



Wyoming Department of Education

Dr. Jim McBride, Superintendent of Public Instruction
2020 Grand Avenue, Suite 500
Laramie, WY 82070

Phone 307-777-5296 Fax 307-777-6719 Website www.k12.wy.us

MEMORANDUM NO. 2009-030

TO: School District Superintendents
Special Education Directors
Principals

FROM: Charlene Turner, Director of Alternate Assessment
Bill Herrera, Assistant Director of Assessment
Standards and Assessment Unit

DATE: February 20, 2009

SUBJECT: Investigation of Student Eligibility and Item Prototypes for an Alternate Assessment

IMPORTANT – TIME SENSITIVE INFORMATION

The Wyoming Department of Education is participating in a federally funded Enhanced Assessment Grant called OAASIS, Operationalizing Alternate Assessment for Science Inquiry Skills. The purpose of the grant is to investigate the development of item prototypes for use on an alternate assessment based on Modified Alternate Achievement Standards in high school science for certain students with disabilities. Information regarding Wyoming's involvement in this grant and a description of this project and federal regulations are further described in the attached OAASIS "Dear Colleague" letter and the **ISLE Introduction Power Point Presentation**.

It is requested that you distribute to high school science general education teachers and high school special education teachers this memo and the attachments to solicit their involvement in the following activities:

- 1) Completion of an online survey, entitled ISLE (Inventory of Student Learning Experiences), which will provide valuable information about eligibility criteria as well as inform the development of effective meaningful test items for certain students with disabilities. We request that the survey be completed and submitted by April 1, 2009, and
- 2) Future participation in a three-state Pilot Study in fall, 2009. This pilot study will provide valuable information towards the development and validity of alternate assessment strategies based on modified achievement standards. The Pilot Study will be a computer-based, multiple choice alternate assessment for science inquiry skills.

CT:al

enclosures



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

February 20, 2009

Dear Education Colleague:

The Wyoming, South Dakota, and South Carolina State Departments of Education are collaborating towards an effective process for developing assessments for students with disabilities. As you know, federal law mandates that we include all students, including those with disabilities, in state testing and accountability systems. To support this work, our states have been awarded a grant from the U.S. Department of Education.

The federally funded grant, OAASIS, shall investigate the development of item prototypes for use on an alternate assessment based on Modified Alternate Achievement Standards in high school science for certain students with disabilities. Outcomes of this grant will be to provide valuable information about eligibility criteria as well as inform the development of effective, meaningful test items for certain students with disabilities.

The students we are focusing on are high school students who have taken biology or life science. In order to understand more about these students, we are asking for your help. We ask that you complete one of two surveys. One survey is designed for any high school general education science teacher. In this survey, we want to know more about the kinds of instruction and accommodations general education teachers use with their students. The other survey is designed for special education teachers. In this survey we ask special education teachers questions about their students with disabilities. Questions specific to one student who might qualify based on the federal regulations are then asked.

To complete the surveys, click on the appropriate survey click (either the general education survey or special education survey):

- ✚ ISLE Survey Link for High School Science General Education Teachers:
<http://www.surveygizmo.com/s/89531/isle-gened>

- ✚ ISLE Survey Link for High School Special Education Teachers:
<http://www.surveygizmo.com/s/89593/isle-specialed>

Please read the introduction to the survey and then respond to the questions. Your responses will be anonymous, but your expertise and insight will be crucial in improving testing and instruction for students with disabilities. Also, we request that you complete and submit the survey by April 1, 2009.

Before completing the survey, please view the attached **ISLE Introduction Power Point Presentation** that describes our project and the federal regulations.

If you have questions about the project, please contact us by phone at 307-777-7322 or through email at cturne@educ.state.wy.us. Thank you in advance for your participation in the projects associated with this grant. Your involvement is crucial to achieving the grant outcomes.

Sincerely,

Charlene Turner and Bill Herrera
Standards and Assessment Unit
Wyoming Department of Education

Developing More Accessible Assessments for Students with Disabilities:



How You Can Help

Presentation Objectives

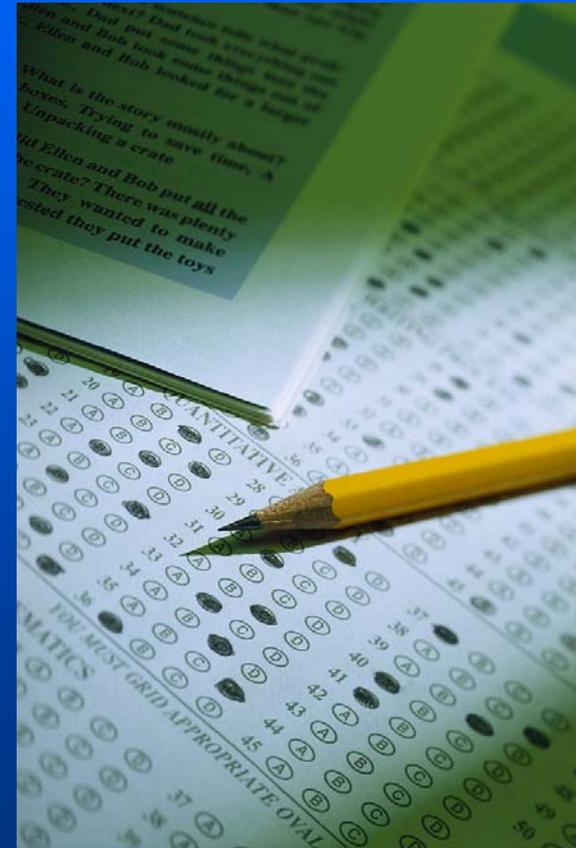
- Provide an overview about recent changes to federal regulations regarding testing students with disabilities
- Provide an overview of OAASIS – a grant shared by South Carolina, South Dakota, & Wyoming
- Give instructions & information about ISLE – surveys for you to provide your expertise

IDEA & NCLB

- The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and No Child Left Behind Act clearly mandate including ALL students in standards-based instruction and assessment.
- Recent changes in IDEA and NCLB allow states the flexibility to investigate the use of an Alternate Assessment based on Modified Achievement Standards (AA-MAS).

AA-MAS

- States are permitted to count 2% of the proficient scores toward AYP.
- Federal regulations list certain eligibility criteria for the AA-MAS...



**Students eligible for an AA-MAS
should meet ALL of the following
criteria:**

- have IEPs with standards-based, grade-level goals
- do not qualify to take an Alternate Assessment based on Alternate Achievement Standards

receive grade-level instruction

receive appropriate accommodations

☐ consistently perform poorly on state-wide general assessments

AND

☐ not likely to meet proficiency at grade-level in the year covered by the current IEPs, even if significant growth occurs



OAASIS

- OAASIS is Operationalizing Alternate Assessment for Science Inquiry Skills.
- This is a federally funded Enhanced Assessment Grant awarded to the South Carolina, South Dakota and Wyoming State Departments of Education.
- The purpose of the grant is to investigate the development of an AA-MAS in **high school science** for certain students with disabilities.

OASIS Activities:

- Modifying 30-40 science test questions to see if eligible students perform better
- Conducting “think-alouds” with 15-25 students to take the modified questions
- Conducting pilot testing in all 3 states using the modified test questions, AND
- Getting input from educators in all 3 states on a survey called ISLE

ISLE



The Inventory of Student
Learning Experiences

We need your help!

- We are asking you to complete ONE of TWO ISLE surveys.
- The ISLE is a survey that will provide valuable information that is crucial to the success of the OAASIS project.

The information you provide will serve two purposes:

1. It will help us define eligibility criteria that will guide IEP teams in identifying the students who will benefit the most from an AA-MAS.
2. It will help us develop effective test items and meaningful alternate assessments.

General Education ISLE

- The General Education ISLE should be completed by high school general ed. science teachers.
- These teachers will be asked about their instructional strategies and the learning needs of their students.

Special Education ISLE

- The Special Education ISLE should be completed by high school special education teachers.
- These teachers will be asked about their caseload, instructional strategies and learning needs of their students.

Special Education ISLE

- Special Education teachers will ***also*** be asked to select 1 student who meets all of the criteria for AA-MAS.
- They will be asked for specific information about this student, but ***will not*** provide any identifying information regarding the student.

Special Education ISLE

Special Education teachers will need the following information about the student they select *before* beginning the survey:

- her or his age
- whether the student receives free or reduced lunch
- all of the student's disabilities

□ the student's most recent achievement levels from statewide assessments (i.e., Proficient, Basic, Below Basic)

□ total number of years the student has performed below proficient in ELA, math and science on statewide assessments

❑ current level of functioning in reading and math

❑ current grades in English, math and science

AND

❑ general information about performance on district and classroom assessments

For more information

Please contact:

John Payne, Project Director
South Carolina Department of Education
803-734-2738
jrpayne@ed.sc.gov

Thank You



Your time and
knowledge are
valuable and we
appreciate your
sharing them with
us!