



Wyoming Department of Education

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MEMORANDUM NO. 2014-137

TO: District Superintendents
School Principals

FROM: Julie Magee, Director
Standards & Accountability Division

DATE: November 3, 2014

SUBJECT: 2014 School Performance Rating: Participation Rate Correction

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION:
PARTICIPATION RATE CORRECTION**

CHEYENNE - Please see the attached communication regarding changes made to the Participation Rate computations for the 2014 WAEA school performance reports.

Please direct questions or concerns to Dr. Mike Flicek at mikefli@msn.com.

2014 WYOMING SCHOOL PERFORMANCE RATING
PARTICIPATION RATE CORRECTION
October 30, 2014

One reason for an embargoed release of the 2014 school performance reports was to give districts a chance to raise any issues of concern. This allows the WDE better determine if there are issues that would require a correction prior to the final public release of school performance ratings. An issue with participation rate computations has been identified as needing a correction prior to the public release. The correction for this issue improved the participation rate performance for some schools. Other schools were not affected. No schools were negatively impacted by this correction.

The Participation Rate Issue

Participation rate computations for the initial 2014 embargoed school reports simply applied the participation rate requirement of 95% and the 90% threshold to the percentage of tests on which students earned a score versus the total number of tests that all students enrolled at the school were to have taken. While responding to questions raised by schools and districts during the embargoed period the WDE determined that this participation rate computation method was holding some schools to higher standards than suggested by the 95% and 90% requirements.

For example, a school with 18 students where one student did not test would have a 94.4 % participation rate. This school would need to meet an *actual required participation rate* of 100% to meet the 95% requirement since just one non-participating student resulted in a rate lower than 95%. The correction assures that the *actual required participation rate* for each school was *not* above 95%.

The Correction

A correction was made to the 2014 participation rates computed for all schools with an *actual required participation rate* that was above the requirement and threshold (i.e., either 95% or 90%). This correction was accomplished by allowing the school with an *actual required participation rate* above the requirement to have one additional non-participant student and still meet the requirement. In all cases this assured the school was not held to an *actual required participation rate* above the 95% requirement or 90% threshold. When this correction was applied, the actual participation rate for the schools were lower than the requirement or threshold (i.e., 95% or 90%), nevertheless, the school was still scored as having met the requirement or threshold.

So, for example, the school with 18 students, one of whom did not test, was allowed one non-participant instead of none. The school had an actual participation rate of 94.4% but was scored as having met the 95% requirement. Instead of having an actual required participation rate of 100%, this school now had an actual required participation rate of just less than 95%.

Participation rates are computed at the test score level rather than the student level. In the example where the school had 18 students, assume they were consolidated subgroup students for the equity indicator. The equity indicator uses math scores and reading scores. For 18 students there would be 36 test scores involved. If one student did not test, there would be 34 test scores. The actual participation rate would still be 94.4%. Allowing this school to have one additional non-participant student would translate into allowing two additional test scores to the school. At the test score level this school would still be considered to have met the 95% requirement.

This correction assured that no school had an *actual required participation rate* above the requirement (i.e., either the 95% requirement or the 90% threshold) but some schools were allowed to have *actual participation rates* below the requirement.

This approach was implemented for each school by computing:

- Test scores needed to meet the requirement
- Actual tests with scores

When the actual tests with scores equaled or exceeded the test scores needed to meet the requirement or threshold the school “Met” the requirement or threshold. The school was scored as “Not Met” on the requirement or threshold when the actual test scores were lower than the test scores needed to meet the requirement or threshold.

The table below shows the number of schools in each category for participation rate using both the original computation method and the corrected method.

Participation Category Before Correction	Participation Category After Correction		
	Dropped to Lowest Performance Level	Docked 1 Performance Level	Met Participation Requirement
Dropped to Lowest Performance Level	14	4	1
Docked 1 Performance Level		5	7
Met Participation Requirement			341

The table above shows improved school participation category scores for 12 schools as a result of this correction.