

IELLAAC notes from 10/30/07
IRC, Arlington Heights

Attended by:

Carmen	Acevedo	Plainfield 202
Christie	Aird	District 131
Sandy	Anderson	SD 112
Debbie	Armendariz	Bloomington 87
David	Barker	Retired SD 207
Mary	Crambes	St. Charles 303
Harriette	Herrera	ISBE
Jennifer	Hixon	Urbana 116
Stephanee	Jordan	Moline 40
Marilyn	Krajenta	Waukegan 60
Cynthia	Latimer	SD 129
Boon	Lee	ISBE
Rosemarie	Meyer	CCSD 21, Wheeling
Karen	Mulattieri	Cicero SD 99
Nancy	Munoz	SD 45
Diep	Nguyen	Des Plains 62
Barry	Pedersen	ISBE
Ed	Portillo	Rockford 205
Beatrice	Reyes Childress	District 131
Amy	Rivera	SD 129
Melissa	Wolf	NSSD 12, Highland Park

Barry told about the award WIDA was granted by the dept of ed to create a math achievement test called " On Par" for ELL students of very limited English proficiency and that we had agreed to be the state, which would work with them in its developmental.

Members had the following questions and comments regarding this information:

- Is there an ISBE Math consultant involved?
- Barry will provide updates to the committee as details and other information becomes available
- What does this mean in the larger picture? Will having a content area test in English for limited language proficient students take away the focus from the need to provide an achievement test in native language
- An idea was suggested: make a portion of the test in L1 even if the majority of the test was in English.
- A discussion regarding the challenges school districts face that promote and implement developmental bilingual programs and dual language programs without a state assessment to

measure progress and performance was held. One thought is by not having a state mandated test in the native language it undermines developmental bilingual programs. There is a general consensus of the group that we need a native language test in Spanish; we don't want to miss the opportunity to make a native language test now that we are looking to have a new state achievement test for ELLs. If it is a state mandate to teach in the content areas in native language, then we should have content area tests to measure achievement.

- The discussion also included many comments about the push towards teaching more in English because the tests that are mandated are in English; many in the school districts think that because we are testing in English, we need to give more English so the students will have better performance on state tests; this is contradictory to the research done by Collier and Thomas and others which points to the importance of developing L1 along with English in the academic areas to have students reach their highest levels of performance.

Other questions regarding WIDA were:

Is WIDA doing anything for testing in Spanish? IELLAC is interested in State testing in native language for accountability purposes: one test to measure the literacy standards for the language arts content area; the other develop content area test that measure math and science which could be used for accountability purposes and could be diagnostic.

In NY state the achievement tests are done in Spanish: they didn't have standards in any other language. This is used as an accommodation for their students.

The native language tests would be not only to be used with students in bilingual programs but in dual language ones, as well. The committee offered to share their research with the division. In District 54, Danette Meyer has a study of students who take norm referenced Spanish achievement test.

Another request was to set up a meeting with members of the assessment division to discuss the benefits of having a test in native language and making an L1 test available to districts

What is the reason we are to use the grade level score sheet for the W-APT? We are finding fewer students eligible when you use that. Do we need to revisit the cutoff score for eligibility? The grade score weighting questions was answered due to the way standards are organized and how in a cluster, the highest-grade level of that cluster is where the standard is set. ACCESS tests

are scored by grade level since we had the cut score review in January of 2006.*

The W-APT has a scoring calculator on their website which can be used to score the tests but there is also an score converter in their administration manual.

There is a certain level of anxiety and frustration with having to constantly be training teachers to use new instruments. How do they best use this test? Because so much rides on the outcome of this test, there can be an unreasonable expectation as to what the test can do. When we used the off-the-shelf tests, you bought the test, used it for 8 or more years and didn't have to endure the changes and upgrades: that is what we are experiencing with the W-APT. Members asked why did we have to change from the first version to the version 2.2, and now version 2.3? When we started with the first W-APT, it only had questions up to Proficiency Level, PL, 4 and the composite score could not go beyond PL 4. Many were unhappy with that: we needed a screener that could screen for proficiency levels 5 and 6 in reading and listening so testers could be confident that the student was really able to perform at that level. Version 2.2 did that for grades 1-12. When we get the version 3 tests for pre-k and Kindergarten, there will be questions that test up to proficiency level 6; plus it will be a test designed to appeal to young children in that age group.

The standards have been reorganized and included the pre-k/Kindergarten standards, which are the basis for the areas on which the assessment will measure.

A comment about the purpose of the committee was shared. What is the role of this committee? It is a sounding board and vehicle for the state to get practitioner feedback and share ideas. The concern is that they are hearing many things that are going on but they were not consulted. Reporting information and bringing members up to date so they can share the information with their districts and the field is a charge of the district.

Many of the things that were reported actually came from discussion held with this group about things they felt needed to be addressed or changed and were taken to the WIDA consortium to be presented, considered and voted on and either approved or voted down by the consortium members. For example, Illinois felt strongly that group administration for the high schools and junior high school groups was needed: we heard that request often from our high schools. In version 2.3, group administration instructions have been included in the administration manual. While the WIDA Central and CAL staff

feels that using the test in the adaptive mode is the best for students, particularly the newcomers to English, they understood the need for this component, which we brought forth.

Joyce Zurkowski, our new division leader for Assessment, called in at 11:30. She apologized for not being with us in person but she was attending the OELA conference in Washington DC. She told us about the Peer review process and that we are at the last mandatory oversight status stage and we have to pass peer review or the Feds can withhold Title 1 funds. Upon consultation with national level experts, they found insufficient evidence on the IMAGE test to demonstrate that it was aligned to IL Learning Standards. ISAT and PSAE have the construct alignment we need. We have to use an aligned assessment for spring of 2008. After much discussion, deliberation and consultation with experts in the country and the executive level administrators of the State Board, the decision was made to use ISAT and the PSAE with accommodations for ELLs. Accommodations will be broadened beyond the allowance for extra time. They will look at what other states are doing to accommodate ELL students taking state achievement assessments. The accommodation list is not finalized. Joyce encouraged the members to assist the assessment division to make this possible. She encouraged the committee to refrain from fueling the fires of controversy that can occur. This use of ISAT and PSAE is not forever. ISBE will release an RFSP which will be published and open for bidding: it is for an achievement test which is designed for ELLs while meeting all of the NCLB rules and regulations regarding test alignment to standards and cognitive rigor and complexity to be maintained. The feds look at the technical construct validity to cover these three areas: content, construct and score comparability. We are one of the only states that had a separate test for ELLs for the long term. For the short term, we will need to use the ISAT and PSAE with accommodations. Robin Lisboa is heavily involved in a national committee looking at ELL accommodations. Some of the accommodations widely used involve glossaries, reader scripts, and translations of directions.

Joyce was asked the following questions and comments from members:

- Is it the same accountability for AYP? Yes.
- Is it the reading test only? No, the math and Science will be given as well in the ISAT or PSAE format with accommodations.
- We want a test that will show what the students know and need the RFSP to capture that concept when it is developed

- Will high school students have to take the ACT? Yes, they will but we are in conversations with ACT. The goal is to allow some accommodations for our 11th graders.
- The accommodations-what will they be? Is there anyway we can tell the field what they will be? At this time nothing is written down. A good place to start is to look at the accommodations written for special education students. Share with us what is happening in the field in this area.
- How do we differentiate between the ACT and the PSAE score?
- Is there anyone exempt from testing: the new to the country (first year in U.S.) rule for reading exemption still applies, but they have to take the math and science tests.
- Public backlash will occur when the news releases come out with the information.
- Joyce shared that the issue of IMAGE was a huge one for the peer review; the other things that were concerns seemed to be able to be worked through.
- The accommodations list should be out by mid-January.
- When ordering materials, order from Questar, as you would have done for IMAGE because they have the database with district information. They will pass that on to the ISAT and PSAE contractors
- Will there be problems with the vendors? Explicit procedures will be set-up so that you won't notice what is going on at the vendor level with the materials. We will tell you what to do if you have additional orders or new orders for materials.
- When will the press release go to the general public? Today, Tuesday, Oct. 30, it will be in the superintendent's bulletin. The report card and this issue.
- There are no accommodations for schools presently.
- Can the state do anything to help schools? There is a lot of analysis happening in the background, as there should be.
- This is a great lurch from previous practice: when these scores come out in 2008 there will be serious consequences to many of the schools. Committee members want ISBE assistance to help the schools with the information and messages that will be shared with the public
- IMAGE used a band-aid approach to comply with the NCLB rules; the fear is that this will be a similar band-aid. Keep in mind that what might be the most difficult, might be the best for the field
- The committee wants to be part of the solution; they are willing to meet before the accommodations are released.

- For the long term, the Spanish test will be looked into
- All of the psychometricians are looking at the options; they are looking at past, present, and future assessments
- What are the levels of sanctions? What will happen in terms of funding? The state is looking into what we can and cannot do.

Joyce said they would meet with the state testing committee in the coming weeks.

Other comments from the committee members:

- A member brought up the point of validity: if the accommodations are not there, the tests may not be valid because they aren't present.

What can we do to support ISBE and each other in this emergency? We know there are millions of dollars of state aid at stake but this will have a deleterious effect on the ELL programs and students with the current political and social climate.

What pressures can we put on the state? Use public relations, political pressure, and the testing committee as vehicles to voice your concerns and issues. And we should not forget this is coming from the feds; comments and concerns need to be directed to the feds as it relates to NCLB accountability.

Can the accommodated test items be written using plain English? That is, the norm-referenced items substituted with IL items? - Not for 2008.

The committee will meet on November 9 at 10:00 in the IRC in Arlington Heights to work on suggestions for accommodations and developing strategies school can use with their ELLs in light of this new development

The Illinois Bilingual Advisory Council will hold a special meeting on November 16 in the morning at the Thompson Center to discuss this matter

Members of the committee will meet with Joyce on November 29 in Springfield to share the results of the work done on November 9 and have further discussion.

Barry shared copies of the ISAT Reading extended response items available on the ISAT website.

Information from Lilibeth Gumia regarding AMAOs was shared. Districts have been notified on Oct. 29 as of their AMAO status, which is much earlier than last year.

There was a question about the time of the year when the ACCESS test is given- will that be revisited? Is there thought about reconsidering the timing of when ACCESS is administered. Transition teams meet from February through May to discuss student placement and staff allocations. The scores come in at the end of these discussions.

We need to consider the public relations piece in our districts. Suggestions on how members thought it should be replayed is by gathering the building administrators together and having the discussion and making sure that the message is one that is the same. Districts will need to prepare the public for the results they will get on the 2008 tests. ISBE should help with the language. How do you prepare the public for the long term good of the students and their education? A suggestion was to create an FAQ (frequently asked questions) for the field. Members felt that IAMME would be an excellent resource and could get the message out to a large constituency. Send Melissa Wolf comment and questions and they will begin to work on the creation of this FAQ sheet that districts can use with their constituencies.

The meeting adjourned at 2:30

This year ACCESS scores should be in districts by April and will be available on IWAS.

* You can find the explanation from WIDA and CAL stated in the WAPT Test Administration Manual on page 39 under the topic: Calculating Grade-Specific Composite Proficiency Level (CPL) Scores. It states the following

Performance on the WAPT™ suggests future performance on ACCESS for ELLs®. However, because WAPT™ is much shorter than ACCESS for ELLs® and is administered under conditions that are not as standardized as they are for ACCESS for ELLs®, the accuracy of WAPT™ scores cannot be considered as reliable as ACCESS for ELLs® scores. Nevertheless, to maintain parallelism between the scoring procedures for the two tests, we have provided a method for adjusting the WAPT™ composite proficiency level to the test taker's grade, rather than grade level cluster. We refer to these as grade-specific scores.

The formulas for calculating the WAPT™ grade-specific scores reflect a mathematically determined pattern of relationship between scores for test-takers at different grades within a particular grade-level cluster. These formulas are based on the scoring patterns established for students taking the ACCESS for ELLs® test. The formulas express how scores for test takers in the lower grades of a grade-level cluster should be adjusted /up/ in recognition of the fact that the test is more difficult for test-takers in the early grades. Based on this reasoning, test-takers in the highest grade of the cluster do not receive any adjustment in their scores.