

Office of Educational Accountability

Newsletter - Issue II, May 2007

OEA Updates...

Changes for the WAA-SwD

A new *Wisconsin Alternate Assessment* for students with disabilities (WAA-SwD) will be given in January of the 2007-08 school year. This assessment will be a performance assessment where teachers record student responses on a standardized set of performance tasks. The process for developing this assessment began in late April with the assistance of 44 Wisconsin educators. The new WAA-SwD assessment is for grades 3 through 8 and 10 in reading and mathematics, and grades 4, 8, and 10 in science. The language arts/writing and social studies assessments at grades 4, 8, and 10 will remain checklist assessments for the 2007-08 school year; however, teachers will not be required to collect work samples.

Update on WAA-ELL

English language learners (ELL) will take the WKCE during the fall 2007 administration. The ELL Assessment Task Force, consisting of ELL educators and administrators from across the state, met this spring to discuss goals for assessing ELL students. Following the recommendations of this group, a state-developed oral translation in Spanish and Hmong for the WKCE and a test-specific glossary for specific grade levels will be available to use with the fall 2007 WKCE.

Regional Workshops on Formative Assessment

DPI is sponsoring three, one-day regional workshops on formative assessment on June 12th-14th. Margaret Heritage of UCLA-CRESST will be leading school teams through the process of identifying learning progressions and integrating formative assessment into the classroom. Notification of this workshop was emailed to all DACs in April.

Notification for NAEP 2008

Throughout the 2007- 08 school year, selected Wisconsin schools will be participating in Long-Term Trend NAEP, arts assessments, pilot computer-based science assessment, and reading and mathematics field testing. Selected schools will be notified in May about participation.

Changes to the Assessment Matrix

The *Assessment Matrix* describing allowable test preparation activities and testing accommodations for students with disabilities, English language learners, and other students on an "as needed" basis was recently updated. The updated matrix can be found at <http://dpi.wi.gov/oea/accomodations.html>. The updated matrix will also appear in the fall 2007 DAC Guide.

Revisions to the matrix largely involve clarification of wording and re-classification of accommodations from one category to another (e.g., from "Presentation" to "Setting"). In a few instances, an accommodation will no longer be allowed for a certain content area as it would alter the construct being assessed. Schools and districts are encouraged to review the revised matrix as IEPs and other instructional plans for the 2007-08 school year are being updated during spring

OEA Calendar...

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)

May 25	Districts and schools receive DRAFT notification of <i>preliminary</i> improvement status: DIFI, SIFI, and AYP
May 25 – June 6	SIFI, DIFI, AYP data error clean up
June 12	Public release of <i>preliminary</i> DIFI, SIFI, and/or district/schools missing AYP – summaries posted to http://www2.dpi.state.wi.us/sifi/default.asp
June 29	AYP status is electronically available for every WI school and district. Three-year AYP review summary is posted to the web.
June 29	Deadline for districts and schools to prepare appeals and request reconsideration of their <i>preliminary</i> DIFI, SIFI, or AYP status
July 2 – July 27	DPI processes DIFI, SIFI, and AYP reconsideration requests and notifies districts and schools of the results of these requests

Terms: DIFI – District Identified for Improvement
 SIFI – School Identified for Improvement

Other Important Dates

May 4	Post-test workshop via Mediasite
May 22	WKCE Press Release
May 31	DAC update form and Confidentiality Agreement due from districts
June 12-14	Formative Assessment Workshops: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • June 12- at CESA #1 in Brookfield, WI • June 13- at DPI in Madison, WI • June 14- at Kalahari Resort in Wisconsin Dells, WI

2007. Schools and districts should also monitor accommodation usage to ensure that those listed on IEPs are consistent with those used during testing.

Remember to Update Your DAC Information

On May 1st, DACs will receive an email regarding updates to DAC contact information and the WKCE Confidentiality Agreement. It is essential that each district complete and return these forms to the Office of Educational Accountability by May 31, 2007. You can view/print these forms at <http://dpi.wi.gov/oea/dacforms.html>.

Launch of a New OEA Website

A new and improved OEA website will be launched on May 1st. The site has been reorganized to better meet user needs and has several new features including a "DAC Corner" with information and updates specifically designed for DACs: <http://dpi.wi.gov/oea/index.html>.

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“What test security issues do we need to consider when conducting data retreats?”

Each year, the Office of Educational Accountability receives reports of security violations. Many result in the invalidation of test scores which have a significant impact on teachers, students, and schools. Most security violations stem from unintentional actions of school staff. As schools prepare to review WKCE test results and participate in end-of-year or summer data retreats, it is highly recommended that districts and school staff discuss examples of security violations and establish a precautionary plan for test security.

Districts are allowed to keep up to 20 copies of the WKCE per grade level. The retained booklets are a valuable resource for reviewing assessment standards and objectives. By examining test items, school staff can identify the manner in which concepts are assessed and discuss potential hypotheses for school and district level performance.

When engaging in these activities, a plan that includes the following precautions is strongly encouraged:

- Data retreats that include the use of WKCE booklets should be conducted in a secure location.
- All the test books used for the data retreats should be accounted for and secured when not in use.
- The participants should sign a confidentiality agreement form prior to reviewing the WKCE booklets.
- The teacher should not “check out” test booklets for removal to another location.
- Participants should be notified that items will be used again during future test administrations. Creating practice items based on live items (i.e., changing numerical values, restructuring the question, changing the object in the question) is considered a violation of test security.
- Clear instructions should be conveyed that photocopying and duplication of test books and use of test items or “modified” test items for test preparation are strictly prohibited.

The consequences such as invalidation of test results (e.g., AYP) and other district-level disciplinary measures should be clearly explained to the participants.

FAQ... On Assessment

Why does it take so long to get test results?

Many steps happen between the time test books are returned and when reports are delivered. Immediately following the testing window, students' work is scored. In general the process includes: Shipping (2 weeks), Scoring (3-4 weeks), Statistical Analysis (2-3 weeks), District Data Correction (2 weeks), and State Level Data Correction CTB/DPI (2 weeks). The length of the scoring window is in part attributed to constructed response (CR) items. CR items require human scoring and, therefore, require a lengthier scoring period. In addition to these processes, results are carefully reviewed prior to the release of *Individual Progress Reports (IPR)*, *On-line Reporting System (ORS)* data for district assessment coordinators, the public access data on *Wisconsin's Information Network for Successful Schools (WINSS)*, and OEA data links at <http://dpi.wi.gov/oea/data.html>.

How could Wisconsin schools receive test results earlier?

Each year ways to save time without jeopardizing quality are examined by CTB, DPI, and districts. For example, if the *Record Editing System (RES)* did not include scale scores, it might be possible to do the RES data clean-up process earlier. This would allow results to be available sooner. Likewise, the timeliness of reports is contingent on all test booklets being returned by districts and schools on time. A delay of even one box delays the completion of the scoring process for the whole state.

How do private schools order the WKCE?

The WKCE for Grades 3-8 and 10 may be purchased by private schools by contacting a CTB/McGraw-Hill Wisconsin Customer Service Representative at (800) 282-2203. For more information go to: <http://dpi.wi.gov/oea/privatesch.html>.

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Building Assessment Literacy... Responding to Questions about Assessment Results

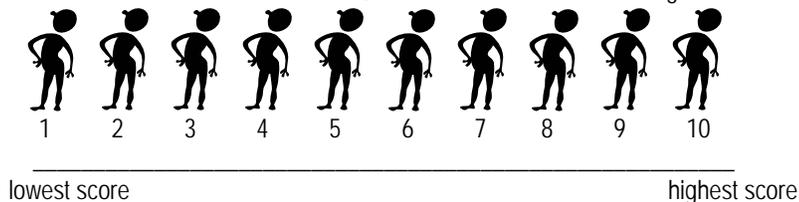
How many items do students need to get right?

We often receive questions about how many items need to be answered correctly to be proficient on the statewide exams. This can be a very challenging question to answer. Many people understand assessment based on their own experiences with classroom assessments. Often in those situations, test questions are scored either as correct or incorrect and overall competency on the classroom assessment is then reported as a percentage (number correct divided by the total number of items). Grades are assigned based on a teacher's assertion of what level of performance constitutes an A, B, C, D, or F.

The *Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examinations* (WKCE) are scored by a different process. The WKCE takes advantage of a statistical procedure known as "item response theory" (IRT) to evaluate scores. Each test question – or item – is treated independently. Unlike classroom tests, all items are not created equal, but are viewed as samples of the knowledge domain with varying difficulty. The IRT calculations do not weight questions per se, however, an incorrect answer on a difficult item does not affect scores as much as an incorrect answer on an easier item. Similarly answering a more challenging item correctly will have a greater affect on the overall score than answering a more challenging item incorrectly. For large-scale standardized tests, IRT scoring is a more accurate representation of students' knowledge of the content area.

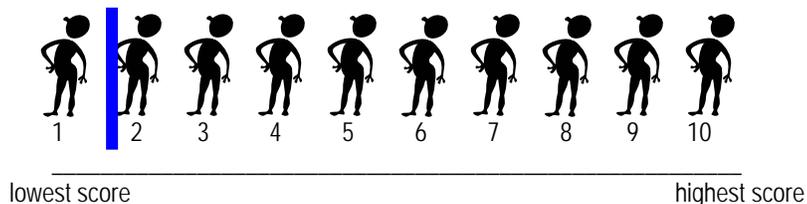
How can a student at the 20th percentile be proficient?

Assessment results are reported as criterion-referenced or norm-referenced scores. While the assessment questions may be similar, there is a significant difference in interpretation of the results. For example, a common norm-referenced report of results involves percentiles. Consider the following illustration of assessment results for 10 children, ranked from lowest score to highest score.



In the diagram above, using a norm-referenced interpretation, Student 5 scored at the 50th percentile. This means that this child performed equal to or better than half of the other students. Likewise, Student 2 scored at the 20th percentile and equal to or better than one-fifth of his/her peers. The results in this scenario answer the question, "How well did the student perform in comparison to his/her peers?" Reporting results in terms of percentiles, however, does not provide information on whether or not the students were proficient. It is possible that all students performed poorly and that none are proficient or that all are proficient. Rank ordering the student scores does not necessarily reflect an amount of knowledge and skills measured by the test.

Consider the same picture. Again, student scores are rank-ordered. This time a line has been drawn to signify the score needed to be proficient. In the case of the classroom assessments, recall that the score for proficient (or the criteria for a passing grade) is often determined by individual teacher judgment. In the case of the WKCE, a statewide panel of Wisconsin educators determined the passing score for "proficient" through a consensus process. Proficiency means that the student demonstrates the knowledge and skills necessary to be successful on grade-level work related to Wisconsin's *Model Academic Standards* and the *Assessment Frameworks*.



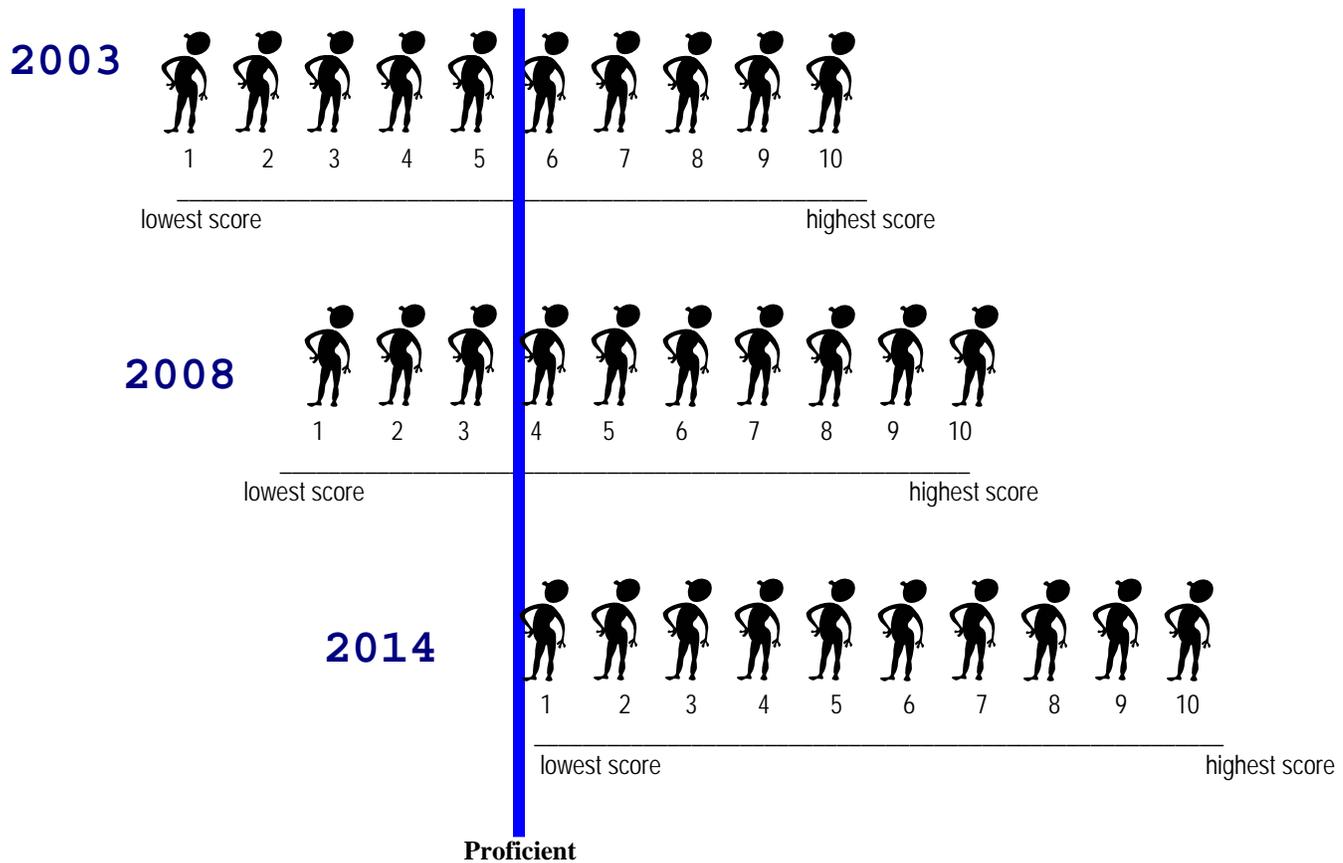
In this situation, one can still make comparisons between students. Student 5 continues to fall at the 50th percentile and Student 2 continues to perform at the 20th percentile. We know, however, from the determination of what constitutes proficiency that Students 2 through 10 are proficient. Thus, a student at the 20th percentile falls within the proficient range. While student 2 is proficient, students 3 through 10 are performing at a higher level relative to Student 2.

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If the previous scenario was a classroom assessment, Students 2 through 10 would all receive passing grades. Under a traditional grading system, it is very possible that 90% of a class receive a passing grade. As demonstrated in the diagram, this means that students at the 20th through the 100th percentile rank passed and were considered proficient. All have reached the teacher-established benchmark for proficiency despite their rank order.

Since the WKCE is a criterion-referenced test, the goal is for all students to meet the established criterion for competency. In the accountability context of *No Child Left Behind*, the goal established by federal law is for all students to be proficient by the year 2014. In this situation, as student performance increases the number of students moving across the bar for proficient increases until all students are proficient regardless of percentile rank. The diagram below demonstrates this scenario. Note that in each graphic, Student 2 is at the 20th percentile and Student 5 is at the 50th percentile.



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