

Office of Educational Accountability

Newsletter - Issue IX, February 2009

OEA Updates...

Dissemination of Student Reports

Districts will receive Individual Profile Reports (IPRs) explaining the Fall 2008 Wisconsin Student Assessment System (WSAS) test results by February 26, 2009. Please send the reports to parents as soon as possible. The reports need not be held until the Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examination (WKCE) press release. The WKCE press release embargo pertains only to schools and districts sharing summary test results with the public.

Many districts include a letter with the student report when it is sent home. Listed below are a few key points about the IPR report, test results, and the WSAS.

1. The interpretive information for the IPR is printed on the back of the IPR.
2. The 2008-09 Administrator's Interpretive Guide is available on the web at <http://dpi.wi.gov/oea/publications.html>.
3. Performance level score ranges are the same as they have been in prior years, and are based on input from Wisconsin educators, business people, and parents.
4. Standard Performance Indices (SPIs) are provided to give an estimate of student performance within a subject area.
5. A state percentile is provided to determine how a student did relative to other test takers in the state. A lower percentile might still indicate proficiency, if the majority of the students at that grade-level are proficient. For more information go to <http://dpi.wi.gov/oea/pdf/assessrsilt.pdf>.
6. The IPR shows if any testing accommodations were provided to the student during testing.

WKCE Update

In the fall DPI conducted a survey of district assessment coordinators, asking if districts preferred returning to only one WKCE test book per student in grades 4, 8, and 10. 82% of districts indicated a preference for one test book. For the 2009-10 test administration, students at grades 4, 8, and 10 will have a single WKCE test book. This will reduce report errors due to matching student books during scoring and reduce the handling of multiple materials at the school and district level when testing students. OEA would like to thank the 315 districts who participated in the survey.

OEA Calendar...

Important Dates

2009	
February 13	ACCESS Testing Window Closes
February 20	Districts receive alternate determination of AYP forms for schools without tested grades (SWINT) or with very small enrollment
February 24	All ACCESS Materials Must be Received at MetriTech
February 26	WSAS Phase I Test Results Received WSAS Optional Products Order Deadline
March 6	Main National Assessment of Educational Process (NAEP) and Pilot Studies Window Closes
March 12 *	WSAS Phase II and Phase III Test Results Available Online
April 3	AYP/SWINT Determination Forms Due
April 28 *	WSAS Press Release
May 1	ACCESS Reports Shipped to Districts
May 4 – May 29	ACCESS Correction Window
May 22	Schools and districts receive notification of preliminary AYP determinations. AYP results are embargoed until June 9.

*Please note that dates are earlier than in previous years

Earlier WSAS Summary Reports and Press Release

This year all WSAS school and district summary reports will be available electronically on March 12. This is about a month earlier than previous years. As a result, the WSAS press release date will be on April 28, rather than at the end of May. This will allow time to update the WINSS website so it will be live on the press release date. Please do not share any summary data publicly prior to this date.

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Communication of Testing Information to Staff

The District Assessment Coordinator (DAC) is the Office of Educational Accountability's (OEA) single point of contact for each district. In many districts, the DAC may also have a wide range of other responsibilities outside of assessment. We try to streamline communication through emails, this newsletter, and the "DAC Corner" on our web page. Through these avenues, we provide brief overviews of topics that may be timely within your district, so that you may copy and distribute information with a minimum of additional effort on your part. We invite you to send us requests for topics you would like to see us address through this newsletter or through other brief documents that might be useful to you as handouts within your district. Please contact OEA at oeaemail@dpi.wi.gov with any suggestions. We would like to provide districts with useful tools to: communicate appropriate testing procedures, respond to questions raised about assessment, and help schools understand and communicate test results.

English Language Learner (ELL) Translation Accommodation Update

DPI provided written scripts and bilingual word lists as test accommodations this year for native Spanish- and Hmong-speaking students taking the WKCE.

More than 190 educators responded to this year's translation accommodation survey. The most commonly-mentioned benefits of the accommodations were that they:

- allowed students to more accurately demonstrate their knowledge, without the hindrance of a language barrier,
- provided a resource for teachers or test administrators who may not be proficient in Spanish or Hmong, and
- helped ensure the integrity of the WKCE by providing a standardized translation.

Thank you for working with us to make the WKCE a more meaningful assessment for English language learners. We will continue to work with you to evaluate and improve the translation accommodations as we plan for next year's test administration.

ELL Accountability Update

All districts and consortia met their annual measurable achievement objectives (AMAOs) for English language learners in 2008-09. The 2008-09 reports are based on the data from 2006-07 and 2007-08. The U.S. Department of Education (USDE) requires some changes to how ELL accountability is calculated in the future.

For more information on the USDE guidance, see the October 17, 2008, Federal Register. For information or to comment on the translation accommodation or AMAOs, please contact Kristen Kehoe at kristen.kehoe@dpi.wi.gov or Renae Fjeld Accardo at renae.fjeldaccardo@dpi.wi.gov.

Next Generation Assessment Task Force Update

The state superintendent created a Next Generation Assessment Task Force to make recommendations for future state assessment system needs. The task force membership consists of 42 individuals representing business, school boards, superintendents, principals, teachers, directors of instruction, district assessment coordinators, pupil services staff, and others.

At the initial meeting, the task force discussed the components of a balanced assessment system to frame the discussion. In December five states presented information about their assessment systems and the value and limitations of their assessment components. This month the task force made preliminary recommendations about future assessment needs in Wisconsin. The task force considered possible options for formative, benchmark, and summative assessments. A final meeting is planned for March. The final recommendations will be considered along with projected costs and compliance requirements, and will be a factor in making recommendations for future state budgets and other funding opportunities.

Our current contract with CTB/McGraw-Hill has a two-year-notice requirement to terminate the contract. This time period is needed to transition from one assessment to another so that test development and technical quality requirements can be met.

Information about the Next Generation Assessment Task Force and all meeting handouts are available at <http://dpi.wi.gov/oea/ngatf.html>.

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What does "test security" mean, and why is it important?

Every year districts are asked to sign a confidentiality agreement about the Wisconsin Student Assessment System. Some sections of the District Assessment Coordinator Guide describe aspects of test security. These are a routine part of test administration to make sure everything possible is done to keep the tests secure.

Basically, there are two main issues related to test security for standardized tests:

1. every precaution should be taken to ensure that no student has an unfair advantage on the test, and
2. test items should not be left unsecured in a way that could make them available to others outside of the test administration.

Instances of "unfair advantage" may happen when students are over-accommodated during the test administration, or if they are exposed to test items from previous years. This can happen if a school was not aware that test items from previous years are used again on future tests, and used previous items for practice. Another example would be reading the reading test to students, or providing assistance to students with thinking through a test item. When these things happen, it often results in invalidated tests for students experiencing these testing irregularities. Because this can affect public reporting and accountability, it is important for districts to make sure all teachers and test proctors are aware of standard procedures for administration. Students' completed test books should be secured immediately, and boxed for shipment, so that it is clear test books have not been handled or reviewed in any way prior to scoring.

The second issue, allowing test books to be left unsecured, can also result in test invalidation. In addition, it could result in other fines and penalties if test items become exposed publicly, causing items to not be usable for future test administrations. Test items are copyrighted, and test item development is costly. By the time an item appears on a test, it has been through many reviews and revisions, and has been field tested across the state. This is why it is critical that all test books be kept in a locked location at all times except when students are completing a testing session. A locked classroom is not secure, unless the test books are locked in a secure place in the classroom, such as a locking cabinet. While this may seem excessive, it only takes one test book leaving the testing environment, to render all the items on that test unusable for the future.

In Wisconsin, we have allowed districts to retain a certain number of test books for use in item analysis workshops with educators. Typically, this occurs at the end of a school year or in the summer. The purpose is usually the review of summary reports that show how groups of students did on given content standards, so as to help the district make improvements to curriculum and instruction. It is critical to be aware that the test items are "live" and will be used again on future tests. The same security should apply during such workshops as would be in place during test administration. Test books should never be "checked out" to teachers or left unsecured while educators are out of the room. These item analysis workshops may continue as long as secure conditions are maintained.

Most test security problems occur because someone did not realize the problems that arise from an invalid test administration, or from leaving test items potentially exposed. We appreciate the work you do in your district to help alert others of potential problem areas before they happen. If you have any questions about the appropriateness of given practices, please give us a call so we can help you with a solution.

FAQ...About Test Results

Q. How do I get access to the online reports on the Online Reporting System (ORS) website?

Usernames and passwords for the Online Reporting System can be obtained by calling Phil Cranley in the Office of Educational Accountability at (608) 266-9798.

Q. Where can I get information that helps me understand Wisconsin Student Assessment System (WSAS) reports?

Descriptions of the information shown on WSAS reports, and how to interpret and appropriately use this information, are available from several sources. Within the Online Reporting System, each report has a section (located on the far left-hand side of the screen) entitled Report Details. In this section, users can access both a Report Purpose describing the intent of the report as well as a Report Legend explaining any terminology and statistics used. Some ORS reports have a blue "More Info" link in the upper right-hand corner of the screen. WSAS reports are also explained in the Administrator's Interpretive Guide, which can be accessed on the DPI Web site at <http://dpi.wi.gov/oea/publications.html>.

Q. What if we did not receive a report for a student?

All students in grades 3-8 and 10, including those not tested, should get an Individual Profile Report. If you did not receive a report for one or more of your students, it may be because a test book was not submitted and processed for that student. If you believe that a test book was submitted, you should contact OEA at 608-267-1072. OEA staff can check for the student's record in the state-level database, and if the student's record is not present, you should then contact CTB's Help Desk at 1-800-282-2203 and have them check the warehouse for the test book.





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Building Assessment Literacy... OEA Web Page Finds

The Office of Educational Accountability (OEA) works hard to ensure information district/school assessment coordinators (DAC or SAC) will need is easily accessible on our web page <http://dpi.wi.gov/oea>. This easy access includes:

The DAC Corner: This is located along the right side of every OEA web page and contains information such as a yearly snapshot of a DAC's duties (including information for new DACs), upcoming events/information, informational handouts which may be printed and reproduced as needed, accommodations guidelines, webcasting trainings, quick contact information, and Frequently Asked Questions.

The OEA Home Page: Contains a brief overview of the WSAS and a table containing links to the OEA main pages broken down into three categories: Accountability, Assessment, and Resources. The menu along the left side of every OEA page contains the same categories found in the table on the main page to make navigation easier.

The WKCE Page: Contains information by content area such as links to the Wisconsin Model Academic Standards (WMAS) and Assessment Frameworks, Performance Level Descriptors and Score Ranges, Practice Tests/Released Items and Sample Items, Test Administration Times for the current year, Test Security and Procedures, and the History and Development of the WKCE.

The WAA-SwD Page: Contains information about the WAA-SwD including links to the checklist to determine participation, WAA-SwD Test Administration Training Materials, the Extended Grade Band Standard, WAA-SwD Frequently Asked Questions, and information about including students with special needs in state assessments.

Information for Parents Page: A parent-friendly page that offers brief overviews of the different assessments, and provides links to documents for more information. The page also includes a section that offers suggestions about how to help their student prepare.

The Publications and Resources Page: Contains publications that are sent to districts yearly or only provided online. These documents may be downloaded, printed, and copied as needed. The Student/Parent Pre-Test Brochure in English, Spanish, and Hmong is available, as are the Test Administration Manuals in all three languages. Also available on this page is the Writing Assessment Released Item Book.

These are just a few examples of the information available on the Office of Educational Accountability's web page. Please take a few moments to browse the site and the resources it provides.

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