



# State of Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

Elizabeth Burmaster, State Superintendent

**DATE:** August 15, 2006

**TO:** District Administrators  
District Assessment Coordinators  
Directors of ELL/Title III  
Directors of Special Education and Pupil Services  
CESA Administrators

**FROM:** Lynette Russell, Director  
Office of Educational Accountability

**SUBJECT:** Wisconsin Alternate Assessments – Changes for Fall 2006 Test Administration

The U.S. Department of Education (USDE) conducted a federal peer review of all state assessment systems, and notified states of their status in July 2006. States were required to meet numerous criteria related to technical documentation. A total of 36 states received an “approval pending” rating, including Wisconsin. In most states, the areas still needing attention are related to alternate assessments. This is the case for Wisconsin as well. States may not administer these alternate assessments in 2006-07 until further evidence has been gathered related to alignment, validity, reliability, and comparability. We are working with USDE to clarify the details of these requirements.

As a result of these federal requirements, there will be changes for Fall 2006 test administration for the Wisconsin Alternate Assessment – Students with Disabilities (WAA-SwD), and the Wisconsin Alternate Assessment – English Language Learners (WAA-ELL). We want to alert you to these changes so you can make necessary adjustments and communicate with relevant stakeholders. A summary of the changes are listed below:

### Wisconsin Alternate Assessment – Students with Disabilities (WAA-SwD)

- **The testing window for WAA-SwD will be October 2 – November 24, 2006.**
- Print materials for use in WAA-SwD administration are being modified to reflect linkages to Wisconsin grade-specific assessment frameworks for 3-8 and 10. Some changes will be made to the scoring rubric to clarify grade cluster cut scores (3-4-5, 6-7-8, and 10).
- Final documents will be posted for use by the end of September. Training about these changes will be provided in September. There will be no changes to the actual WAA-SwD items.
- In addition to completing summary achievement level information on the back of the WKCE-CRT test booklet, DPI is required to gather item-specific information via a Scantron sheet for each student tested. IEP-aligned evidence will also be submitted along with the Scantron sheet. More information on this process will be provided in September.

- DPI has applied for a grant to develop an electronic process for submitting item data in future years; the Scantron sheet will only be used until an electronic process is in place.

Questions about the WAA-SwD may be directed to Sandra Berndt, DPI Special Education Consultant, [sandra.berndt@dpi.state.wi.us](mailto:sandra.berndt@dpi.state.wi.us), 608-266-1785, or Brian Johnson, DPI Alternate Assessment Consultant, [brian.johnson@dpi.state.wi.us](mailto:brian.johnson@dpi.state.wi.us), 608-267-1290.

#### Wisconsin Alternate Assessment – English Language Learners (WAA-ELL)

- **The U.S. Dept of Education will not allow the use of the WAA-ELL for accountability purposes for 2006-07, as acceptable modifications will not be communicated to states prior to the Wisconsin test administration window.**
- Districts should follow these guidelines when making decisions about assessment for ELL students at English proficiency Level 1 or Level 2 (students previously eligible for the WAA-ELL):
  - Students in the country for less than one year do not need to be tested, and will not have an impact on test participation for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) – they will be removed from the denominator. Directions will be sent in the fall about how to indicate this status on the student test booklet.
  - Districts may choose to give the WKCE-CRT to a student at Level 1 or Level 2 who has been in the country for more than one year, using allowable accommodations. The student will count as a test participant for AYP, and the student’s resulting achievement is counted for AYP purposes in the academic areas in which the student participated.
  - Districts may choose to not give the WKCE-CRT to a student at Level 1 or Level 2 who has been in the country for more than one year if it is not deemed appropriate for that student. The student will not count as a test participant for AYP; that is, the student would need to be part of the allowable 5% that are not tested. The student will have no impact on academic areas for AYP as these calculations are based only on students who are tested.
  - A district may continue to administer the WAA-ELL if the district believes it provides useful information for teachers, but it will not be part of the Wisconsin Student Assessment System for 2006-07, and will not be used in calculating AYP.
- DPI is forming an ELL Alternate Assessment Task Force to review requirements for ELL alternate assessment as they become available. The task force will examine possible modifications to the current assessment, as well as approaches used in other states, and set direction for any necessary improvements to the WAA-ELL.

Questions about the WAA-ELL may be directed to Brian Johnson, DPI Alternate Assessment Consultant, [brian.johnson@dpi.state.wi.us](mailto:brian.johnson@dpi.state.wi.us), 608-267-1290.

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