



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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FOR RELEASE - March 3, 2014

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PAWS TESTING WINDOW OPENS TODAY FOR WYOMING STUDENTS

New standards alignment and re-calibration of cut scores make 2014 a baseline year

CHEYENNE - The testing window for the Proficiency Assessments for Wyoming Students (PAWS) opens today in the Cowboy State.

While the name is the same, the 2014 PAWS won't look much like previous editions of the test from a content perspective. This year's PAWS is aligned to the 2012 Wyoming Content and Performance Standards in English language arts and math, which reflect much higher expectations for students across Wyoming. As a result, this year's PAWS will mark a break from pre-2014 PAWS testing results and reporting trend lines.

"This year's test will represent a new baseline for Wyoming students and is different enough from previous assessments that it cannot be readily compared with previous years' tests," said WDE Director of Assessment, Deb Lindsey.

Lindsey went on to say that whenever significant changes are made to test content, it becomes necessary to review performance levels and re-establish score ranges that determine how much students need to know and do in order to be considered advanced, proficient, or basic. This process, known as standard-setting, will involve a number of Wyoming educators who are experts in the standards at specific grade levels. Once that process is completed this summer, the new performance levels will be applied to the PAWS and Student Assessment of Writing Skills (SAWS), which is administered in grades three, five and seven.

PAWS is Wyoming's state assessment in grades 3-8, and is used to measure students' progress towards Wyoming content standards. The data the assessment produces is used for federal and state accountability determinations such as Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) and the Wyoming Accountability in Education Act (WAEA). PAWS and its alternate for students with significant cognitive disabilities (PAWS-ALT) are administered to Wyoming students in grades 3-8 in reading and math as well as science in grades four and eight. The ACT serves as the state assessment for students in grade 11.

In Wyoming the PAWS assessment window runs from March 3-28, with the PAWS-ALT having already begun its administration window on Feb. 17 and running through March 28. Parents should expect to receive reports on student performance in September.

As required by the Wyoming Accountability in Education Act (WAEA), Wyoming districts will administer the EXPLORE, PLAN, and ACT assessments to nearly all ninth, 10th, and 11th graders in the spring of 2014. EXPLORE and PLAN assessments help predict college and career readiness, as well as performance on the 11th grade ACT. The EXPLORE and PLAN tests are both multiple choice tests administered to students using paper and pencil. The alternate assessment for students with cognitive disabilities, the PAWS-ALT, is also administered at the high school level at grades nine, 10 and 11.

The testing window for ACT EXPLORE and PLAN runs from April 14-May 2.

For more information on assessments in Wyoming, contact Tom Lacock at tom.lacock@wyo.gov or 307-777-5399.