

Assessments Friday Focus Webinar Series 2026-2027 Assessments Overview for the 2026-2027 School Year-Meeting Transcript



Spangenberg, Bethany

Good afternoon. Welcome everyone to our Friday Focus webinar. My name is Bethany Spangenberg. I'm the Deputy Associate Superintendent of Assessment and today we're just going to kind of look at assessment overview for this upcoming school year.

Okay, for our agenda today, we're going to just have a quick reminder of what are the summative assessments are used for. We're going to provide an update on testing windows, request for proposals, look at the Friday Focus schedule that we have planned for the year, and provide additional resources that are coming and information that you may need.

So just to remind us, the purpose of summative assessments, there are lots of kind of purposes that we use it for. Primarily, we are to collect data to be used for accountability. So that's what ESSA says, that we have to have these assessments that are used in our accountability systems. And really, it's that big picture measure at the LEA, the school level, or the state level to make some decisions to look at programs and to identify who needs additional support. These assessments that we have here in Arizona were not designed specifically for that individual student level data or teacher evaluations. We try to provide a high-quality assessment that can be used, is often used for other purposes, but I wanted to remind everybody that really this is for that big picture decision making at the high level. So, as we go into our assessments this year, we know that you have your entire assessment systems, you have formative, interim, or benchmark assessments that you're using to really help with that instructional piece, and then we just kind of collect a snapshot of what might have happened in the year.

So, I think this is a hot topic. We've been getting a lot of questions. So, we're really, really happy to announce we had a final approvals just this morning on the AASA, AzSCI and ACT and ACT Aspire test windows. So, AASA and AzSCI are moving to the same window that was under HB 2032. So, that will be April 12th to May 7th.

AASA computer-based testing must be completed by May 7th for that reading and math online, but the oral reading fluency and writing must still be completed within the first two weeks, so by April 23rd. AASA paper-based testing also needs to be completed by April 23rd.

And then for AzSCI, all of those units must be completed by May 7th. And then we will have reporting to you on May 26th. So previously, most of the reports were available to you on May 25th. HB 2032 said May 26th, so we'll definitely make sure you have them by May 26th. And we are also working with our vendor to make sure that you have a MOWR report.

Our goal is that May 15th date that we had earlier so that you can make your program decisions and identify parents of students who need those supports. So, we are trying to get that indicator to you a little bit earlier. So hopefully by May 15th. And when we have more of that information, those details, we will get that out to you. So along with that, HB 2032 didn't apply to ACT or ACT Aspire, but we looked at a little bit of changes for that as well. So, ACT is pretty much going to be the same. We have our test window one and test window two. Those will be the weeks of March 22nd to April 16th. Reminder that ACT does not have that administration on Monday's, but you would be able to do ACT Aspire on Monday's if you prefer. And then also ACT Aspire paper-based testing must be completed by April 2nd.

So similar to before, you do have those two weeks this year but making sure that paper testing is completed just for the processing so that we can make sure that everything is included when we have the reporting as well.

So, our assessment overview, we usually have these posted. It is currently posted, but recently. So, if you need to clear your cache or just wait, it'll show up for you. But you will have the picture here of assessment overview for our achievement assessment. So that will outline all of this information that I provided just now and kind of give you some more details of those dates.

Okay, looking at our testing windows for English language proficiency assessments, those haven't changed. Those have been posted for a while. So AZELLA Placement or the screener as it's sometimes called and the Alt-ELPA screener is currently open through into May. We are looking to see if the Alt-ELPA screener will be available through May 14th, just like the AZELLA Placement screener is. At this time, plan to have all of your Alt-ELPA screeners completed by May 7th and we'll let you know if we can give you that additional week. At this time, we also have a AZELLA reassessment or the summative and the Alt-ELPA summative that will be open from February 1st to March 19th. So, no changes to that and that is currently on the assessment overview, the updated version, it'll all be the same.

MSAA, we don't have those test windows yet. It was not due to HB 2032. That is

because we don't have a contract for this year yet. We are in that process; I'll get into a little more details later, but until that contract is awarded, we cannot confirm when the test windows will be. We do hope to have those test windows confirmed in October. And we are looking at about the same thing that we've always done. We just aren't able to confirm that without the vendor to let us know if that's going to be possible.

And then the assessment overview, you're going to see this test window is going to be coming soon. I know soon, October is not necessarily soon, but we are going to get that to you as soon as possible. So, when you see that updated version, you will not see any updates for MSAA.

I do see a question before we move on to the next topic. Did we lose 2 weeks in the test window or is it just shifted 2 weeks down? You still have the four weeks to test, so we did not lose time. It's just shifted back. So back two weeks for AASA and AzSCI. Well, AzSCI moved windows to match AASA. AASA moved back two weeks but you do still get the four weeks.

That's all the questions I see so far. We will continue. If you have additional questions, please put them in the chat.

Request for proposal. So those RFPs, AZELLA was awarded in April. We've been making lots of communications about that. The screener has opened. Everything is moving forward. So AZELLA team will continue to provide those updates in their different formats.

We do have some Friday Focus webinars on those. They have their AZELLAology, so lots of ways that we're trying to make sure that you have all of this information with our new contract that was just awarded. MSAA RFP closed on July 15th. We are working through that process and trying to come to a consensus on a recommendation for the state board. We hope to have that on the state board agenda for September, and that is for the spring 2027 administration. So, as I mentioned, we don't currently have a contract for this next administration yet. We hope to have that very soon so that we can start making those plans and providing information to everyone.

As far as the achievement assessments, the high school closed on July 28th, and the committee is going through that process to find a recommendation for the state board. We hope to be able to get that on the agenda for the state board sometime this fall, and that will be not until the spring 2028 administration. So, nothing is going to change with our high school assessments as far as our contracts this year. So just

keep doing what you're doing, the things that you already know how to do. And then when we get to it, we will later after this year's administration, we will provide any updates that you need to know for the spring 2028 administration the following school year. Achievement, so AASA and AzSCI are 3 through 8 tests. That RFP is currently posted and will close on September 1st. So, we will go through that process also of evaluating the bids and providing a recommendation to the state board. Again, this one is the same for the spring 2028 administration. Nothing with AASA or AzSCI. The contracts are not changing anything this year. So just keep doing what you're doing for those as well. And not exactly sure on the timelines because that is still posted, but we will have more information about that later this fall or early winter. But again, that does not apply to the school year. So don't worry about that one until after this next administration.

Any questions for the RFPs?

Not seeing anything yet, so I will continue.

Friday Focus schedule. I'm not going to read these all to you, but as you can see, there are quite a few of them. We do have lots of different topics related to assessment, but also with some partners. So AZELLA topics, alternate achievement topics, also a combination of the presentations from the standards and assessment and accountability team. So, we're all kind of working together to give you a lot of information. Hopefully it's very timely. Just like this one, we were going to record them all. We will be posting them. So, I know there's a lot. You might not be able to commit every Friday to that. But if there's specific topics that you're looking for, you are certainly welcome to join us or listen to the recording afterwards. This is just the first part of the schedule. There's actually a slide with more topics that we will go through into February for these Friday Focus webinars. And then we kind of pause for a little while just with testing. Everybody is very, very busy. We are and you are, so, we'll break a little bit for those so you guys can focus on that testing. And then we will resume on May 7th, looking ahead into the next school year and we'll provide any updates that we have available. Especially we know we have new contracts and you guys are probably going to be very curious how, what is changing or what is not changing with that. So, we will provide more of that on May 7th. So right now, keep in the back of your head, there are some changes to contracts

coming up. Don't know exactly what that's going to mean as far as implementation. You don't need to worry about that before May 7th.

I did see the AP testing schedule starts on May 3rd, so the state testing window overlaps a full week. It sounds like it will be. That was due to HB 2032 so there was a bill that was signed that said that we had to push the testing window back to the second week of April. So that is why we pushed it back. And I do recognize that it could cause some conflicts with some of the other things, activities that you have going on in your schools.

So, we did increase our Friday Focus. That is partially because we are not going to have our assessments conference this year. Typically, we would have had it this fall. We had it every other year for a few years. But we're enhancing our Friday Focus. What we are able to share with you to try to give you a lot of information, have an opportunity for you to connect with us, hear some different things, ask some questions. Instead of our assessments conference, we're looking as an agency to do something a little bit different. And that's a multi-unit conference that we're planning for June 29th to July 1st, 2027. That is going to be the Arizona Excellence in Education Conference. This is going to be instead of the assessments conference and Teachers Institute Leading Change. So, we are looking at more of a comprehensive assessment, not assessment, a comprehensive conference that includes standards assessment and accountability, making sure that entire system is represented and that we are there to support you. So, you can plan for that, the Arizona Excellence in Education or AE2 conference, and that will be at the Arizona Grand Resort next summer.

And as we have more information, we will make sure that we provide that to you. All right, so the house bill, our HB 2032 was for grades 3 through 8. So that's where you're going to see the overlap. The high school assessments were actually moved to, both of them are going to be in the ACT window. Let me go back to that a little bit. Sorry, way back here. So that high school testing will be done on April 16th. So, if you have your AP testing in May, you will not have an overlap for the high school that would just be through grades 3 through 8. So that's why we are able to, this year, yeah, sorry, this year, AzSCI will also be into May 7th, but this is our last year of high school AzSCI so I do recognize that this year is going to be a little bit more

complex, but going into next year, we will not have a separate high school science assessment. So, we just have to deal with it for one year and then we won't have to worry about that conflict.

Sorry, thank you for the reminder.

All right, I know we shared some new information about dates this afternoon. That was really right, hot off the presses, ready to go out to share to you. So, a lot of those resources that had anything with the testing calendars, we are updating those. Those will be available to you very soon. We recognize that they're not all there right now. The assessments overview has been updated, but you can look for a detailed testing calendars, the assessment flyer, infographics, all of those other resources that may have changed due to our change in contracts, our change in test windows, those kinds of things are coming and you will be able to see those posted very, very soon. Don't have an exact date, but I think we're hoping in the next couple of weeks. But Candis, please let me know if that's not accurate.

Also, just additional information, wanted to let you guys know, make sure that you were aware that Navvy is also offered again this year. So that is our formative assessment tool that's aligned to Arizona standards. We already have the contract in place. Previous years when we were trying to offer this, the contract was kind of delayed into the school year, but that is all ready for you to sign up. It is statewide, ELA/math for all grades. So, if you're interested in that formative assessment tool, it is at no cost to you. That is under the AASA contract here at the state so we are covering that cost for you to be able to use the formative assessment tool. If you want more information about what it is or if you need some additional resources, there is a Pearson support site that has lots of information on it including we had our Friday Focus webinar last week, some of that same information about what it is, how to use it, that's posted on that website and plenty of other additional resources for you to learn about the product if you're not familiar with it. And then also if you want to sign up, the link is here. It's also on that Pearson support page. So, you can just kind of fill out a short form to get you started. It'll connect you directly with the team that's able to help you implement that. All of the setup and everything goes directly through Pearson, it does not come through ADE. So, you have to make sure you fill out that form to show that you're interested so that they can reach out to you and

start working with you to get that implemented. There is Navvy available for high school. It is not necessarily aligned to ACT, but it is somewhat, at least somewhat aligned to our Arizona standards. So, the way that they had developed Navvy was that you should be able to find it as a good formative assessment tool. It is standards based so if you find something that doesn't quite align with what you're already doing, you just can avoid those standards when you do those checks but it is available. They do have this formative assessment tool in high school as well. We are not requiring you to. We just heard from people in schools that some of the assessment tools that you were using were not effective, or maybe there's minimal resources to be able to purchase formative assessment tools. So that's just one way that we're trying to help you if you feel like you need it or want to use it, it's available to you. It's not something that, you know, we really want to push on you. There's a little bit of a difference if you're in a school improvement and they have benchmarks that they're able to kind of track your progress and work with you on those. But as far as the formative assessment tool, that is 100% optional if that's something that you feel like you need.

We will have Navvy available at no cost for this school year, but as I mentioned, this is the last school year of our contract. So, I don't know what that looks like going forward. So, I can't guarantee you anything after this current school year. But again, when we have more information about what is included in that contract for next year, we will share that with you.

Are the progress checks or benchmarks predicted of AASA outcomes? Ideally, yes, but we are still working through studies to confirm if it actually is. We do all the data, the preliminary data that we looked at showed a strong correlation between Navvy usage and performance on AASA. We're still looking at that a little bit deeper because just implementation can be all over the board. But we have heard narratively that teachers, school leaders were very impressed with the results and the support that they get, having that data immediately available and then also resources to help support next steps for instruction.

One more piece of information that I want to share with you is that remote proctoring is not yet available. We do not have it set up for the spring 2027 administration. But again, in the May webinar, you know, we have new contracts

coming up. We'll see if that's something that we will be able to offer and we'll have that update in May.

So, I will go through, there's a few more questions that I can look at, but I did see that there was somebody wanted to go back to the calendar and I think you probably mostly want this one.

Thank you, Candis responded. The SPV request process will be similar. The request window opens September 14th.

What is replacing AzSCI at High School? So, the RFP that was publicly posted and available for anybody to look at said that the high school assessment has to have a science component as well. So, whatever we end up being able to get for science will have a science or for high school will have a science component.

So right now we are administering ACT science. So, if it is, if it happens to be ACT that gets the contract, they would, we would just use that science instead of the separate science for example.

There was a little bit of information. If you have other things and don't have any questions, you're certainly welcome to get back to your day. But we will be on for maybe, depending on if we keep getting questions, 5 or 10 minutes so that we can make sure we answer everything. So, ACT will no longer be the high school assessment? We don't know yet. So that's the part where the RFP had closed and the committee is still making that determination and we'll bring it to the board for approval. So, I don't really have information about what that's going to be, but that will not be until 2028. ACT is definitely going to be our high school assessment for 2027, but we will not be using the science component for accountability. We will still use AzSCI just this year for accountability.

The question about private schools taking state assessment and timelines. I think, hopefully, Candis, can you help with that one?



Middlebrook, Candis

Yes, we have a process for private schools to request state assessments, which

usually opens in October. We can provide more information to you.
When we get closer to that date.



Spangenberg, Bethany

Looks like our questions have definitely slowed down. We'll stay here for a couple minutes yet, but if you have any final questions, please put them in the chat.

The sample test for Grade 3 would be the same for 2027 as for 2026. I'm guessing the spring administration.

Katie, do you want to confirm? I don't know if additional items were released or anything like that for AASA. Okay.



DiTullio, Katie

Hello. Overall, the sample test will remain the same.

We're just making a couple little tweaks and updates in grade 3, just to clarify, one or two items, but overall, everything is still the same on our sample tests.



Spangenberg, Bethany

Thank you, Katie.

Matt, I don't know if you can clarify at all. We go through the procurement process. If you're looking at, you know, what vendor we might have for AASA, we really don't know until we receive those bids and do those evaluations. We don't have a primary contender that we're hoping for. We want the best contract and the best assessment for students, and we just decide who is going to be able to provide that for us. But if there's something additional, please clarify.

Thank you, John.

I'm not really seeing any additional questions coming in. If you do have any specific questions, oh, there's one more. If you do have any specific questions, you can reach out to us at testing@azed.gov. Otherwise, I hope you enjoy the rest of your weekend. And then as I'm answering here, if anything else comes in, I'll make sure those are answered as well.

Request to share the tech requirements as soon as we have the state assessment

available, we can definitely prioritize that. We have time to plan to make sure that we have all of those technology requirements available to share with you as early as possible. So yes, that's a good point and we'll make sure that we get those tech requirements to you early.

Science is moving to 5th and 8th grade and not in high school. So yes, that is correct. So, the RFP that is currently posted specifies that ASA will be in grade 5 only and grade 8 only. We are not having the grade band assessments according to that RFP and that it was not including a high school science assessment separate because that will be with the high school contract.

There is an alignment study that has been done. If we end up with a vendor that has not done an alignment study for high school science yet, that will be done as well. So, it's not that it's not aligned to the high school standards. They will be included and incorporated and there are there will be alignment information available to you to see how those assessments are aligned to our state standards.

All right; I'm not seeing any new questions. Thank you all so much for your time. Have a wonderful weekend and if you need anything, please reach out to us at testing@azed.gov. Thank you.