept/Reject statements follow the continuum of placements. Each statement is individualized.
- *How is my student's programming and locations different from their grade-level peers?*
 - Make sure the differences are in writing somewhere in the IEP or PPWN!

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Writing IEPs for Students with Significant Needs (3 of 3)

➤ Accommodations/Modifications/Supports

- *What does my student get that is different than their grade-level peers?* Put it in writing!
- Visual Schedule, If/Then Schedule, Sensory Breaks, Social Stories, Paraprofessional, etc.
- **Alternate Curriculum** or Modified Curriculum: Must specify which subjects/classes.
- **Alternate Report Cards**: Must be "as informative and effective" and "at least equivalent" in information and reporting frequency to the report card of grade-level students without disabilities. Can list "SPED." Caution: IEP Progress Report may not reflect entire instruction.
- **Alternate Grading**: In elementary, might list academic and social skills areas instead of grade-level standards. In middle/high school, might use Pass/Fail or Participated if ABC is not accurate achievement.
- Ensure that **PARENTS** understand how these **MODIFICATIONS** affect course completion and graduation requirements! Start this conversation when the IEP team discusses alternate assessment in 3rd grade.

- Contact Stacy.Holzbauer@state.sd.us with questions.

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Data

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Child Count

To Prepare:

Pull data from Infinite Campus and begin reviewing.

Make any necessary corrections in Infinite Campus before December 1, 2026.

To be included in the Child Count, students must have an IEP in effect and be receiving special education services on December 1, 2026.

Timelines for December 1, 2026 Child Count:

December 1, 2026: Districts may begin uploading data.

January 8, 2027: Deadline for Child Count submission.

February 12, 2027: Deadline for Final Certification.

Additional Information:

The 2026 Child Count submission information will be **available soon** at:

<https://doe.sd.gov/ofm/data-childcount.aspx>

Contact your region representative with any questions

To reset your login credentials, please send an email to: Farha.labonnnya@state.sd.us

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New- Child Count Comparison Tool

How to Locate New-Child Count Comparison Tool:

- Go to <https://doe.sd.gov/ofm/data-childcount.aspx>
- Under the December Child Count Reporting Documents find the New- Child Count Comparison Tool

Special Education December Child Count

Child Count is an unduplicated count of all children with disabilities ages 3 - 21 receiving special education and related services according to an individualized education program (IEP) on December 1st of each year.

[Log-on to the Child Count Data Collection](#)

Child Count 2026 Timelines:

- Districts may begin uploads on December 1, 2026
- Child Count must be submitted by January 8, 2027
- Final Certification must be completed by February 12, 2027



[December Child Count Reporting Documents](#)

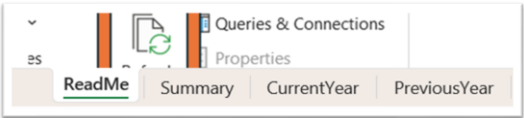
- [Instructions - Child Count Data Submission](#)
- [Desk Guide - Special Education Data Reporting /pages 104-118](#)
- [Instructions for Reporting Private School Students](#)
- [Districts Required to Report Private School Students](#)
- [Helpful Tips for Successful Child Count Data Submission](#)
- [New- Child Count Comparison Tool](#)**

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New- Child Count Comparison Tool

New-Child Count Comparison Tool:

- For Instructions use the “Read me” tab in the data tool



- After Running the tool, the **Status** column results should look like the following
 - If the student appears in both the Current Year and Previous Year data, the status is **Found**.
 - If the student appears only in the Current Year data, the status is **New**.
 - If the student appears only in the Previous Year data, the status is **Not Found**.

Found
Found
Found
Found
New
New
New
New
New
Not Found
Not Found
Not Found
Not Found
Not Found
Not Found
Not Found

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New- Child Count Comparison Tool

Caution

The tool uses the **district name** and **state student ID** to compare records, so if a student moves to a different district, they may appear as **Not Found** in the previous district and **New** in the current district.

Also, **the tool does not check whether a student's special education record is still open or whether an exit or end code has been entered.**

It only compares the records between the two years.

So, districts should review the results and check any differences against their records in Infinite Campus.

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Miscellaneous

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Congratulations to the Governor Awards Winners

Denise Stiles, Douglas School District
Outstanding Transition Services



Dan Rounds, Transition Services Liaison Project –
Distinguished Service



- More information on the Governor Awards and list of all award winners can be found on the [Department of Human Services](#) website.

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SD Advisory Panel for Children with Disabilities



2026-2027 Priority Area: Identify gaps in resources and professional development for Paraprofessionals.

Asking districts to submit responses to:

- What resources are you currently using to prepare your paraprofessionals?
- Would you be willing to share resources, not developed by the state, that you are using for training paras and to determine role within the district?
- What additional supports do your paraprofessionals need in order to support students with disabilities they are working with?
- Email any information you would like to share to Wendy.Trujillo@state.sd.us

<https://doe.sd.gov/sped/advisory.aspx>

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Order Accessible Textbooks and Educational Materials for the 2027-28SY

- South Dakota Accessible Library Services, together with a federal program through the American Printing House for the Blind (APH) can access textbooks, digital resources, and hands-on educational materials for K-12 students who are visually impaired or blind and who have qualified under IDEA.
- This program can improve student engagement and achievement; it reduces delays in delivering accessible content and supports inclusive education across South Dakota schools.
- [Find out more](#); for questions, contact [Virginia Kaus](#) or fill out the [request form](#).
- Materials for the 2027-2028 school year must be requested by March 10, 2027.

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SEP Professional Learning Reminders

+ DOE Learning Platform

- Register at <https://sded.sd.gov/>

Issue	Remedy
Need to cancel registration	Cancellations are done in the learning platform. Please do so as soon as you know you are unable to attend.
Course is full	<i>If</i> there is a waiting list, add your name. You will be added to the course/training if a space opens and you will receive notification.
Registration has closed, but you would like to attend	Contact the DOE contact listed in the registration. Space may be limited and those who are not registered, but show up, may be turned away.
Didn't receive continuing education contact hour certificate	Certificates can be found in the Learning Platform. If there is a requirement to complete a survey or activity in order to receive the contact hours, please do so.

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Call for Presentations

- Calling all educators, professionals, and special education experts!
- We are looking forward to another year of bringing together presenters who are willing to share their expertise, experiences, and resources with conference attendees. Your contributions help create meaningful learning opportunities and support the continued growth of the special education field across South Dakota.
- **Submit Your Presenter Proposal by Nov. 24.**



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October is Dyslexia Awareness Month



The International Dyslexia Association (IDA, 2025) updated definition of dyslexia:

“Dyslexia is a **specific learning disability** characterized by difficulties in word reading and/or spelling that involve accuracy, speed, or both and vary depending on the orthography. These difficulties occur along a **continuum of severity** and persist even with instruction that is effective for the individual’s peers. The causes of dyslexia are complex and involve combinations of **genetic, neurobiological, and environmental influences** that interact throughout development. Underlying **difficulties with phonological and morphological processing are common but not universal**, and **early oral language weaknesses** often foreshadow literacy challenges. Secondary consequences include reading comprehension problems and reduced reading and writing experience that can impede growth in language, knowledge, written expression, and overall academic achievement. Psychological well-being and employment opportunities also may be affected. Although identification and targeted instruction are important at any age, language and literacy support before and during the early years of education is particularly effective.”

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Dyslexia Resources

+ For Families:

- [SD DOE Dyslexia Brochure](#)
- [National Center on Improving Literacy - Literacy Resources for Families](#)
- [International Dyslexia Association - Dyslexia Fact Sheets](#)

+ For Schools:

- [SD DOE Dyslexia Handbook](#)
- [International Dyslexia Association - Dyslexia in the Classroom Guide](#)

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Resource Reminder! Behavior and Reading Tips for Parents

<https://doe.sd.gov/sped/mtss.aspx>



+	Overview of Programs
+	Join the next PBIS Cohort
+	Current Cohort Resources
-	Parent Resources
	• May 2026 - Reading Tip • April 2026 - Reading Tip • March 2026 - Reading Tip • Feb. 2026 - Reading Tip • Jan. 2026 - Reading Tip • Dec. 2025 - Reading Tip • Nov. 2025 - Reading Tip • Oct. 2025 - Reading Tip • Sept. 2025 - Reading Tip

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Please share the SPED Webinar registration information with your district or agency special education professionals!

Next SPED Webinar

November 17, 2026

SPED Webinar PowerPoint are posted at:

<https://doe.sd.gov/sped/directors.aspx>

A recording is available for 2 weeks after the webinar and can be accessed by reaching out to your [Regional Representative](#).