**RESPONSE TO DISTRICT QUESTION DURING EMBARGOED RELEASE**

**THE WYOMING ACCOUNTABILITY IN EDUCATION (WAEA) 2012-13 PILOT**

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On Friday October 11, 2013, reports were released to schools that showed them their results under the implementation of the WAEA pilot school rating model. These reports were embargoed for two weeks. The purpose of the embargoed release is to give schools and districts an opportunity to inspect the results and raise any questions or concerns they might have prior to a public release of the results. Questions and concerns are answered and issues are investigated and any corrections, when appropriate, are applied before the public release.

During the embargoed release a school questioned procedures related to the minimum *n* requirements. The procedure that had been implemented for the minimum *n* requirements as part of the WAEA Data Model involved first determining if a school had at least two of the three indicators. When a school had two indicators it was possible within the model to determine a school performance level for the school without adding in any school performance evidence from prior school years.

When a school had only one indicator or no indicators that met a minimum *n* requirement it was not possible to derive a performance level for the school. The WAEA Data Model would then add school performance evidence from prior years in an attempt to reach the minimum *n* requirement on at least two indicators so that a school performance level could be assigned to the school. Whenever school performance evidence from prior years is used it is likely that some students will necessarily provide evidence from more than one year. As an example, achievement results from the same students would be included from both grade 4 and 5. In this example the performance of a low performing or high performing student may have a magnified impact. While not ideal, this practice does make it possible to derive a score for the school. With an interest in avoiding the double counting of individual students, prior year evidence was not included in the scores at schools with scores on at least two indicators.

This feature of the WAEA Data Model, however, was inconsistent with the procedures included in the WAEA Implementation Handbook. The following passage is from the handbook.

“For accountability decisions, the minimum number of students (*n*) in the consolidated subgroup is 15. For schools with a consolidated subgroup of less than 15 the performance of the consolidated subgroup over multiple years will be considered. Subgroup performance will be considered over two years. If that results in 15 students in the consolidated subgroup equity would be measured for those combined years. If not subgroup performance will be considered over three years. If there are not 15 students in the subgroup over three years, equity will not be measured at the school.”

The school that questioned the minimum *n* requirement for the equity subgroup would have been one performance level higher if this language included in the handbook had been included in the WAEA Data Model. While investigating this school’s question it became apparent that a number of schools would have benefitted had methodology described in the handbook been included in the WAEA Data Model.

A Correction was applied prior to the public release of school reports. We intended to use a hold harmless approach and only make changes when they resulted in a more positive outcome for a school. There were no schools, however, that would have had a more negative outcome from this correction. Nineteen schools were identified, however, that would have performance levels one level higher when prior year evidence was included for the equity indicator. The reports for these 19 schools will be corrected to reflect the inclusion of the equity indicator and the higher performance level prior to the public release of school reports.

As a follow-up, plans are underway to conduct a study of various minimum *n* scenarios prior to the 2014 implementation. Specifically, there is an interest in seeing if a common minimum *n* would work for all three indicators.

This correction further will alter the final impact of the WAEA pilot. Specifically, four schools moved from the Not Meeting Expectations performance level to the Partially Meeting Expectations Category, five schools moved from Partially Meeting Expectations to Meeting Expectations and ten schools moved from Meeting Expectations to Exceeding Expectations.

The Professional Judgment Panel (PJP) work occurred prior to this correction. Had this correction been made prior to the PJP work it is likely that the identified cut scores for the equity indicators would have been different. As such, even though the impact data changed due to this correction, the impact data prior to making this correction is probably a more accurate estimate of the likely impact in 2014. The Table below shows the difference in impact from prior to and after this correction for grade 3-8 schools.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Pre Correction | | Post Correction | |
| Count of Schools | % of Schools | Count of Schools | % of Schools |
| Not Meeting | 37 | 13.1% | 33 | 11.7% |
| Partially Meeting | 70 | 24.7% | 69 | 24.4% |
| Meeting | 135 | 47.7% | 130 | 45.9% |
| Exceeding | 23 | 8.1% | 33 | 11.7% |
| Not Classified | 18 | 6.4% | 18 | 6.4% |