



Wyoming Department of Education

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MEMORANDUM NO. 2007 - 136

TO: School District Superintendents

FROM: Lesley Wangberg, Supervisor *LW*
Standards, Assessment and Accountability Unit

DATE: August 17, 2007

SUBJECT: PAWS Student Reports and Parent Letter Distribution

PAWS Student Reports

Proficiency Assessments for Wyoming Students (PAWS) individual student reports have been printed and shipped from Harcourt Assessment, Inc. to each district office. Reports should be in your office no later than August 19th. Each district will receive two shipments. One shipment contains all of the PAWS student results for your district. The other shipment contains all of the PAWS-ALT student reports for your district. The contents of each box are arranged in the following manner:

- Reports are separated by school
- Each school's reports are ordered by grade level
- Two of the reports for each student are arranged alphabetically within a grade level:
 - One report is provided for the school's record.
 - The other report is to be distributed to the parent or guardian.
- An Interpretive Guide for PAWS Reports

Interpretive Guides for PAWS_ALT are included as an attachment to this memo.

Please find three attachments with this email. The first attachment contains a letter from Dr. McBride with regard to students who participated in the PAWS. The second attachment contains a letter from Dr. McBride with regard to students who participated in the PAWS-ALT. Please be sure that the appropriate letter and Interpretive Guide accompanies either the PAWS or PAWS-ALT report when distributed to parents and guardians.

School District Superintendents
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In the event that you do not receive a complete set of reports or a set of reports has been sent in error, please contact the Harcourt Assessment Scoring Hotline at 1-800-328-5999.

If you have questions about the information contained on the PAWS student reports, please contact John Durkee, 307-777-6226, jdurke@educ.state.wy.us or Lesley Wangberg, 307-777-6918, lwangb@educ.state.wy.us at the Wyoming Department of Education. For questions about information on PAWS-ALT student reports, please contact Charlene Turner, 307-777-7322, cturne@educ.state.wy.us at the Wyoming Department of Education.

The WDE greatly appreciates your efforts toward improving education in Wyoming and looks forward to working together with all districts this new school year.

LW:al

Attachment: Letters and PAWS-ALT Interpretive Guide



Wyoming Department of Education

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Phone 307-777-7673 Fax 307-777-6234 Website www.k12.wy.us

August 17, 2007

Dear Wyoming Parent or Guardian,

I am pleased to make available to you the results of your child's 2007 Proficiency Assessment for Wyoming Students (PAWS). All students are required by law to participate in Wyoming's assessment system. The purpose of the Wyoming assessment system is to determine student mastery of academic knowledge and skills and to gather useful information to inform educational goals for each individual student.

The Proficiency Assessments for Wyoming Students (PAWS) was administered this year during January and April to students in grades 3 through 8 and 11. For the 2007 administration, schools across the state made the decision to participate in a single administration window or in both. For those students who participated in both, this report represents the best performance from the two administrations.

PAWS assesses student's reading, writing and mathematical progress against the Wyoming Content and Performance Standards. Math and reading multiple choice items were delivered online. Math and reading items that required a written response, as well as the writing portion of the test, were administered in a booklet form. Wyoming teachers participated in the scoring process for the written responses.

Accompanying your child's report is a PAWS Interpretive Guide to assist you in understanding the performance results of the reading, writing, and math assessments. The PAWS results are intended to provide you and your child's teacher(s) with information about your child's performance at the skill level within a content area. This information allows for focused instructional decisions in the classroom.

The Wyoming Department of Education is proud of the accomplishments in education occurring in schools across Wyoming. We are dedicated to working together to ensure your child's continued educational growth.

Sincerely,

Jim McBride, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Public Instruction



Wyoming Department of Education

Dr. Jim McBride, Superintendent of Public Instruction

Hathaway Building, 2nd Floor, 2300 Capitol Avenue

Cheyenne, WY 82002-0050

Phone 307-777-7673 Fax 307-777-6234 Website www.k12.wy.us

August 17th, 2007

Dear Parent or Guardian,

I am pleased to make available to you the results of your child's 2007 Proficiency Assessments for Wyoming Students – Alternate (PAWS-ALT). All students are required by law to participate in Wyoming's assessment system. The purpose of the Wyoming assessment system is to determine student mastery of academic knowledge and skills and to gather useful information to inform educational goals for each individual student. However, not all students participate in the assessment system in the same way.

In the case of a child with a significant cognitive disability, the child's IEP team may decide, with input from you, that the child requires an alternate assessment. Alternate assessment may be appropriate for children who are not able to participate in the general assessment (PAWS), even with accommodations. The PAWS-ALT measures your child's knowledge and skills in multiple ways on grade-level extended standards in reading, writing, and mathematics presented at appropriate levels of challenge to his or her development. These extended academic standards were written by Wyoming teachers, parents, and policy makers.

The 2007 PAWS-ALT Student Report provides an explanation of your child's performance. With the Student Report, you will receive a *Guide for Parents and Guardians to the 2007 PAWS-ALT Student Report*. This guide provides general information about the PAWS-ALT, your child's test results and No Child Left Behind.. Please visit the Wyoming Department of Education websites: <http://www.k12.wy.us/SAA/PAWS/paws.alt.htm> and <http://www.k12.wy.us/SAA/standards.asp> to obtain more information about the PAWS-ALT and the extended Wyoming Academic Content Standards and Academic Benchmarks Standards in reading, writing, mathematics, and science.

If you are interested in completing a short survey to provide feedback to the Wyoming Department of Education about the Student Score Report and the *Guide for Parents and Guardians to the 2007 PAWS-ALT Student Report* please go to the following link: <http://www.soomerang.com/recipient/survey-intro.zgi?p+WEB226t27P6an2> . Thank you in advance for completing this survey, which will provide useful information to improve reporting of student results.

Sincerely,

Jim McBride
State Superintendent of Public Instruction

Proficiency Assessments for
Wyoming Students - Alternate
(PAWS-ALT)



Guide for Parents and Guardians
to the
2007 PAWS-ALT Student Report



Wyoming Department of Education
Spring, 2007

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Background Information on Wyoming's Alternate Assessment

What is the Wyoming Alternate Assessment (PAWS-ALT)?

Wyoming's alternate assessment, the PAWS-ALT, provides students with the most significant cognitive disabilities with three ways to show their mastery of academic skills in reading, writing, mathematics. All students in grades 3 – 8 and 11 are assessed.

Who determines which students will participate in the PAWS-ALT?

Participation decisions for each student are made by the IEP team by persons who are the most familiar with the student's individual needs. The parent or legal guardian is a required and important member of this team. The Wyoming Department of Education provides guidance to IEP teams to aid them in the decision making process. For further information on participation guidelines, please refer to the *Guidelines for Participation in Wyoming's Alternate Assessment* on the Wyoming Department of Education website at:

http://www.k12.wy.us/SAA/Paws/paws_alt.htm

Who participates in the PAWS-ALT?

Students with disabilities who have the most significant cognitive disabilities may participate in the PAWS-ALT. In Wyoming, this is a small number of students. Participation is not based on disability or the amount or location of service a student receives. A student's IEP contains both academic and functional measurable goals and objectives. The academic goals are based on grade-level extended Academic Content Standards and Academic Benchmarks, which are appropriately challenging for the student. These can be found at

<http://www.k12.wy.us/SAA/standards.asp> .

What subjects are assessed and reported?

All Wyoming students are tested in grades 3 – 8 and grade 11 in the same subject areas including reading, writing and mathematics. Your child is assessed in the subjects and grades indicated in Table 1.

**Table 1
2007 PAWS-ALT
Assessed Subjects and Grades**

Subject	Assessed Grades
Reading and Writing	3 – 8 and 11
Mathematics	3 – 8 and 11

How is the PAWS-ALT different from the PAWS?

Wyoming's Alternate Assessment (PAWS-ALT) and the general assessment (PAWS) both measure how well students have mastered academic knowledge and skills in reading, writing, and mathematics. However, the PAWS-ALT is based on content described in the extended Wyoming Academic Content Standards and Academic Benchmarks, which are reduced in breadth, depth, and complexity. The student's IEP goals and objectives include skills based on these extended Academic Content Standards and Academic Benchmarks. These can be found at <http://www.k12.wy.us/SAA/standards.asp> .

The content in these standards and benchmarks is challenging and includes high expectations though they are less complex than the content which is assessed on the general assessment. Students are able to demonstrate their academic knowledge and skills in different ways depending on the assessment in which they participate. Key differences between Wyoming's Alternate Assessment (PAWS-ALT) and Wyoming's general assessment (PAWS) are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2
Comparison of PAWS-ALT and PAWS**

	PAWS-ALT Alternate Assessment	PAWS General Assessment
Participation	The IEP team determines that a student will take the PAWS-ALT. A very small number of students with the most significant disabilities take the alternate assessment because PAWS is not an appropriate assessment, even with allowable accommodations.	A student takes PAWS, unless his or her IEP Team determines that the student will take the PAWS-ALT.
Administration	Students take the test during an extended administration window, which begins in early February and finishes in late April. The subject areas tested include reading, writing, and mathematics.	Students take the test during a winter and/or spring administration window. The subject areas tested include reading, writing and mathematics.
Scoring	Scores are based on a combined score earned by the student on the three test components for each subject area.	Scores are based on how the student answers each test question including multiple choice and written responses.
Reporting of Results	A performance level, a numerical score and a percentage in each reported content area.	A performance level, numerical score and scaled score in each reported content area.

What is the format of the PAWS-ALT?

The PAWS-ALT has three components. They are the Data Collection of Student Work (DCF), Teacher Observation of Academic Skills (TOAS), and Student Performance Events (SPE). The following table provides information about the three components.

**Table 3
PAWS-ALT Test Components**

PAWS-ALT Components	Number of Items in Each Subject	Methodology
DCF	10	Performance Judgments
TOAS	15	Direct Observation Checklist
SPE	7	On-Demand Performance

When is the PAWS-ALT administered?

The 2007 PAWS-ALT was administered in the spring. The long testing window shown in Table 4 allows the teacher to decide on different testing schedules on an individual basis for his or her students.

**Table 4
Testing Windows for the PAWS-ALT**

Test Component	Testing Window
Data Collection Form	March 1 – April 21, 2006
Teacher Observation of Academic Skills	March 15 – April 21, 2006
Performance Events	March 15 – April 21, 2006

How is the PAWS-ALT scored?

Teachers receive training from the Wyoming Department of Education to score the test. The teacher records your student's answers to questions in reading, writing, and mathematics. The student test booklet is sent to Harcourt Assessment, Inc. so that the scores can be evaluated and reported to you in the PAWS-ALT Student Report.

Who receives the results of the PAWS-ALT?

Each Wyoming school district receives two copies of the PAWS-ALT Student Report for each student who took the test in its schools. One copy of the report is for you (the parent or guardian) and the other is for the school. Your child's school will provide a copy of the report to you.

How do teachers receive training to administer the PAWS-ALT?

The Wyoming Department of Education provides yearly, regional, training opportunities and technical assistance to all administrators of the PAWS-ALT. In addition, phone and email correspondence is provided to support the administration of the assessment. All teachers who will administer the PAWS-ALT are strongly encouraged to attend the trainings to ensure that they receive the most current information regarding the administration of the test.

Understanding the Student Report and Your Student's Results

The PAWS-ALT is designed to evaluate how well students with disabilities are learning the academic knowledge and skills described in the extended Wyoming Academic Content Standards and Academic Benchmarks. The **PAWS-ALT Student Report** shows your student's overall performance and test scores in reading, writing and mathematics. Additionally, Assessment Target scores are reported as percentages. These scores report your child's performance on an important skill in each content area. This report is intended to help parents and guardians track

the continuing progress of their children and provide valuable feedback to teachers. The information provided on the report when combined with other educational assessments can be used by your child's teacher to adjust instruction to better assist your child in his or her learning.

The PAWS-ALT was administered this past spring. The performance level and numerical score which your child achieved in each of the three subject areas is indicated on page 1 of the 2007 **PAWS-ALT Student Report**. The scores required for each performance level were recommended by panels of Wyoming educators and approved by State Superintendent Dr. Jim McBride. An example of a student report page 1 and page 2 follows.

2007 PAWS-ALT Student Report

Student identifying Information

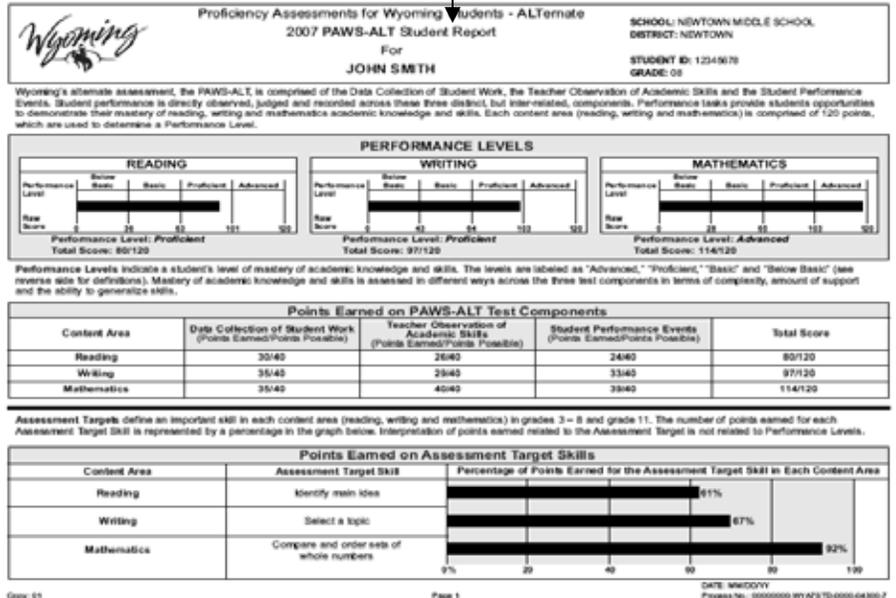
Page 1

Description of PAWS-ALT test components

Your student's Performance Level in reading, writing, and mathematics

Number of points earned by your student on each of the three PAWS-ALT test components in each content area

Percentage of points earned by your student on each Assessment Target Skill in each content area



Definitions of terms are found on page 2 of the Student Report.

General description of the four performance levels of achievement for each assessed content area

Definitions of terms used on page 1

 Proficiency Assessments for Wyoming Students - ALternate Performance Level Descriptors by Content Area			
The Performance Level Descriptors define the academic knowledge and skills a student has mastered in each content area of each grade. Students who participate in the PAWS-ALT are measured against academic knowledge and skills of reduced complexity and depth.			
Performance Level	Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Advanced	The student independently performs reading skills aligned to academic content standards of reduced complexity. The student comprehends the meaning of text and applies his or her understanding to literary and informational text in new learning situations without assistance.	The student independently performs writing skills aligned to academic content standards of reduced complexity. The student generates expressive and expository pieces to communicate ideas in new learning situations without assistance.	The student independently demonstrates mathematics skills aligned to academic content standards of reduced complexity. The student applies number operations and concepts, geometry, measurement, algebra, and data analysis skills to solve mathematical problems in new learning situations without assistance.
Proficient	The student performs reading skills aligned to academic content standards of reduced complexity with some external support. The student performs reading tasks related to understanding that text has meaning and to understanding literary and informational text in familiar learning situations with some assistance.	The student performs writing skills aligned to academic content standards of reduced complexity with some external support. The student applies writing skills to write expressive and expository pieces to communicate ideas in several familiar learning situations with some assistance.	The student performs mathematics skills aligned to academic content standards of reduced complexity with some external support. The student solves mathematics problems associated with number operations and concepts, geometry, measurement, algebra, and data analysis in several familiar learning situations with some assistance.
Basic	The student performs reading skills aligned to academic content standards of reduced complexity with multiple prompts and external support. The student describes the meaning of text and identifies literary and informational text in a familiar learning situation with assistance.	The student performs writing skills aligned to academic content standards of reduced complexity with external support and modeling. The student uses some writing skills to write expressive and expository pieces to communicate ideas in a familiar learning situation with assistance.	The student performs mathematics skills aligned to academic content standards of reduced complexity with external support and multiple prompts. The student can carry out routine procedures associated with number operations and concepts, geometry, measurement, algebra, and data analysis represented in a familiar learning situation with assistance.
Below Basic	The student responds to the presentation of reading activities aligned to academic content standards of reduced complexity with reading and external support. The student responds to reading tasks related to the meaning of text, literary text, and informational text in a structured, learning situation with assistance.	The student responds to the presentation of writing activities aligned to academic content standards of reduced complexity with external support and modeling. The student responds to writing tasks related to communication of ideas through the application of writing skills to expressive and expository pieces in a structured learning situation with assistance.	The student responds to the presentation of mathematics activities aligned to academic content standards of reduced complexity with external support and modeling. The student responds to mathematics tasks associated with number operations and concepts, geometry, measurement, algebra, and data analysis in a structured, learning situation with assistance.

Points Earned/Points Possible: This score indicates the total number of points the student earned out of a possible number points in a content area on a PAWS-ALT test component. Points earned on the Assessment Target Skill are represented as a percentage.

No Score: This indicates a PAWS-ALT test component (Data Collection of Student Work, Teacher Observation of Academic Skills and/or Student Performance Events) in any or all content areas (reading, writing or mathematics) was left blank or not completed according to the requirements of a complete PAWS-ALT test administration. A No Score will be displayed as the Performance Level and be indicated in the Points Earned/Points Possible column of the Test Component Table.

Incomplete: If No Score is indicated for any content area within a test component, the student will receive an Incomplete as the Total Score for that content area.

Assessment Target Skill: Assessment Targets define an important skill in each content area (reading, writing and mathematics) in grades 3 – 8 and grade 11. These skills are central to the development of more challenging skills in each content area. The Assessment Targets remain consistent over the grades assessed by the PAWS-ALT in order to illustrate growth and change over time. A student's performance on each skill can be compared across reading, writing and mathematics using the percentages, which are based on the number of earned points out of points possible. However, the Assessment Targets are not to be confused with proficiency determinations. The number of points earned per target area on the PAWS-ALT is simply an indicator of student progress towards that target, rather than towards academic content area proficiency.

Page 2

Understanding What is Being Taught

Wyoming has high academic expectations of all students. The goal of reading, writing, and mathematics instruction is to provide the important skills that enable students with the most significant cognitive disabilities to achieve high academic expectations and to access the general academic curriculum.

The basis of the extended Wyoming Academic Content Standards is the Wyoming Content and Performance Standards. The extended Academic Benchmarks, though less complex, demonstrate ways all children access the general curriculum. The extended Academic Benchmarks are to be a part of your child's Individualized Educational Plan. The extended Academic Content Standards specify the essential learning all students must master. Teachers ensure that students achieve mastery by using a range of instructional strategies they select based on students' needs, the extended Academic Content Standards, and grade-level extended Academic Benchmarks. The grade-level extended Academic Benchmarks are specific to each grade and define the knowledge and skills in grades kindergarten through eighth and grade eleven.

Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities vary widely in their forms of communication and access academic skills at varying levels of complexity. Often, a wide range of accommodations and assistive technology are used to provide this access. Your child's teacher will use appropriate instructional activities that take into consideration your child's individual skills and communication levels. Each extended Academic Benchmark is defined by a minimum of 4 levels of complexity and examples for instruction to provide multiple points of access to the skills ranging from less complex to more complex. An example of a related Reading Academic Benchmark in grade 3, grade 7, and grade 11 is provided in Table 5.

Table 5
Example of Reading Academic Benchmarks

Academic Content Standard 1. Reading Students demonstrate understanding of literary and informational texts.	
<p align="center">Grade 4 Academic Benchmark</p> <p>Students identify an idea from the beginning and the end of a text.</p>	<p>Level IV Students respond to a text-based question about the beginning or end of a text by choosing a picture symbol, word or object.</p>
	<p>Level III Students identify an idea from the beginning and the end of a text.</p>
	<p>Level II Students match an idea from the beginning or the end of a text.</p>
	<p>Level I Students attend to an idea from the beginning or the end of a text.</p>
<p align="center">Grade 7 Academic Benchmark</p> <p>Students identify the main idea and supporting details in a story.</p>	<p>Level IV Students identify the main idea and three supporting details in a story.</p>
	<p>Level III Students identify the main idea and supporting details in a story.</p>
	<p>Level II Students match a given main idea to a supporting detail given two supporting details.</p>
	<p>Level 1 Students attend to a discussion of a main idea and supporting details of a story.</p>
<p align="center">Grade 11 Academic Benchmark</p> <p>Students identify main idea and summarize a familiar text.</p>	<p>Level IV Students identify main idea, supporting details, and summarize a familiar text.</p>
	<p>Level III Students identify main idea and summarize a familiar text.</p>
	<p>Level II Students recognize the main idea or summary of a familiar text given two choices.</p>
	<p>Level 1 Students attend to the presented main idea and summary of text.</p>

Grade Level Academic Skills

At each grade level, Academic Benchmarks describe skills that students may be taught and expected to learn at an appropriate level of complexity as determined by the teacher. Table 8 describes these skills at each grade level in reading, writing, and mathematics from which academic instructional goals are determined and taught for your child at an appropriate level of complexity.

TABLE 8
Grade Level Academic Skills

Grade 3 Academic Skills		
In reading, students at this grade:	In writing, students at this grade:	In mathematics, students at this grade:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • know important ideas in literary texts • are aware of information related to a literary text • are familiar with story elements • are acquainted with a variety of literary genres • know ideas in informational text • are aware of similar ideas across two informational texts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • select a topic • write a topic sentence • use voice in their writing • use conventions of print • use descriptive words • relate information to a topic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • represent whole numbers • compare and order whole numbers • use coins and dollars • recognize standard two dimensional shapes and compare two and three dimensional shapes • compare customary units of length including inches and feet • extend patterns • make use of data

Grade 4 Academic Skills		
In reading, students at this grade:	In writing, students at this grade:	In mathematics, students at this grade:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • know important ideas across a literary texts • sequence ideas • are aware of facts related to a text • are familiar with story elements • know information related to nonfiction or informational text • know important information in informational texts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • organize topics • write a topic sentence • write sentences • use voice in their writing • use conventions of print including some spelling • are familiar with resources for research • respond to a story and relate prior knowledge • organize topics and details 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • represent larger whole numbers • compare and order whole numbers • use coins and dollars • solve simple addition and subtraction problems • use quantitative labels to estimate • differentiate standard two and three dimensional shapes and objects • compare U.S. customary units of weight, capacity, and length • tell time to the hour • organize and compare data

Grade 5 Academic Skills

In reading, students at this grade:	In writing, students at this grade:	In mathematics, students at this grade:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • retell a story • are aware of inference • make simple connections • know descriptive words • are acquainted with a variety of literary genre • compare and contrast information • respond to information mode 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create a list of topics • write topic sentences and supporting details • use voice • write simple, complete sentences • use basic conventions of print • write a simple report including examples • write information related to an informational resource • obtain and organize information from an informational resource 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • represent and order larger whole numbers and count by two's • use coins and dollars • solve addition problems • solve simple subtraction problems • estimate • identify and express values of coins • identify and compare parts of a whole including halves • identify and name standard two and three dimensional shapes and objects • determine U.S. customary units of weight and capacity • identify patterns growing by two's • organize and compare data

Grade 6 Academic Skills

In reading, students at this grade:	In writing, students at this grade:	In mathematics, students at this grade:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify main ideas and a supporting detail from literary texts • understand cause and effect • make text-to-text connections • compare story elements • identify features of informational texts • identify information from informational texts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • organize and select a topic • match related sentences • use voice to express opinion • write complete sentences • use basic conventions and grammar • identify related and unrelated sentences • write a report including a connection • use a resource to create informational texts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • represent and order larger whole numbers and count by two's and five's • identify and compare parts of a whole including halves and quarters • identify congruent geometric shapes • estimate to compare weight • compare and determine U.S. customary units of capacity to measure • provide the value of a variable in number sentences • organize and compare data

Grade 7 Academic Skills

In reading, students at this grade:	In writing, students at this grade:	In mathematics, students at this grade:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use vocabulary to compare and contrast • identify main ideas and supporting details from literary texts • make connections within a text • identify author's purpose • identify chronology of events in informational texts • identify data presented in graphic representations of informational texts • identify information from an interview 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • organize topics into categories • write using paragraph form • use voice to express feelings or opinions • write compound sentences • use basic conventions and grammar • communicate responses to literary texts • identify problems and write solutions or procedures • identify resources used to complete research • write descriptions related to literary texts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • represent and order larger whole numbers and count by five's and ten's • recognize equivalencies • combine parts of a whole including halves • identify angles and parallel lines in objects • determine U.S. customary units to measure length • understand relationship between U.S. customary units of weight and capacity • calculator perimeter of a four-sided figure • recognize values on a number line • identify sets of data given graphic representations

Grade 8 Academic Skills

In reading, students at this grade:	In writing, students at this grade:	In mathematics, students at this grade:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify sequence of details in literary texts • identify story elements • identify a simile in literary texts • differentiate relevant from irrelevant information in informational texts • retell information in meaningful order 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • select a topic • write using paragraph form • write to persuade • use a variety of sentences in their writing • share their writing • express opinions about literary texts • use resources to create informational texts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • represent and order larger whole numbers • multiply by two's • use estimation • identify the sum of parts of a whole and more than whole including quarters (8.A.N.4) • identify congruent and similar geometric objects • calculate the perimeter of a rectangle • make comparisons using U.S. customary units of measure • translate and represent word phrases • recognize values on a vertical scale • organize, represent, and compare sets of data

Grade 11 Academic Skills		
In reading, students at this grade:	In writing, students at this grade:	In mathematics, students at this grade:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify main idea in literary text • summarize • identify story elements • sequence key events • identify author's purpose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use the writing process • generate ideas including topics and details • write an organized, expanded paragraph • write for an audience • rewrite sentences • write responses to literary texts citing evidence • write a letter or practical text • use multiple resources to write reports or persuasive texts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • represent and order whole numbers • divide by two's • use estimation to solve problems involving two values • use one-to-one proportions • interpret geometric descriptions • recognize equivalent U.S. customary units of measure • represent and solve story problems • evaluate algebraic expressions involving multiplication • collect, organize, and interpret data

Understanding What is Being Assessed

The PAWS-ALT is based on Alternate Achievement Standards and measures achievement in reading, writing and mathematics skills. As part of Federal requirements, students with significant cognitive disabilities are participating in a curriculum based on the same content that all of their peers are learning. As shown in Table 6, the PAWS-ALT assesses the content of the extended Wyoming Academic Content Standards. The areas described in the Wyoming extended Academic Content Standards and Academic Benchmarks that are assessed in reading, writing, and mathematics are shown in Table 6.

**Table 6
Assessed Reading, Writing and Mathematics Standards**

Reading Standard	Academic Benchmarks	Writing Standard	Academic Benchmarks	Math Standards
<p>Students demonstrate understanding of literary and informational texts.</p>	<p>Students know that text has meaning.</p>	<p>Students apply writing skills to communicate.</p>	<p>Students apply writing skills.</p>	<p><u>Number Operations and Concepts</u> Students sequence numbers and use number operations and related concepts to solve problems.</p>
	<p>Students understand literary texts.</p>		<p>Students write expressive and expository pieces.</p>	<p><u>GEOMETRY</u> Students recognize, sort, compare, and contrast geometric shapes and objects and relationships.</p>
	<p>Students understand informational texts.</p>		<p><u>MEASUREMENT</u> Students use tools to apply numbers and concepts to length, capacity, time, and weight.</p>	

Understanding Achievement Expectations

The Performance Level Descriptors define the academic knowledge and skill areas and ways in which a student has mastered this content in each subject area. The level of independence or support, learning situation, and assistance for a student are included in the descriptors. The academic knowledge and skills are reduced in complexity and depth for students who participate in the PAWS-ALT. However, expectations increase from one grade level to the next. The Performance Level Descriptors by content area as written on page 2 of the PAWS-ALT Student Report are described in Table 7.

ALGEBRA
Students recognize and extend patterns and use numbers and symbols to solve problems.

DATA ANALYSIS AND PROBABILITY
Students collect and organize data and make predictions based on given situations.

Table 7
Performance Level Descriptors by Content Area

Performance Levels	Advanced	Proficient	Basic	Below Basic
READING	The student independently performs reading skills aligned to academic content standards of reduced complexity. The student comprehends the meaning of text and applies his or her understanding to literary and informational text in new learning situations without assistance.	The student performs reading skills aligned to academic content standards of reduced complexity with some external support. The student performs reading tasks related to understanding that text has meaning and to understanding literary and informational text in multiple familiar learning situations with some assistance.	The student performs reading skills aligned to academic content standards of reduced complexity with multiple prompts and external support. The student describes the meaning of text and identifies literary and informational text in some familiar learning situations with assistance.	The student responds to the presentation of reading activities aligned to academic content standards of reduced complexity with modeling and external support. The student responds to reading tasks related to the meaning of text, literary text, and informational text in structured, learning situations with assistance.
WRITING	The student independently performs writing skills aligned to academic content standards of reduced complexity. The student generates expressive and expository pieces to communicate ideas in new learning situations without assistance.	The student performs writing skills aligned to academic content standards of reduced complexity with some external support. The student applies writing skills to write expressive and expository pieces in several familiar learning situations with some assistance.	The student performs writing skills aligned to academic content standards of reduced complexity with some external support and multiple prompts. The student uses some writing skills to write expressive and expository pieces in some familiar learning situations with assistance.	The student responds to the presentation of writing activities aligned to academic content standards of reduced complexity with modeling and external support. The student responds to writing tasks related to communication of ideas through the application of writing skills to expressive and expository pieces in structured learning situations with assistance.
MATHEMATICS	The student independently demonstrates mathematics skills aligned to academic content standards of reduced complexity. The student applies number operations and concepts, geometry, measurement, algebra, and data analysis skills to solve mathematical problems in new learning situations without assistance.	The student performs mathematics skills aligned to academic content standards of reduced complexity with some external support. The student solves mathematics problems associated with number operations and concepts, geometry, measurement, algebra, and data analysis in several familiar learning situations with some assistance.	The student performs mathematics skills aligned to academic content standards of reduced complexity with some external support. And multiple prompts. The student can carry out routine procedures associated with number operations and concepts, geometry, measurement, algebra, and data analysis in some, familiar learning situations	The student responds to the presentation of mathematics activities aligned to academic content standards of reduced complexity with external support and modeling. The student responds to mathematics tasks associated with number operations and concepts, geometry, measurement, algebra, and data analysis in structured, learning situations with

			with assistance	assistance.
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Using the Results

How will my child's PAWS-ALT results be used?

The test documents that your child is being taught academic curriculum, as required by law, and shows your student's level of achievement in reading, writing, and mathematics. Other assessments are also used at the school-level to measure your student's academic progress. Results from the PAWS-ALT along with these other assessments can be used to determine future goals and to inform instruction provided by your child's teacher.

The **Performance Levels** can be used to:

- Determine whether each school and district is making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)
- Improve your child's education and access to academic instruction
- Assist teachers in adjusting instruction to meet the individual academic needs of your child
- Allocate resources to students who need them
- Inform professional development needs

The **Assessment Targets** percentages can be used to:

- Indicate performance on an important skill in each content area
- Compare performance on the important skill from year to year

What should a parent/guardian do with his or her child's results?

You are encouraged to talk to your child's teacher about this report, discuss your child's academic progress with his or her IEP team, and identify ways to work together to support your child's education. Please visit these Wyoming Department of Education websites (http://www.k12.wy.us/SAA/Paws/paws_alt.htm and <http://www.k12.wy.us/SAA/standards.asp>) to obtain more information about the PAWS-ALT and the extended Wyoming Academic Content Standards and Academic Benchmarks in reading, writing, mathematics, and science.

Questions and Answers About Alternate Assessment



What are state assessments?

State assessments measure student mastery of grade-level specific, academic knowledge and skills. State and federal regulations require that all students, including those with disabilities, participate in State and district-wide assessments. As a means of facilitating participation and demonstration of knowledge and skills, these students may receive appropriate assessment accommodations. Accommodations are alterations in how instruction or assessments are presented to the student or how the student responds. The Individual Education Plan (IEP) must include a statement of any individual, appropriate accommodations that are necessary to measure the academic achievement of a student on State and district-wide assessments. The State provides guidance to IEP teams to assist in their determination of student participation in and allowable accommodations on State assessments.

What is alternate assessment?

An alternate assessment is an assessment designed for the small number of students with disabilities who are unable to participate in the regular grade-level State assessment, even with appropriate accommodations as required by law. Alternate assessments may cover a narrower range of content and reflect a different set of expectations in the areas of reading/language arts, mathematics in 2007 and science in 2008. The expectations for how well students with the most significant cognitive disabilities know particular extended academic content standards may be less complex than grade level Content and Performance Standards, but are still challenging for these students. The alternate assessment is a collection of evidence that demonstrates student mastery

of extended grade-level specific academic standards. The alternate assessment ensures participation of all students in assessment and accountability systems.

What is an alternate achievement standard?

Alternate achievement standards are used to evaluate the performance of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities on the alternate assessment. There are four performance levels described in the alternate achievement standards: Advanced, Proficient, Basic, and Below Basic. Each performance level describes student academic competency and includes assessment scores. Student performance on alternate assessment differs in complexity from grade-level achievement standards, which are used to evaluate student performance on the general state assessment. The alternate achievement standards are reduced in complexity and breadth.

-What does the alternate assessment measure?

The primary goal of the alternate assessment is the determination of student subject mastery against grade-level extended Academic Content Standards and Academic Benchmarks in reading, writing, mathematics. Student performance on an alternate assessment may guide the development of instructional activities appropriate for the student based on the extended standards for the grade in which the student is enrolled.

Do all students need to participate in state assessments?

Yes. All students participate in state assessments with the passage of the Individuals with Disabilities Act. How students will participate is decided by IEP teams. Wyoming has established Participation Exemptions. Medically fragile students may be exempted if their condition prohibits classroom participation. However,

the vast majority of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities and/or severe multiple disabilities are required to participate in state assessments.



Are all IEP goals linked to the extended Academic Content Standards and Academic Benchmarks for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities?

No. Every student will receive academic instruction aligned to the extended Academic Content Standards and Academic Benchmarks. In addition, each student's IEP will include a wide-range of appropriate, individualized goals and/or objectives related to other areas of instruction and need that may include for example functional or communication skills



Additional Information

How do I get more information about the alternate assessment and PAWS-ALT?

Additional information and assistance are available by contacting:

cturne@educ.state.wy.us or by calling Charlene Turner at (307) 777 – 7322 or Michael Harris at (307) 777 – 2577.

Three additional websites that offer information about alternate assessment are:

www.ed.gov (U.S. Department of Education)

edpubs@inet.ed.gov

The above website offers publications that parents, guardians and teachers may find helpful in supporting the education of all students. The following publication is available by calling 1-877-433-7827, 1-800-872-5327 or at edpubs@inet.ed.gov:

Learning Opportunities for Your Child Through Alternate Assessment

www.naacpatners.org (National Alternate Assessment Center)

NAAC Primary Objectives

- Bring together and build on high quality, technically sound alternate assessment.
- Demonstrate through our selected partner states high quality design and administration of all types of alternate assessments.
- Provide technical assistance through high quality dissemination practices.

