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SECRETARY OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

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GOVERNOR

April 7, 2025

MEMORANDUM

TO: Superintendents, Charter School Administrators, District Test Coordinators

FROM: Mariana D. Padilla, Secretary of Public Education 

RE: School Year 2025–2026 Assessment & Accountability Program Requirements

Using data as a basis for information gathering and decision making is a core component of New Mexico's Multi-Layered System of Supports and school improvement. The New Mexico Public Education Department (PED) encourages school leaders to identify local instructional priorities and to design a local, balanced assessment system (e.g., formative assessment strategies, progress monitoring, universal screening, interim/benchmarking, summative) aligned to those priorities. While local education agencies (LEAs) have the flexibility to include additional assessments beyond state-supported and federally-required assessments, this memorandum provides clarifications and guidance for the upcoming academic year.

GENERAL REMINDERS

Establishing, Reorganizing, or Closing Schools

The accountability model for school identification, as displayed on [NM Vistas](#), begins with correctly identifying accountable schools that serve students in grades K–12. Any change in a school district or charter school's organizational pattern, including the establishment or closing of a school, shall have the secretary's approval prior to implementation. LEAs that are making any organizational changes, including opening, closing, merging, adding, or removing grade levels for SY 2025–26, must submit an [application for permission](#) by June 3, 2025.

Assessment Administration Requirements

All students must be assessed following the state’s [test assignment guidance](#). LEAs are responsible for correctly assigning and administering required state assessments to all students. The PED does not have an allowance for a parent or guardian to “opt-out” of required state assessments on behalf of their students.

Designating District Test Coordinators, Accountability Leads, & Technology Coordinators

Each year, district and charter school leaders must formally designate the primary and secondary district test coordinator (DTC) and technology coordinator per 6.10.7 NMAC to oversee official assessment business and to gain access to secure test management portals. A current list of DTCs and accountability leads is [available here](#). The PED asks that superintendents and charter school administrators complete [this DTC and accountability lead designation form](#) for SY 2025–26 by August 1, 2025, in order for DTCs to register for the fall AREA conference.

Fall AREA Conference

The Assessment, Research, Evaluation, and Accountability (AREA) Division will host the [Fall 2025 Assessment and Accountability Conference](#) on September 3–4, 2025, at Isleta Resort in Albuquerque. This conference is an opportunity for district test coordinators to fulfill their required annual training requirements per 6.10.7 NMAC. The conference will include best practices and current research in assessment and accountability. Conference attendees will include DTCs, instructional leaders, LEA accountability data managers, administrators, and other LEA staff members.

SY 2025–26 Assessment Calendar and Training Schedule

The SY 2025–26 draft assessment schedule is [available here](#). Additionally, a preliminary [2025–26 DTC Assessment Training Schedule](#) is available.

SY 2025–26 Accountability Public Schedule of Events & Office Hours

The SY 2025–26 draft accountability schedule is [available here](#). Please keep in mind that the 2024–25 ESEA Accountability Cycle is calculated during the 2025–26 SY and utilizes Cohort 2024 graduation rate data and Spring 2025 assessment results. This draft schedule will continue to be updated with links and resources as they become available. Please note that the requirement for publishing local report cards has been added to the schedule.

Assessments & Content Standards Alignment

All state assessments are aligned to current New Mexico-adopted content standards.

Assessment	State-adopted Content Standards
ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS for ELLs	WIDA’s English Language Development Standards
New Mexico Measures of Student Success and Achievement (NM-MSSA)	Common Core State Standards (CCSS) Language Arts and Mathematics
SAT School Day	
SBA Spanish Language Arts	Spanish Language Arts Standards
Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) Alternate Assessment	Essential Elements in Language Arts , Mathematics , and Science
New Mexico Assessment of Science Readiness (NM-ASR)	New Mexico STEM Ready! Science Standards

Additional information, including fact sheets, test blueprints, state-adopted Performance Level Descriptors (PLDs) and scale scores, accommodations information, and practice test resources can be found within the Educator Resources sections of the [PED's Assessment website](#).

ASSESSMENT PROGRAM AT-A-GLANCE

Schools by Designation Accountability Model Designation	Balanced Assessment System Measures						
	Assessment Literacy for Understanding Assessment Data & Reports ¹	Screeners: Dyslexia ¹ Gifted & EL ¹	K–2 Amira ISIP at BOY, MOY, & EOY for Early Math & Literacy ¹	K–2 Amira ISIP Monthly Progress Monitoring for Students at Performance Levels 1-3 ¹	3–8 Interim Assessments Math & Reading	Grade 10 Fall PSAT/NM SQT ¹	ESSA End-of-Year Summative Assessments ²
Spotlight	Encouraged	Required	Required	Required	Required	Encouraged	Required
Traditional	Encouraged	Required	Required	Required	Required	Encouraged	Required
TSI	Encouraged	Required	Required	Required	Required	Encouraged	Required
CSI	Required	Required	Required	Required	NM-iMSSA Required ¹	Required	Required
CSI-MRI	Required	Required	Required	Required	NM-iMSSA Required ¹	Required	Required

¹These programs are available to all districts and charters at no cost.

²The state pays for the majority of ESSA assessment costs, and [districts and charters pay a portion](#) of some ESSA assessments.

NEW REQUIREMENTS, SUPPORTS, & ENHANCEMENTS

Use of State-Specified Interim Assessments for CSI & CSI-MRI Schools

Schools identified as Comprehensive Support and Improvement Schools (CSI) and More Rigorous Interventions (CSI-MRI) from the 2023–24 Accountability Reporting Cycle are required to utilize the state funded interim Measures of Student Success and Achievement (iMSSA). ***No exceptions will be made.*** The PED Assessment Bureau will be in contact with these designated schools by April 30.

Grade 10 Fall PSAT/NMSQT Requirement for CSI & CSI-MRI Schools

Schools identified as Comprehensive Support and Improvement Schools (CSI) and More Rigorous Interventions (CSI-MRI) from the 2023–24 Accountability Reporting Cycle will be required to administer PSAT/NMSQT to grade 10 students this fall. The PED will contact DTCs for these schools by April 30 to provide additional information on trainings, accommodations deadlines, and timelines. Please refer to the [draft SY 2025–26 PED assessment calendar](#) for this testing window. The PSAT/NMSQT is free to all 10th-grade students through the PED's College and Career Readiness Bureau (CCRB). Please contact Dr. Melissa DeLaurentis at melissa.delarentis@ped.nm.gov with any questions regarding PSAT/NMSQT.

Supporting High Schools with Preliminary SGP Calculations

More than 75% of high school students in New Mexico already participate in the fall grade 10 PSAT/NMSQT administration. Given this already high participation rate, the PED is determining the feasibility of developing a growth model to support high schools and for future use in the state's accountability model. The PED will review the fall 2024 and the upcoming fall 2025 PSAT/NMSQT administrative data to conduct preliminary student growth percentile (SGP) calculations for those districts and charter schools that have a minimum of 95% grade 10 PSAT/NMSQT participation. These preliminary SGPs will be provided to high schools but will not be applied to the upcoming 2024–25 Accountability Cycle. Again, the PSAT/NMSQT is free to all grade 10 students through the PED's CCRB.

Enhancements to Istation's Indicators of Progress (ISIP) & Monthly Progress Monitoring

In July 2024, Istation merged with Amira, a company that specializes in providing AI-driven, personalized reading support and tutoring grounded in the Science of Reading. The merging allows for the integration of the Amira AI into ISIP to create a more advanced and effective literacy assessment tool. The integration of Amira's AI technology into the legacy ISIP assessment—**now called Amira ISIP**—enhances the assessment experience by combining observational curriculum-based measurement with in-assessment adaptivity.

This merger allows Amira's real-time voice recognition and AI analysis to power ISIP's digital framework, enabling **more precise measurement of oral reading fluency, automatic error detection, and immediate feedback**.

During the 2025–26 school year, all K–2 students are required to take the BOY, MOY, and EOY Amira ISIP assessment. The following should be noted for this coming school year:

- **Amira ISIP Enhancements:** For the upcoming school year, the ISIP has expanded to include Rapid Automatized Naming (RAN), Oral Reading Fluency (ORF), Phoneme Segmentation, Phonological Deletion, Phoneme Substitution, Listening Comprehension Retell, Receptive Vocabulary, and Phonological Working. The changes to ISIP are [explained here for each grade level](#). The assessment can be completed in about 20 minutes or less and will provide criterion-referenced reports anchored to NM Standards, as well as the norm-referenced reports that are available now.
- **Required Monthly Progress Monitoring:** State proficiency rates in literacy and math make clear that students who are falling behind must be provided with additional supports. Students who are not proficient must be progress-monitored monthly to track academic progress. Monthly progress monitoring is critical for struggling readers because it allows educators to track their students' growth and pinpoint areas where they may need additional support. By identifying these gaps early, educators can intervene before these issues compound. With consistent progress monitoring data, teachers can tailor their instruction to focus on the areas that are most challenging for individual students. Additionally, students who are not proficient (Performance Levels 1, 2, and 3) on the Amira ISIP must be progress-monitored monthly to track academic progress. Headphones with microphones are allowable expenses by Title I-A funding if included in the Title I school's schoolwide program plan and the Early Literacy Allocation in SEG.

- **Optional and Required Amira ISIP Educator Trainings:** All first-year teachers in Kindergarten, 1st, and 2nd grade — teaching literacy and math are required to attend local or regional Istation trainings. Given the enhancements to the Amira ISIP, all educators using Istation are encouraged to attend a training. The training schedules and registrations will be communicated to coincide with the Amira ISIP professional development plan [outlined here](#). Both onsite and virtual webinars (to be recorded and available on [Canvas](#)) will be available throughout the 2025–26 school year. Travel and substitute reimbursement costs for professional development are allowable expenses by Title I-A funding if included in the Title I school’s schoolwide program plan and the Early Literacy Allocation in SEG.

Revised Accountability Portal Application

In response to district and charter feedback to improve data validation and expand functionality, the platform formerly known as SOAP is currently undergoing improvements and has been renamed to SAGE (Secure Accountability Gateway for Education).

The new SAGE application will retain all the functionality of the SOAP application, but will allow users to reset passwords, allow LEA administrators to add users within their district or charter, and streamline internal data upload and storage procedures. The SAGE application is planned to replace SOAP in September.

New Optional Resource for English Learners

The WIDA MODEL (Measure of Developing English Language) is a suite of English language proficiency assessments for grades K–12. As a flexible, on-demand language proficiency assessment, the WIDA MODEL can be administered at any time during the school year, depending on the needs of the district, school, charter school, teacher, or student. The test is based on [WIDA’s English Language Development Standards for K–12](#). The WIDA MODEL could be covered by districts and charter schools with supplemental Title III funding or Title I-A funding per the Title I school’s schoolwide program plan or for students identified as eligible under a Title I targeted assistance program.

REQUIRED SCREENERS AND PROGRESS MONITORING TOOLS

Early Development Instrument (EDI) and the Childhood Experiences Questionnaire (CHEQ)

The PED, in partnership with the Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD), have contracted with the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) Center for Healthier Children, Families, and Communities to administer the Early Development Instrument (EDI) and the Childhood Experiences Questionnaire (CHEQ). [The EDI](#) meets the kindergarten assessment required by the NMAC 6.30.5.12 and replaces the KOT (Kindergarten Observation Tool).

The CHEQ is a parent/caregiver survey that provides important contextual information about children’s early experiences prior to kindergarten. The CHEQ will be administered to parents this fall. A subcommittee of the Assessment and Accountability Advisory Committee (AAAC) is helping advise the PED and ECECD on how best to collect this survey data from parents/caregivers. More information on the CHEQ administration will be communicated to LEAs at the start of the school year.

WIDA Screener for English Learner Identification

The WIDA Screener for Kindergarten and the WIDA Screener for Grades 1–12 are the only PED-approved English language proficiency screening assessments. These screening assessments are part of the English learner identification process for K–12 students entering New Mexico public schools for the first time. To ensure consistent identification procedures, it is critical that district, school, and charter school staff involved with the English learner identification process are properly trained and that practices are aligned with standardized statewide entrance procedures for potential English learners.

The PED’s Language and Culture Division offers English Learner Identification Process Training, which is available in [Canvas](#). The course is required annually to ensure that district, school, and charter school representatives understand the purpose of the Language Usage Survey (LUS), know how to answer parents’/guardians’ questions about the LUS, provide support to ensure the LUS is presented in a language the parents/guardians understand, and avoid the erroneous identification of potential English learners. Please contact Ann Chavez at ann.chavez@ped.nm.gov with questions on the English learner identification process and the WIDA Screeners.

Dyslexia Screening for First Grade

Per Section 22-13-32 NMSA 1978, all first-grade students must be screened for dyslexia by the 40th day of school and within two weeks of initial enrollment for students new to New Mexico. The screeners remain the same as last year:

- Teach Me to Read (English screener; printable PDF)
- Lexercise (English screener; student responses are entered online by the teacher; one subtest has a printable PDF)
- Amira Istation’s ISIP (Spanish screener; same as ISIP for first grade online)
- IDEL (Spanish screener; printable PDF)

Screener training and printable materials are available in [Canvas](#) as self-paced course modules. For questions related to dyslexia screening requirements, please contact Christy Quesada at christine.quesada@ped.nm.gov.

Gifted Screening for All Students by Third Grade

Per [6.31.3 NMAC: Gifted and Talented Students](#), all New Mexico students should be screened for gifted by the end of the third grade. Each LEA should establish procedures for this universal screening process. For additional information regarding various gifted screeners, assessments, and training, please contact Christopher Vian at christopher.vian@ped.nm.gov.

3–8 Interim Assessment for Mathematics and Language Arts

All districts and charter schools serving grades 3–8 will continue to administer either a locally procured or the [state-provided interim assessment](#) (iMSSA) at the beginning-of-year, middle-of-year, and end-of-year windows for the purposes of benchmarking student progress. This interim data must be tied to the NM School DASH Annual and 90-Day Plan for all schools. The PED Assessment Bureau will not require LEAs to submit summary interim assessment reports at the end of the year. Please keep in mind the reference to *state-specified* interim assessments for designated schools in CSI and CSI-MRI status on page 2 of this memorandum.

FEDERALLY REQUIRED ESSA ASSESSMENTS

Districts and charter schools must follow the [PED test assignment guidelines](#) in order to meet federal assessment participation rates for student populations.

ACCESS for ELLs

The WIDA ACCESS for English Language Learners meets New Mexico’s federal requirement to provide an annual assessment of academic English language proficiency. It is annually administered to identified English learners in grades K–12. ACCESS for ELLs measures a student’s overall proficiency and progress toward English proficiency in four domains: Listening, Reading, Speaking, and Writing. The test is based on [WIDA’s English Language Development Standards for K–12](#).

NM-MSSA

The New Mexico Measures of Student Success and Achievement (NM-MSSA) is New Mexico’s statewide summative assessment for mathematics and language arts and is administered at the end of grades 3–8. The NM-MSSA is designed to measure students’ proficiency in grade-level New Mexico Common Core State Standards.

NM-ASR

The New Mexico Assessment of Science Readiness (NM-ASR) is New Mexico’s statewide summative assessment for science. The standards require the integration of Science and Engineering Practices, Disciplinary Core Ideas, and Crosscutting Concepts to explain phenomena and solve problems. The NM-ASR is designed to measure students’ proficiency in the New Mexico [STEM Ready! Science Standards](#) in grades 5, 8, and 11.

SAT School Day

The SAT is a national assessment developed by College Board and aligned to New Mexico’s high school academic standards to measure knowledge and skills that can consistently predict a student’s success in college and workforce training programs. All grade 11 students in New Mexico public schools are expected to participate in the spring SAT School Day, except for those students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who take the state’s alternate assessment.

Assessments in Spanish as an Accommodation

Assessments are available in Spanish for NM-MSSA and NM-ASR for qualifying English learners. Additionally, high school ELs have the option to take the SBA Spanish Language Arts assessment in lieu of SAT School Day Reading & Writing.

Alternate Assessments for Students with the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities

General education assessments (e.g., SAT School Day, NM-MSSA, NM-ASR, ACCESS) are not appropriate for a small population of students identified as students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, as determined by a legal plan. For this special population of students, Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) is the alternate assessment to measure math, language arts, and science achievement. Additionally, if the student is also an English learner, Alternate ACCESS for ELLs is the appropriate test assignment. These assessments are aligned to alternate academic achievement standards that are unique to this population. The student’s Individualized Education Program (IEP) must indicate placement in alternate assessments for math, ELA, and science rather than the SAT, MSSA, ASR, and general ACCESS for ELLs assessments.

National Assessment of Educational Progress

The beginning of the 2025–26 school year marks a main NAEP year. School districts identified for the NAEP sample will be notified by early fall.

OTHER AVAILABLE CURRICULAR ASSESSMENTS

Avant STAMP

All students enrolled in a state-funded bilingual multicultural education program who have not already tested and achieved language proficiency in the home or heritage language of the BMEP are required to complete the Avant STAMP assessment once per year to measure growth towards language proficiency. Achieving proficiency on the Avant STAMP and specific coursework requirements are one option for a student to earn the State Seal of Bilingualism and Biliteracy (SSBB). For a complete list of testable languages, please visit the [Avant STAMP resources page](#). For further information on options to earn the SSBB, please contact Daisy Barnard at daisy.barnard@ped.nm.gov.

Advanced Placement

The New Mexico Public Education Department strongly believes that all students should have equal access to the full benefit of Advanced Placement® (AP) coursework. AP students do college-level work in high school, and if they score a three or higher on the AP exam, they can earn college credit. The PED will again cover a large portion of the exam fee for economically disadvantaged students under the College Board's AP Exam Fee Reduction guidelines, resulting in a total cost to students of \$3 per exam. The testing window for AP exams is scheduled for May 2026 and will be added to the testing calendar. More information and deadlines concerning the NM Fee Reduction Program are available at www.APNewMexico.org. For more information on Advanced Placement, please contact Dr. Melissa DeLaurentis at melissa.delarentis@ped.nm.gov.

For general questions about assessment or accountability requirements, please contact the AREA team at PED.Assessment@ped.nm.gov or PED.Accountability@ped.nm.gov.

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