WDE Assessment Updates

August 12, 2014

-Deb Lindsey-
777-8753

-Jessica Steinbrenner-
777-8568

-Michelle Carroll-
777-3618

-Bailey Anthony-
777-5296

-Pari Swanson-
777-5292

-Will Donkersgoed-
777-5133

- Robin Holbrook -
777-5217

Update on Alternate Assessment

On July 1st, the State Board approved a new contract with American Institutes for Research (AIR) to deliver the Spring 2015 and 2016 alternate assessment. The Wyoming Alternate Assessment for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities (Wy-ALT) administration window is Feb. 23-Mar. 27, 2015. Look for resource documents like the Assessment Overview, Key Dates, Frequently Asked Questions, Test Design and much more on our website. Please note, the mandatory administration training will take place in January, 2015 in at least 4 locations through the state. We are working to establish locations and exact dates, so watch the newsletter for details.

In addition to the new Wy-ALT, the Wyoming Content and Performance Standards extensions for students with significant cognitive disabilities are now open for public comment. Please take some time to review the extensions and comment on them! In conjunction with the Center for Literacy and Disability Studies, WDE will be offering a training opportunity for anyone interested in learning more about the standards extensions. The focus will be on literacy and communication for students with significant cognitive disabilities. Participants will gain an understanding of the extensions and how to use them instructionally for all their students. We are planning these sessions for November and will schedule them in at least four locations in the state as well. Again, please watch the newsletter for details on dates/locations!

If you have any questions about the new assessment, don't hesitate to contact Pari Swanson, ALT Assessment Consultant, at 324-8122 or email pari.swanson@wyo.gov.

Smarter Balanced Achievement Level Setting

Smarter Balanced is inviting educators and other stakeholders nationwide to participate in the **Online Panel for Achievement Level Setting**, a unique opportunity to provide feedback on the new assessments.

Achievement Level Setting is the process for establishing one or more cut scores on an assessment, making it possible to create categories of performance. During this process, participants review test questions and recommend achievement level scores that establish challenging, yet fair expectations for students. With capacity for thousands of teachers, higher education faculty, parents and others, the **Online Panel** results will provide critical information to Smarter Balanced member states as they establish achievement levels for the new assessments.

Occurring between October 6 and 17, the **Online Panel** will allow participants to actively contribute their expertise and recommend the achievement level score in English or mathematics that will indicate students are on-track to college and career readiness. Participating in the **Online Panel** process is simple and will take no more than three hours over a two day window. Visit the Smarter Balanced website to **learn more about the Online Panel** and register today!

Those interested in participating must visit the link below and complete the easy four-step registration process. Panelists will choose a 2-day window between October 6 and 17, 2014 for participation.

http://smarterbalanced.measinc.com/EventCode/100614

Please share the opportunity to participate in this important project within your community!

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 convened 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 were comprised of Wyoming educators with experience implementing the standards in their classrooms, and the process was 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 were 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 s tandard-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.

PAWS Results - 2014 Questions and Answers Continued...

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 <u>not</u> 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.

New Informational Resource for ACCESS for ELLs 2.0

WIDA has developed the ***Overview of Online ACCESS for ELLs 2.0: What's New in Summative Assessment*** webinar. This recorded webinar gives important information about the online assessment that will be operational in the 2015-16 school year. This webinar address the following information:

♦ Timeline for the ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 online assessment
♦ Key features for the online assessment
♦ Additional recourses to assist in the transition to the online assessment

Below is the link to this recorded webinar:
http://assetsproject.org/implementation/ACCESS2.0Webinar/presentation.html

WIDA will continue to post new resources to the Operational Test Preparation Resources webpage as they become available.

DRC College/Career Ready Field Test: Fall 2014 Opportunity

Data Recognition Corporation (DRC), a nationally known testing company located in Minnesota, will be inviting districts and schools across the country to participate in their Fall College-and Career-Ready Field Test Project for students in grades 3 – 11.

The college-and career-ready (CCR) grade-level tests will be administered online October 6 - 31, 2014, and they will contain technology-enhanced items as well as other new item types measuring CCR standards. This is another opportunity to familiarize students and teachers with more demanding, complex items and item-types. Schools and districts will have total flexibility in what schools, grades, or subjects they might select to participate. DRC will provide customer service and technical support throughout the field testing project.

DRC promises tech readiness reports prior to testing, and reports with raw score results will be available to schools and districts after the field tests are completed. Districts will also be eligible for several technology grants from DRC.

Below is a brief Q & A regarding the DRC field test. They will begin contacting districts and schools on August 1 to encourage them to sign up for participation in the October field test.

What's this Field Test? DRC has developed a set of technology-enhanced items and passages aligned to the College- and Career-Ready Standards. The items will be administered online and are available in three 60-minute test sections: Mathematics, Reading, and Language Conventions.

Who can participate? Students in grades 3–11 are eligible. Participating districts and schools can volunteer and will have flexibility to decide the number of students, grade levels, and which schools will participate.

When is it scheduled? The enrollment period is August 2014 – September 2014 and the test will be administered in October, 2014.

What are the incentives and potential benefits to participating?
Participating districts and schools will receive the following:
- Technology readiness reports providing diagnostic results based on test simulations
- Student performance reports—online in real time, providing student raw score results; roll-up summaries following testing
- An invitation to a follow-up webinar with national experts to provide implications and impact of student results
- All participating schools will be entered into a drawing for the chance to win one of several $10,000 technology vouchers

How do I enroll? DRC will be contacting districts, and schools in August and September. Interested districts/schools may also call DRC at 855.643.9106, email DRCRecruitment@datarecognitioncorp.com, or visit www.datarecognitioncorp.com/fieldtest for more information

Does the WDE require any schools or districts to participate? Is this Field Test in any way endorsed by WDE?   No and no. WDE is simply providing districts/schools with a heads-up that DRC representatives will be contacting districts/schools and inviting them to participate. The WDE does not require any school to participate, nor does the WDE endorse the Field Test. It's completely voluntary; participation is at the discretion of LEA personnel.

ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 Operational Test
Communications and Preparation Resources

Over the past two years, WIDA and project partners have been developing and field testing the ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 online assessment items. The new assessment will become operational in the 2015-16 school year.

The table below provides an overview of preparation resources and their website location.

Communication	Purpose and Website Location
ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 Implementation Section (ASSETS Website)	• To provide the most up-to-date information about plans for ACCESS for ELLs 2.0, including FAQs • The Implementation/ Operational Test section of the WIDA (ASSETS) website serves as the central location for all preparation documents about ACCESS for ELLs 2.0
Technology Requirements for the Operational Test (ASSETS Website)	• To provide information about technology requirements (e.g, hardware, operating systems, network, etc.) to administer the online test • To outline considerations for users of tablets and other devices • Available on the WIDA (ASSETS) website (Implementation/Operational/Technology Requirements section)
Recommendations for Purchasing Headsets (document)	• To provide information about recommended headset features for the online test and a list of headsets WIDA has tested • Available on the WIDA (ASSETS) website (Implementation/Operational/Technology Requirements section)
ACCESS for ELLs 2.0: Key Implementation Strategies for the Operational Test (document)	• To provide recommendations to state and local education agencies on preparing for the operational test (technology, logistics, etc.) • Available on the WIDA (ASSETS) website (Implementation/Operational/Test Preparation Resources section)
What's New in ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 (flyer)	• To inform district educators of the changes to expect with ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 for each domain • Available on the WIDA (ASSETS) website: (Implementation/Operational/Test Preparation Resources section)
What's New in ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 (recorded webinar)	• To explain in more detail the changes to expect with ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 • To show sample test items so end users can better visualize the online test • *To be available in July 2014*