



WYOMING DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

*Creating Opportunities
for Students to Keep
Wyoming Strong*

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MEMORANDUM NO. 2016-061

TO: School District Superintendents
Curriculum Coordinators
High School Principals
High School Counselors

FROM: Brent Young, Chief Policy Officer

DATE: April 11, 2016

SUBJECT: Assessment and Accountability System Changes

CHANGES TO WYOMING'S ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS

The 2016 Wyoming legislative session brought changes to Wyoming's state assessment and accountability systems. The following areas will be impacted by these changes: Statewide Assessment, State Accountability, Alternative Schools Accountability, and College Entrance Exam for the Hathaway Scholarship Program. The recent passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which replaces No Child Left Behind, will also impact Wyoming's assessment and accountability system, and further guidance will be sent as it becomes available.

Statewide Assessment

[Enrolled Act 55](#) requires a new statewide assessment system to be first implemented in the 2017-18 school year. Key components require that the WDE and the State Board do the following:

- Implement a standards-based assessment system in English language arts and mathematics in grades 3-10; assess science in grades 4, 8, and 10
- Implement a college entrance assessment in grade 11, required of all students
- Implement an optional work readiness assessment in grades 11 and 12
- Ensure total time in testing is no more than 1% of total student-teacher time
- Include multiple item types to better address the standards (the Assessment Task Force recommended a statewide writing assessment at least once in each grade span: elementary, middle, and high school)
- Include optional interim assessments for district use, aligned to the summative assessment in terms of content

- Include a “best practices” reporting system to support improvement strategies
- Assess as late in the year as practical (the Task Force Report suggests the last two weeks of April and first week of May)
- Assess online, to the extent practical
- Measure student performance on a comparative basis in other states

A new requirement in ESSA places a statewide cap of 1% on the number of students who can participate in the alternate assessments. States are working with The US Department of Education (ED) to better understand the requirement and any potential consequences for states that exceed the cap.

In addition, the newly updated assessment peer review process conducted by ED contains new requirements to more fully assess adopted content standards. In English language arts (ELA), staff at ED have indicated that states will have to plan to assess speaking and listening standards if they are components of states’ adopted ELA content standards. Given the limited feasibility of implementing expanded ELA assessments at this time, ED has provided states with the opportunity to request a waiver of the requirement for the 2015-16 and 2016-17 school years. The WDE is currently accepting public comment on this waiver request, and more information can be found at:

edu.wyoming.gov/wyoming-to-submit-waiver-on-speaking-and-listening-assessments/

In the 2016-17 school year, PAWS, Aspire, Wy-ALT, and ACT Plus Writing will continue as required assessments that will be used for school accountability calculations. WorkKeys will remain an optional assessment for students in grades 11 and 12.

For additional information about changes to the Statewide Assessment system, please contact Deb Lindsey at deb.lindsey@wyo.gov or 307-777-8753.

State Accountability

The Wyoming Accountability in Education Act (WAEA) currently requires an Achievement indicator for grades three through eight as well as grade 11. Beginning with the 2017-18 school year, the state accountability system will include Achievement measures for grades three through ten based on results from the standards-based assessments indicated above, and the grade 11 Achievement indicator will be based on performance on the college entrance exam.

For additional information about changes to the State Accountability model, please contact Sean McInerney at sean.mcinerney@wyo.gov or 307-777-8752.

Alternative Schools Accountability

In 2016-17, districts with alternative schools will have an opportunity to volunteer as participants in the pilot of the alternative schools accountability model ([Enrolled Act 64](#)), which will be based on the attached Wyoming Alternative School Accountability Framework. This framework was developed by Wyoming school and district leaders of alternative schools, the Wyoming Department of Education, and the Center for Assessment, and it was presented to and approved by the Joint Education Committee in the fall of 2015.

As part of state accountability for alternative schools, the following indicators will be measured:

- Academic Performance, based on Achievement and Growth as defined in WAEA
- College and Career Readiness, including a measure of progress in credits earned toward high school graduation as well as the extent to which students earn accomplishments associated with post-secondary education
- Student Engagement, based on daily attendance and a student success plan
- School Climate, based on surveys measuring the quality and character of school life

For the next school year, Wyoming alternative schools will continue to receive their school performance reports for informational purposes only.

For additional information about the Alternative Schools Accountability model, please contact Julie Magee at julie.magee@wyo.gov or 307-777-8740.

College Entrance Exam for Hathaway Scholarship Program

The Hathaway Scholarship Program ([Enrolled Act 16](#)), signed into law at the conclusion of the 2016 legislative session, resulted in changes of language regarding the ACT exam within [W.S. 21-16-1301](#) through W.S. 21-16-1311. The new legislation removed all references to the ACT exam and replaced it with “college entrance exam.” This new language bears no changes to the current required ACT cut scores to receive a level of the Hathaway Scholarship. The current ACT cut scores remain unchanged.

As in the past, students will still be able to take either the ACT or SAT to meet Hathaway Scholarship awarding requirements. The [ACT-SAT concordance table](#) demonstrates how the SAT will correlate to the appropriate ACT cut score should a student take the SAT.

Current ACT Cut Scores

Hathaway Scholarship Level	Required ACT Score	Required SAT Score
Honors	25	1150
Performance	21	990
Opportunity	19	910
Provisional Opportunity	17	830

For additional information about changes to the Hathaway Scholarship Program, please contact Bradley Barker at bradley.barker@wyo.gov or 307-777-6226, or Jennifer Peterson at jennifer.peterson@wyo.gov or 307-777-6840.

Attachments:

Enrolled Act 55-Statewide Student Assessment

Enrolled Act 64-Alternative Schools Accountability

Wyoming Alternative School Accountability Framework

Enrolled Act 16-Hathaway Scholarship Eligibility