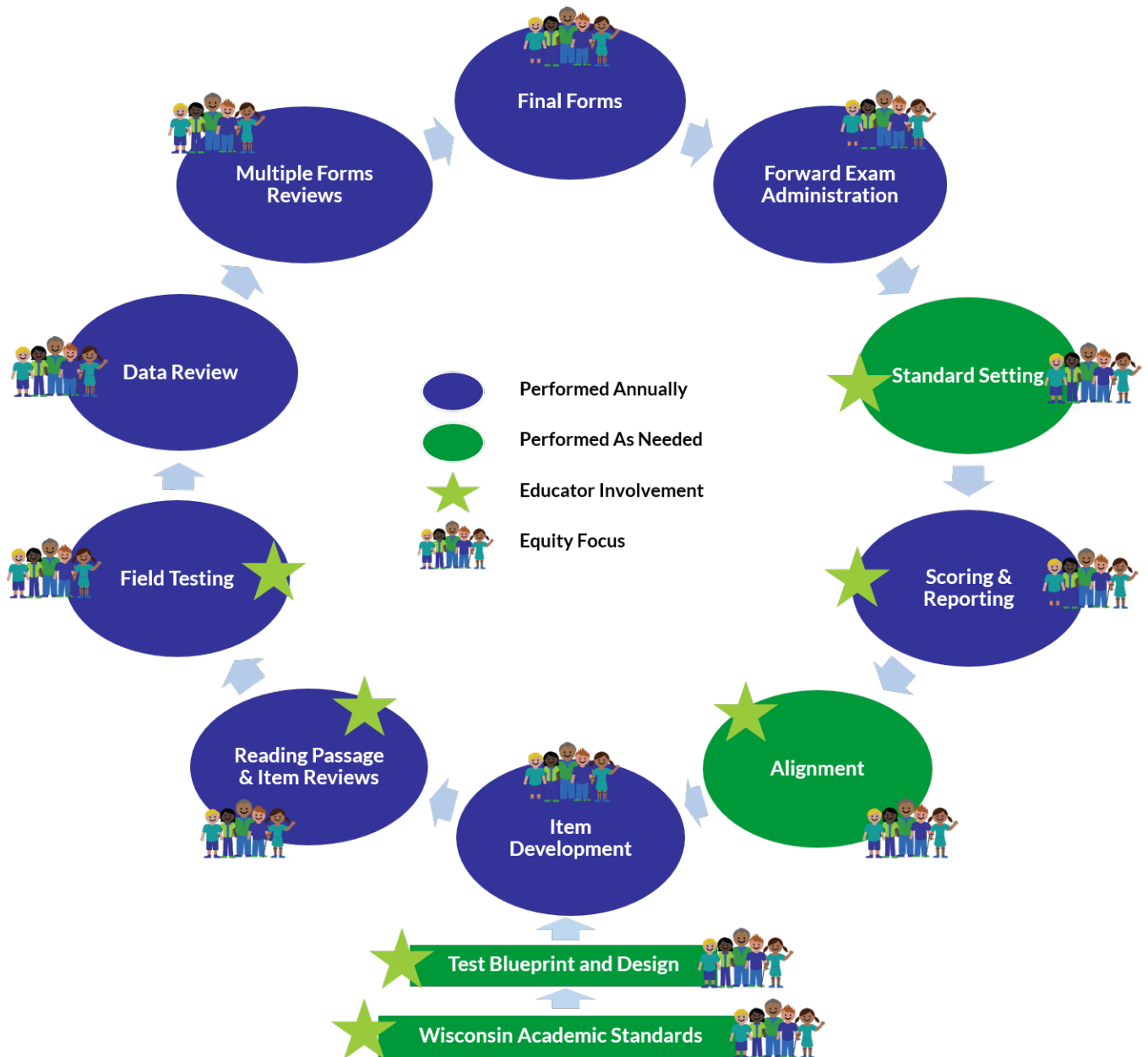


# Forward Exam Development Process



## Involvement of Wisconsin Educators in the Forward Exam:

Wisconsin educators play an integral role at all stages in the development of the state’s academic content standards, achievement standards, and assessments. Educators with diverse geographic, demographic, racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds across the state participate in the Forward Exam development activities. Special education and English learner representation is also ensured at all stages of development. A diverse group for educator involvement is an important step in ensuring that the Forward Exam supports educational equity.

Selected examples of this participation include the following:

- Development of the Wisconsin Academic Standards;
- Participation in the standard-setting process that established performance descriptors and cut scores for the Forward Exam
- Annual review and editing of assessment items in English language arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies for content appropriateness, bias and sensitivity, depth of knowledge, and difficulty and fairness prior to field testing;
- Refining of the test blueprints and test designs to ensure the Forward Exam reflects what students should know and should be able to do to be college- and career-ready.

## **Wisconsin Academic Standards:**

The Wisconsin Academic Standards specify what students should know and be able to do in the classroom, in order to be college- and career-ready. To ensure that all children have equal access to high quality education programs, the academic standards are essential in making sure our schools offer opportunities to get the knowledge and skills necessary for success beyond the classroom.

## **Test Blueprints and Designs:**

The test blueprints and designs outline the number, types, and difficulty of items on the Forward Exam. The blueprints and designs ensure the structure and format of the Forward Exam is consistent from year to year, allowing for tracking student group progress over time, to monitor and ensure equity.

## **Item Development:**

The test vendor annually develops multiple items (in multiple formats and types) for English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies, aligned to the Wisconsin Academic Standards. Once DPI reviews all new items, Wisconsin educators are brought together to review, edit, and approve them.

## **Reading Passage and Item Review:**

The DPI staff, Wisconsin educators, and the test vendor review all reading passages and items to make sure that all students have an equal-and-fair opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and skills. Items are reviewed for potential bias against racial, ethnic, cultural, religious, gender, or geographically-represented groups.

After items are developed, the DPI staff and a team of Wisconsin educators are brought together to review items and to decide whether they should be included on the Forward Exam. The educators review the items to make sure that they are appropriate for the intended grade level and that all students will have an equal-and-fair opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and skills. The team of educators may modify the items as necessary to achieve these goals. Items unable to be modified appropriately are rejected from use on the Forward Exam.

## **Field Testing:**

After items have been approved by DPI and the team of Wisconsin educators, they are embedded in the Forward Exam for field testing. How students perform on the field test items does not affect students' score on the exam, but it does allow the DPI and test vendor to collect data to ensure that the items provide all students with an equal-and-fair opportunity to demonstrate their skills.

## **Data Review:**

Field testing data are reviewed by DPI and the test vendor to make sure that the items performed as intended and do not contain bias toward a specific group of students. Items are rejected from future use on the Forward Exam if they do not meet these criteria.

## **Multiple Forms Reviews:**

The test vendor conducts multiple statistical analyses to make sure that test forms are consistent from year to year. The DPI staff conducts multiple reviews of the test forms to make sure that the items are appropriate for all students, grade-level, and subjects.

## **Final Forms:**

The final test forms and all items are reviewed by the test vendor and DPI for sensitivity issues related to equity, current events, and natural disasters before the testing window opens.

## **Forward Exam Administration:**

The Forward Exam test administration is conducted in a standardized manner. A standardized test is a test that is administered and scored in a consistent, or "standard", manner. Standardized tests are designed in such a way that the questions, conditions for administering, scoring procedures, and interpretations are consistent and are administered and scored in a predetermined, standard manner. All test administrators are required to complete training and follow exact instructions and a written script provided in a Test Administration Manual. This standardization ensures all students have equal access and opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in relation to the Wisconsin Academic Standards.

## **Standard Setting:**

Standard Setting is a process of determining cut scores that correlate with performance levels. A diverse group of Wisconsin educators set these cut scores by engaging in a structured conversation that includes content standards, performance levels, the test, and expectations for ALL students. The cut scores that are determined during the standard-setting procedure distinguish one performance level from another.

## **Scoring and Reporting:**

The tests are scored using a pattern scoring technique based on item response theory (IRT). A student's score is dependent not only upon the number correct, but on each item's difficulty and guessing parameters in conjunction with the student's response on the item.

Reports are generated annually for parents, districts, schools, and DPI. State, district, and school level data are publicly reported for all students and all student groups. Parents receive an individual student report of their child's performance on the Forward Exam. DPI provides a template of a student report translated in both Spanish and Hmong.

## **Alignment:**

After testing and scoring are complete, an independent and diverse group reviews the items on the test to ensure they align to the academic standards. The group makes sure there are enough items, coverage across standards, and ranges of difficulty for each objective.