

# Office of Educational Accountability

Newsletter - Issue VIII, November 2008

## OEA Updates...

### Successful Administration of the 2008-09 WSAS

The 2008-09 Wisconsin Student Assessment System (WSAS) test window comes to a close November 28. DPI would like to thank everyone for their time and effort in the successful administration of the 2008 WKCE and WAA-SwD. The Office of Educational Accountability (OEA) staff appreciate the phone calls and emails from schools and districts asking for clarification, providing comments, and reporting irregularities. Your attention to administrative detail and awareness of test security before, during, and after testing helps ensure that all students have the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and skill. We know how much work this is for schools and districts, and appreciate all that you do.

### ISES Deadline

The ISES "Review and Revision" period is the opportunity for districts to review student demographic data that has been submitted and make any necessary changes so WSAS reports are accurate. ISES is currently open, and will run until 8:00 a.m. on November 24. Before November 24 school districts should check all student demographic data in ISES for accuracy and completeness, correct remaining errors, address any unacknowledged warnings, and lock and submit final district data. Districts will have one final opportunity to review WSAS student demographics during the January Record Editing System window. DACs should work with their WSLS/ISES administrators to accomplish this task.

### Record Editing System Window

Districts will have an opportunity to review student demographics and testing status during the WSAS Record Editing System (RES) window from 8:00 a.m. January 14 until noon on January 23. WSAS scores and performance levels will not be included in RES. In addition to the demographic fields for each student, there will be a field to indicate whether or not each student was tested, and which test was used (WKCE or WAA-SwD). RES is the final opportunity for districts to ensure that data used by the DPI for reporting and accountability are accurate and complete. A recorded training session on using RES will be available online by January 7, 2009.

## OEA Calendar...

### Other Important Dates

2008	
<b>November 24</b>	8:00 AM deadline to review and revise all ISES records before lockdown
<b>November 28</b>	WSAS Test Window Closes
<b>December 1</b>	ACCESS for ELLs® testing window opens
<b>December 8</b>	Deadline for DACs to arrange for pick up of WSAS test materials
2009	
<b>January</b>	Publication of progress and attainment of English Language Proficiency in WINSS
<b>January</b>	NAEP Pre-Assessment visits at schools  Schools send NAEP parent letters
<b>January 7</b>	Record Editing System (RES) training via mediasite
<b>January 14 -23</b>	Record Editing System Window
<b>January 26</b>	NAEP Testing Window Opens
<b>February 13</b>	ACCESS for ELLs® testing window closes
<b>February 27</b>	WKCE and WAA-SwD Individual Performance Reports (IPR) shipped to districts
<b>March 6</b>	NAEP Testing Window Closes

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## Special Education Grant Update

The Department of Public Instruction has received two grants from the U.S. Department of Education focused on the assessment of students with disabilities.

The first grant is to investigate how the Wisconsin Alternate Assessment for Students with Disabilities (WAA-SwD) impacts instruction. This assessment, first administered in 2007-08, is intended for students with significant cognitive disabilities whose instruction is based on the Wisconsin Extended Grade Band Standards. We will use information gained from surveys, focus groups, and data analysis to improve professional development and promote effective decision making based on WAA-SwD results.

The second grant is to investigate the characteristics of students who are consistently low performing on the WKCE. Some of these students have disabilities, and some do not. Grant activities to date have included data analysis and feedback groups. Through this grant we will gain insight into how to better help these students with, for example, improved instructional strategies or guidelines for IEP development.

## Wisconsin's Standard and Assessment System Receives Full Federal Approval

The DPI Office of Educational Accountability received notification from the U.S. Department of Education in October that Wisconsin's assessment system is fully approved. This means the WKCE and WAA-SwD have met all the technical requirements for a valid and reliable assessment system for the purposes the tests were designed to address. At this time, only a small number of states have been fully approved.

## Next Generation Assessment Task Force Update

The state superintendent has 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 reviewed the idea of a balanced assessment system to frame the discussion. The handouts and articles related to this discussion are available at <http://dpi.wi.gov/oea/ngatf.html>. At subsequent meetings, a variety of states will present information about their assessment systems and the value and limitations of their assessment components. This will help the task force make informed recommendations about future assessment needs in Wisconsin. The task force will consider possible options for formative, benchmark, and summative assessments. These recommendations will be considered along with projected costs and compliance requirements, and in making recommendations for the next state biennial budget. Should recommendations result in changes to our current assessment, it would go out to bid.

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.

Additional information about the Next Generation Assessment Task Force is available at <http://dpi.wi.gov/oea/ngatf.html>.



## ELL Accountability Update

Any districts or consortia that missed their 2007-08 ELL Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAO) received preliminary notification on November 18. Those districts may request reconsideration if they identify data errors that will alter their sanction status. Reports of the final AMAO determinations will be available for all districts with English Language Learners after the reconsideration period in December. ESEA and ELL contacts will receive instructions on downloading the PDF AMAO reports when they become available in the *Title III-A Consolidated End-of-the-Year Report*.

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## ACCESS for ELL® Update

The ACCESS for ELL® test materials will arrive in districts the week of November 24. The testing window for students participating in the ACCESS for ELLs® is December 1-February 13. This window has been set to allow districts ample administration time.

This year the ACCESS for ELLs® materials will also include the newly-revised Kindergarten ACCESS for ELLs®. Since much of Kindergarten learning takes place through hands-on activities, the new Kindergarten test uses picture cards that allow for a variety of new test item types including matching, identifying, and describing activities. The interactive nature of the assessment encourages all students to accurately demonstrate their level of English language proficiency.

DPI and WIDA have produced Mediasite presentations that include trainings for the ACCESS for ELLs® assessment, English language proficiency standards, and the Kindergarten ACCESS for ELLs® assessment. The recorded presentations are posted online. All test administrators need to be trained on the administration of the assessment(s) that they will be administering to students. All test administrators administering the Kindergarten ACCESS for ELLs® assessment must be re-trained even if they have been previously trained, because the Kindergarten test has been produced in a new format. Training for the new Kindergarten assessment can be accomplished in many different ways. Training can be done through watching the Kindergarten DVD (all district assessment coordinators were sent the DVD in October), watching the Mediasite presentation on the DPI website, participating in the online training on the WIDA website, or any training that a district or CESA may provide. After the training is completed, all participants should go to the WIDA website: [www.wida.us](http://www.wida.us) and complete the 20-question quiz. Participants who complete the quiz, and receive a score of 80% or higher, will become certified test administrators.

The DPI has produced a frequently asked questions document regarding the ACCESS for ELLs® assessment and all ELL issues regarding assessment and accountability which is available at <http://dpi.wi.gov/oea/ells.html>.

## Results of the Survey Conducted

The Question: For the past few years we have had two separate WKCE test books at grades 4, 8, and 10. While this does make the test less intimidating to a student when it is not one larger book, it introduces problems with matching up the two books so each student's total test is reflected accurately in reports. A lot of RES cleanup is addressing this issue with districts. In an effort to reduce report errors and reduce the handling of multiple materials when testing students, we would like to know if it would be your district's preference to go back to a single book **at grades 4, 8, and 10?**

Thanks to the 315 districts who have participated in this survey. 257 participants (82%) showed their interest in returning to one book. 58 participants (18%) opted to stay with two books. We will consider your input while making decisions for the test administration next year.

## National Assessment of Educational Progress

This year approximately 460 Wisconsin public schools are participating in the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). This test is used to compare Wisconsin performance to other states, and to gather national trends. The assessments for the 2008-09 school year include Reading, Mathematics, and Science tests at grades 4, 8, and 12. Previous NAEP results are available online at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/states/profile.asp>.

Thanks to all schools selected to participate this year. Parent letters for participating schools can be downloaded from MySchool; they should be sent home. Please contact Angela Dugas, [angela.dugas@dpi.wi.gov](mailto:angela.dugas@dpi.wi.gov), if you have any questions.

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## What is the role of a WKCE test administration proctor?

A qualified proctor for the WKCE is an employed district staff member (including administrators, teachers, and paraprofessionals) who has been trained in test administration, test security, and appropriate use of test accommodations. All proctors should attend WKCE test administration training within their district prior to each year's test administration. DPI provides a 7-minute test security video segment that can be used to supplement district training available at <http://dpi.wi.gov/oea/webcasts.html>.

WKCE proctors should:

- Ensure the security of the WKCE test books before, during, and after testing. Books should be kept in locked storage.
- Ensure that students have their assigned test book by asking the students to check the name on the front of the book prior to beginning the session.
- Remain in the room throughout the entire test administration and walk around the room to ensure that:
  - Students are not using any prohibited electronic devices
  - Students are in the correct content area and session
  - Students are filling in the bubbles correctly using a #2 pencil
  - Students are paying attention to the task.
- Ensure that the test sessions are administered within the allotted time.
- Report all testing irregularities to the school assessment coordinator.

For a complete list of WKCE Proctor Guidelines go to <http://dpi.wi.gov/oea/dacnwltrs.html> under handouts at the bottom of the page.

## FAQ...Shipping and Packing Test Materials

### Q. What should I do if we've already shipped our boxes and we have one or more tests that didn't get included in the shipment?

If there are some test books left out after shipping, you must register through the online retrieval system for test-box pick-up again. Pack them in a testing box, not in an envelope. The test vendor will make specific arrangements for pick-up of these test books. You should not mail them without going through the test box online retrieval process. Doing so may result in test books that are not scored.

### Q. How should I pack the tests if I have one or more test books with irregularities?

All test books with irregularities should be banded with a completed Special Handling Form, which is included in the TCK. After packing the rest of the test books, place these special handling materials above the stack of test books under the school header sheet. You should then go through the online retrieval system for pick-up of test materials.

### Q. When packing test books, must we use the bands and boxes that are provided?

Yes. You must use the bands and boxes provided. The bands are specifically selected for their size, strength, and durability. Rubber bands or other types of bands may damage test books and make them difficult to score. The boxes are specific to Wisconsin and make it easier to track all of Wisconsin test materials.

### Q. What should I do to show that I shipped all of my boxes?

Be sure that a staff member is present when boxes are picked up and that every box has been accounted for on the shipping document. Retain a copy of the receipt verifying the number of boxes shipped.

### Q. Where can I get instructions for packing my test materials to return to CTB for scoring?

There is a packing and shipping PowerPoint available on the 2008-09 WSAS pre-test workshop webpage available at <http://dpi.wi.gov/oea/08pretest.html> listed under ancillary materials.

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## Building Assessment Literacy... Some Answers to Growth Model Questions

### What is a growth model?

Growth models measure the progress of individual students over time. These models can provide additional information for instructional planning, school improvement, and accountability under No Child Left Behind (NCLB). One type of growth model is a *value added model* (VAM), which can be used to estimate a school's effectiveness by controlling for student characteristics such as prior achievement or poverty.

### How are growth models used for accountability?

NCLB accountability looks at status (percent proficient) and improvement (safe harbor), neither of which measure individual student progress. Title I regulations issued in October allow states to include a growth model in their accountability systems. However, models must be based solely on achievement against grade level standards, so models that include student characteristics, such as value added models, are not allowed. In addition, the requirement that all students must be proficient by 2013-14 must be maintained.

Eleven states piloted the use of various growth models for accountability. These models are generally of two types: growth to standards (GTS) models and transition matrices. A GTS model allows schools to count as proficient students who are "on track" to be proficient within some defined time frame. A transition matrix gives schools "credit" for moving students up through performance levels, even if those students have not yet attained the proficient level.

### What is a growth report?

Growth reports included with some commercial benchmark tests typically show student scores over the course of a semester or a year. These reports may be most helpful for making instructional decisions about a student's educational program during a school year. Often these reports include normative information – such as whether a student's growth is above or below average.

### What can a district do with growth model data?

Districts can use information from growth models to supplement status information for accountability and to evaluate the effectiveness of programs and schools. For example, a school might be considered as needing improvement if it has a larger percentage of students scoring below proficient than other schools. However, a growth analysis might show that in this same school students are making exceptional progress even though they have not yet met proficiency targets. That would be evidence that the school is on the right track and may be using some practices or programs from which other schools could learn. Two districts in Wisconsin use a value added model: Milwaukee Public Schools and the Madison Metropolitan School District.

### What is DPI doing with growth models?

We are exploring growth models that could be included in our accountability system and other models that, although not allowed for accountability, would still be useful for program evaluation and school improvement. As part of the state data warehouse, we are involved in a project that will demonstrate a value-added model based on statewide WKCE data.

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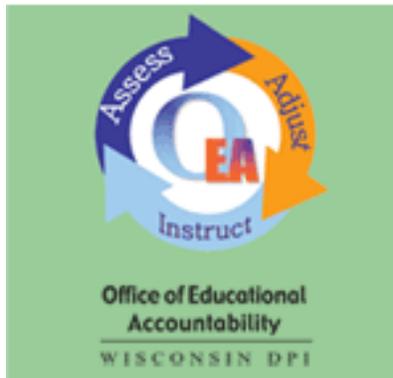
## Some Answers to Growth Model Questions

-Continued-

The project is led by Rob Meyer, director of the Value Added Research Center at the Wisconsin Center for Education Research. A second project is investigating the feasibility of four different growth models, including some that could be used for accountability. Doug Bates (UW-Madison), Harold Doran (American Institutes for Research), and Bob Lissitz (University of Maryland at College Park) are leading this project. We will use the results of these projects to create new reports for the data warehouse, evaluate prospective changes to our accountability system, and promote knowledge transfer with districts.

### How can I get involved?

Please contact Phil Olsen, Assistant Director of OEA, at [philip.olsen@dpi.wi.gov](mailto:philip.olsen@dpi.wi.gov) or 608-266-8779 with your questions and ideas as we explore various applications and approaches to modeling growth.



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