



WDE Assessment Updates

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-Deb Lindsey-
777-8753

-Jessica
Steinbrenner-
777-8568

-Pari Swanson-
777-5292

-Will Donkersgoed-
777-5133

-Robin Holbrook -
777-5217

-Bailey Anthony-
777-5296

Help Needed: ACT Standard Setting

On August 5 and 6th the WDE will need a panel of people to review and help set new cuts for the ACT. We'll be setting new, higher performance expectations on the ACT in reading, math and science to align with the college and career readiness and the higher performance expectations on PAWS. This standard setting group will be working in Cheyenne and will receive a stipend of \$300 per day for the two days to cover lodging, dinner, travel, and time. Please register today:

https://docs.google.com/a/wyo.gov/forms/d/13q9IX7uoD-AjETICHRZ45MfRdu9Ujz3jO8GRheP0uKM/viewform?usp=send_form

PAWS Results - 2014 Questions and Answers

What is different about the 2014 PAWS?

- ⇒ In 2012, Wyoming adopted new, more rigorous content standards in English language arts and math. These standards, commonly known as the Common Core State Standards, specify what children are expected to know and do in each grade level, kindergarten through grade 12.
- ⇒ Since then, we have been transitioning our state test, the Proficiency Assessments for Wyoming Students (PAWS), to address the content in the new standards. Because the test has changed to better assess the more rigorous standards, WDE has to set new cut scores that define *how much* students need to know/do in order to earn scores in each of the performance levels (advanced, proficient, basic, and below basic) on the PAWS.

In what ways have the new standards affected the questions on the test?

- ⇒ In ELA, reading passages are sometimes paired together, and students must read both and compare and contrast the two passages. For example, they may be tasked with determining/analyzing the theme in both, or contrasting two arguments on a singular topic. Students also answer stand-alone language items on PAWS which require students to demonstrate their knowledge of academic vocabulary and figurative devices.
- ⇒ In math, students are expected to show they understand math concepts, not simply memorize and repeat formulas. For example, some questions require students to demonstrate that they know the next steps for solving a problem. And content that formerly had been tested in the upper grades is now being tested in earlier grades.

How are changes in cut scores made?

- ⇒ In the summer of 2014, WDE will be convening standard-setting panels to review test questions against the academic targets established in the standards and to make recommendations about what students need to know and be able to do at each grade level, 3-8, in order to earn a score in each of the performance levels.
- ⇒ The standard-setting panels are comprised of Wyoming educators with experience implementing the standards in their classrooms, and the process is being facilitated by the state's test vendor, Educational Testing Services.

Who makes the final decisions about new cut scores?

- ⇒ Recommendations from the ELA and math panels will be reviewed by staff in the Wyoming Department of Education, including the State Superintendent, who retains the authority to finalize and establish the cut scores.

Does the WDE have technical experts to help guide its decisions?

- ⇒ Yes. Like other state departments of education, WDE works with a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) comprised of national experts in educational assessment and measurement. The plan for standard-setting was reviewed and approved by both the WDE and its TAC in early 2014, and the process for determining cut scores will be reviewed by the TAC prior to adoption by the WDE in July, 2014.

What changes, if any, can we expect to see in the test scores?

- ⇒ Since the 2012 content standards in English language arts and mathematics established higher expectations for students, the 2014 PAWS sets an entirely new baseline for student performance. Consistent with experiences of both Kentucky and New York, we have anticipated lower proficiency rates than we have seen in the past. This does not mean that students know less than 2013 and earlier, or that schools are doing a poor job educating their students – it's that the test itself reflects the much higher expectations we now have for Wyoming students.
- ⇒ Over the next few years, as students' knowledge and skills improve, we expect that proficiency rates will improve as well.

When will we get our 2014 results?

- ⇒ Because we are conducting standard-setting this summer for PAWS Reading and Math (grades 3-8) and the Student Assessment of Writing Skills-SAWS-(grades 5 and 7), data won't be available to districts until September.
- ⇒ During the first week of September, Individual Student Reports (ISRs) will be shipped to districts. One copy is intended for parents and the other copy is intended for the cumulative folder. In the middle of September, a data file with individual student results will be released in Fusion for district staff with the appropriate security rights. School and district reports will also be available.

What about AYP calculations and WAEA School Performance Reports (SPRs)?

- ⇒ In September, the statutorily required Professional Judgment Panel will re-evaluate school performance cuts for the SPRs in light of the changes to PAWS and resulting effects on overall school proficiency rates. Then, the WDE will run both AYP calculations and the SPRs. We anticipate these school accountability reports to be ready in October.

Can we expect any changes in PAWS science?

- ⇒ No. The state content standards in science have not changed, so the tested content hasn't shifted, either. We will continue to test the "old" science standards and use previously established performance cuts until we adopt new content standards.