Washington State Legislature

State Assessment Workgroup

Final Report

December 30, 2008

Workgroup Membership:

Senator Curtis King
Senator Rosemary McAuliffe, Chair
Senator Eric Oemig
Representative Glenn Anderson
Representative Skip Priest
Representative Pat Sullivan
Representative Sharon Tomiko Santos

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Introduction

In the 2008 legislative session, the Washington State Legislature created a legislative workgroup on the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) comprised of state House and Senate members to review and evaluate the current assessment system by January 1, 2009, and potentially make recommendations to improve it (ESHB 2687, section 127).

The following workgroup members were appointed by the House of Representatives:

- Representative Glenn Anderson
- Representative Skip Priest
- Representative Pat Sullivan
- Representative Sharon Tomiko Santos

The following workgroup members were appointed by the Senate:

- Senator Curtis King
- Senator Rosemary McAuliffe
- Senator Eric Oemig

The workgroup members chose Senator McAuliffe to chair the WASL workgroup.

During the 2008 interim the WASL workgroup met six times. The meetings were held in Bothell, Olympia, and Redmond, Washington. Work sessions were held at each of these meetings with an opportunity provided for public comment. The work session topics included:

- The history and overview of the WASL (the current Washington statewide student assessment), the current state and federal requirements for statewide assessments, and the research of the Washington State Institute of Public Policy on barriers to success on the WASL and possible alternatives.

- The statewide Washington Alternative Assessment System portfolio for special education students and what other states are using instead of a portfolio.

- The purpose and design of assessments, including the difference of information provided by multiple choice and student constructed response questions; and creating a balanced assessment system, with perspectives provided from other states and from local Washington school districts.

- End of Course and Exit exams in other states.

- Statewide assessments in other states, including commercially developed assessments (ACT and SAT) augmented to align to the individual state's student standards.

- A request to the workgroup for a performance audit and the kind of information that could be provided from an audit.

- Diagnostic/Formative assessments, including an interim formative assessment: Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)

- Culturally responsive pedagogy, achievement, and assessment.

- Updates on renegotiation of Washington's contract for the WASL and on the transition to a math end-of-course assessment.

Recommendations

Long Term Recommendations

I. The following principles should be established as legislative intent for the design of a new assessment system:

An effective assessment system shall be implemented that improves and informs classroom instruction, supports accountability and provides useful information to all levels of the educational system, including students, parents, teachers, schools, school districts, and the state.

This statewide assessment system shall:

a. Include multiple assessment formats, including both formative and summative, as necessary to provide information to help improve instruction and inform accountability;

b. Enable collection of data that allows both statewide and nationwide comparisons of student learning and achievement;

c. Be balanced so that the information used to make significant decisions that affect school accountability or student educational progress shall include many data points and shall not rely on solely the results of a single assessment.

II. One component of the assessment system shall be instructionally supportive formative assessments. The key design elements or characteristics of an instructionally supportive assessment shall include:

a. Be aligned to state standards in areas that are being assessed;
b. Measure student growth and competency at multiple points throughout the year in a manner that allows instructors to monitor student progress and have the necessary trend data with which to improve instruction;
c. Provide rapid feedback;
d. Link student growth with instructional elements in order to gauge the effectiveness of educators and curricula;
e. Provide tests that are appropriate to the skill level of the student;
f. Support instruction for students of all abilities, including highly capable students and students with learning disabilities;

g. Be culturally, linguistically, and cognitively relevant, appropriate, and understandable to each student taking the assessment;
h. Inform parents and draw parents into greater participation of the student's study plan;
i. Provide a way to analyze the assessment results relative to characteristics of the student such as, but not limited to, ELL, gender, ethnicity, poverty, age, and disabilities;
j. Encouraged to be computer-based and adaptive; and
k. Engage students in their learning.

III. A second component of the assessment system shall be a state administered summative achievement assessment that can be used as check on the educational system in order to guide state-expectations for the instruction of children and satisfy legislative demands for accountability. The key design elements or characteristics of the state administered achievement assessment shall be to:
   a. Be aligned to state standards in areas that are being assessed;
   b. Maintain and increase academic rigor;
   c. Measure student learning growth over years; and
   d. Strengthen curriculum.

IV. A third component of the assessment system shall include classroom based assessments, which may be formative and/or summative. Depending on their use, classroom based assessments should have the same design elements and characteristics listed above for formative and summative assessments.

V. To sustain a strong and viable assessment system, pre-service and ongoing training should be provided for teachers and administrators on the effective use of different types of assessments.

VI. As the statewide data system is developed, data should be collected for all state-required statewide assessments to be used for accountability and to monitor overall student achievement.

Short Term Recommendations

I. Direct the Superintendent of Public Instruction to revise the number of open-ended questions in the statewide achievement assessment in grades 3 through 8 and 10 to reduce the cost and time of administering the assessment while retaining validity and reliability of the assessment and retaining assessment of critical thinking skills. Require a cost analysis of these changes and a report back to the Legislature.

II. Maintain the current graduation requirement for Reading and Writing. Review the current timelines for implementation of the new high school Math End-of-Course exams and consider adjusting (not removing) the graduation requirement timeline for consistency. Consider making the graduation requirement contingent on a finding by the State Board of Education of validity and reliability of the new exam rather than a fixed date. Consider the same policy for Science, based on possible adoption of an End-of-Course exam.

III. Direct the Superintendent of Public Instruction to revisit the alternative assessments, the appeals process (including considering local school district authority), and the special education (WAAS) portfolio and make recommendations to the Legislature for improvements.

IV. To encourage college and career readiness, provide funding for students who have passed the high school WASL to take the PSAT as a voluntary choice. Direct the State Board of Education to examine the Essential Academic Learning Requirements in all subjects to determine how to improve alignment with college and career readiness and the proposed Core 24 graduation requirements.

V. Direct the Superintendent of Public Instruction, in consultation with the State Board of Education, to begin design and development of an overall assessment system that meets the principles and characteristics described in the Long-Term Recommendations. Require a cost analysis of these changes, including costs to expand availability and use of instructionally supportive formative assessments, and a report back to the Legislature.

Presentation & Discussion Summaries

Legislative Charge to the Workgroup
(ESHB 2687 - 2008 Supplemental Operating Budget Section 117(14)

….A legislative work group on the Washington Assessment of Student Learning is established.

> The workgroup will consist of a maximum of nine members. Legislative members shall be appointed by the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives and shall represent the two largest caucuses of both the Senate and the House of Representatives.

The purpose of this workgroup is to review and evaluate the current assessment system by January 1, 2009, and potentially make recommendations to improve it.

> Of the amount provided in this section, $150,000 is provided solely for costs associated with hiring independent technical experts to advise the Washington Assessment of Student Learning workgroup created in this subsection.

Preliminary Discussion - Goals & Objectives

(July 9, Workgroup Conference Call)

Sen. McAuliffe was selected to chair the workgroup. Members identified a number of objectives and issues for the workgroup to consider:

- A desire for a deeper understanding of what types of testing are going on across the country to inform the group on the options for making the assessment both work better and cost less.
- A desire for the assessment to be used as a tool for learning for teachers, parents and students.
- A better understanding of all elements of the WASL and the changes that have been made.
- Identify and establish a clear set of expectations for an assessment system, and then identify the characteristics or traits of a system meeting those expectations, whether that results in one form of testing or multiple forms.
- Address fairness and equity issues.
- Consultation with experts in the field (including vendors)..
- Careful consideration of the migration or conversion costs (including the impact on the field) of adopting any type of new system.
- Concern by practitioners in the field about an assessment system constantly in flux.
- Science assessment issues.
- Solve and clarify the goals of the WASL and the assessment system in terms of student learning diagnosis versus a graduation hurdle.
- Consider a type of online assessment mechanism that creates a regular feedback loop on a broader array of academic and non-academic topics related to student success.
- Consideration about the link between Basic Education finance and assessment because the public expects some form of accountability, especially if being asked for an increased investment.
- Closer examination of the requirements and expectations of testing in grades 3 through 8.
- A better understanding of what is driving assessment design decisions: quality, NCLB, or budget?

History of WA Assessment

(July 28, Staff Presentation)

In 1991, the Governor's Commission on Education Reform and Funding (GCERF) was created and charged with developing a long-term action plan to reform the state's public schools and significantly improve student performance. The GCERF final report (December 1992) found shortcomings in state standardized achievement tests:

- Reliance on multiple choice
- Do little to encourage complex thinking
- Do not require that students demonstrate their ability to write and reason, or display mathematical and scientific thinking behind their answers
- Test students on a curve-against each other-rather than against the material to be mastered

Education Reform legislation enacted in 1992 (SSB 5953) and 1993 (HB 1209) directed the Commission on Student Learning to develop a series of academic examinations and performance-based assessments to determine if students have mastered the state standards (EALRs). The assessments were expected to have certain features:

- Criterion-referenced (rather than norm-referenced)
- Include a variety of methodologies, including performance-based measures.
- Not biased toward persons with different learning styles, racial or ethnic background, or gender.
- Allow results to be used by educators as tools to evaluate instructional practices.
- Lead to a Certificate of Mastery at the secondary level, which is required for graduation (changed in 2004 to a Certificate of Academic Achievement or CAA).
- Report results in a format that allows parents and teachers to determine academic gain from one year to the next (added in 2004).

Overview of WA Assessment System

(July 28, Staff Presentation)

Washington's student assessment system has multiple components:

- Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) for reading, writing, mathematics, and science
- Washington Alternate Assessment System (WAAS) for special education students
- Classroom-Based Assessments (CBAs) for non-WASL tested subjects
- Certificate of Academic Achievement (CAA) Options that are alternative assessments for graduation
- Second Grade Reading Assessment
- Washington Language Proficiency Test (WLPT) for English language learners

However, statewide measurement of student achievement of the state learning standards (EALRs) is largely done through the WASL, and to a lesser extent, the CBAs in non-WASL subjects.

State law contains a number of directives about the nature of the assessment system and the design of the state assessment (WASL). Federal law (NCLB) contains more complex requirements than state law regarding the design and implementation of a statewide assessment system, such as:

- Alignment to and measurement of state-adopted learning standards.
- Requirements to test virtually all students at grade level, including students with disabilities and English language learners with very few exceptions.
- A test that measures student performance against state standards for their grade level.
- High technical standards for reliability and validity.
- Peer review by the US Department of Education.

These requirements affect the options and process for states to make significant assessment design changes.

Fiscal Update/WASL Contract

(July 28, Staff & OSPI Presentation)

The revised 2007-09 budget for the WASL is $54.6 million (state funds). Commitments made in the 2008 Session included:

- Shorten assessments in elementary and middle school grades.
- Incorporate new math standards into assessment by 2010(Grades3-8) and 2011(High School).
- Implement new End-of-Course assessments in high school math.
- Implement diagnostic assessments and new accommodations.
- Include robust termination clauses in contract to maintain Legislative flexibility to set policy direction.
- Reduce costs wherever possible.

Some items in the contract have had to be re-bid. Negotiations have taken place to further reduce costs. Other issues include:

- The move to end-of-course testing in high school math is budgeted at $3.2 million for FY 2009, but this represents only initial development.
- The segmented math assessment was developed as an alternative to the high school math WASL but was never approved for official use as an alternative. Estimated cost: $2.4 million for 2009.
- The WAAS Portfolio assessment for students with significant cognitive disabilities is experiencing significant cost increases that cannot be covered by federal IDEA discretionary dollars.

WASL Data Analysis/Options to Augment the Assessment System

(July 28, WSIPP Presentation)

In 2006, the Legislature directed the Washington State Institute of Public Policy (WSIPP) to conduct a statistical analysis of WASL data to identify characteristics of students who do not meet standard and review options that could be used to augment the assessment system.

The WSIPP reported characteristics of students with lower met-standard rates include: disability, poverty, English language learner, non-Asian minority, and male (in reading & writing).

Assessment options with low potential to increase met-standard rates are nationally available standardized tests (SAT, ACT, CTE exams) and grade-based options (GPA cohort, GPA). Options with higher potential to increase met-standard rates are Collection of Evidence and Segmented Math. Thus far, current alternatives have added little to overall met-standard rates.

Alternate Assessments for Students with Disabilities

(August 25, OSPI Presentation & Wisconsin)

All students with disabilities must be assessed by the statewide assessment system under NCLB. NCLB permits an alternate assessment based on different learning standards for students with significant

cognitive disabilities (2% of overall student population). Washington uses the WAAS Portfolio that measures "EALR Extensions" - adapted versions of the standards with developmentally appropriate objectives. The requirements to assess all students - including those with significant disabilities - have changed the way that teachers think about teaching and learning for these students. There is increased realization and commitment that these children can learn.

The WAAS has undergone changes in recent years, with a recent focus on simplification and clarity of instructions to reduce the burden on teachers. However, administration costs have also increased significantly to $1.7 million in FY 2009. Wisconsin recently switched from a portfolio to a standardized series of performance tasks as its approach to assessing this student population. In part, this decision was made because their portfolio was not approved by the US Department of Education and the changes that would have been required to bring it into compliance were too expensive and burdensome for teachers. Costs of alternate assessments in other states vary widely. The SPI has directed staff to examine alternate assessments and costs in other states and report back with recommendations by July 2009.

Balanced Assessment

(August 25, Dr. Rick Stiggins, Assessment Training Institute)

According to Dr. Stiggins, a "balanced" assessment system is one that meets the needs of all users:

- Students, teachers, and parents on an individual basis
- Teams of teachers, principals and curriculum directors
- School, district, community leaders, state & federal government

The decisions that users make on the basis of the assessment results and the type of information needed to make those decisions varies. Consequently, the appropriate type of assessment to meet user needs also varies. The following table illustrates this concept:

Balanced Assessment Systems

Decision to be Made	Who Makes Decision	Information Needed	Assessment Type/Example
What comes next in learning?	Student, teacher, parents	Continuous information on individual student's progress toward each standard	Continuous classroom assessment. Reliable diagnosis of learning strengths and weaknesses. *Example: Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processing (CTOPP/Pearson)*
Are the standards being mastered? Are programs working?	Teams of teachers, principals, curriculum directors	Periodic, but regular, evidence summarized across classrooms indicating which standards are not being mastered	Interim, benchmark, progress-monitoring assessments that are common across classrooms or schools. *Example: Measures of Academic Progress (MAP/NWEA)*
Are enough students meeting standards?	School, district, community leaders, state & federal government	Annual test scores summarized across schools showing the percent of students meeting standard	Annual accountability testing, high technical reliability for its purpose. *Example: WASL*

Missing from most states' assessment systems is the notion that assessment should be in support of learning - "assessment for learning." Also missing is an understanding that students' reaction to the assessments is critical: the assessment system should not lead to students giving up on learning. Most teachers and principals have not received sufficient training and education in how to create and use assessments appropriately. This is a significant issue for professional development and also must be addressed by the colleges of education.

End-of Course Assessments

(August 25, Jennifer Vranek, Education First Consulting)

The Education First Consulting study of end-of-course assessments (EOCs) identified both advantages and disadvantages to both comprehensive assessments (such as the WASL) and EOCs. In states with comprehensive assessments, the assessment:

- Usually focuses on 10th grade or lower standards;
- Assesses a slice of high school standards, rather than deep knowledge of particular subjects;
- Can potentially narrow the delivered curriculum to what is tested;
- Provides a "snapshot" of system performance;
- Often takes up less testing time overall and cost less;
- Takes a more straightforward approach to exit exams and school accountability; and
- Rarely provides information on students' readiness for postsecondary education coursework and training.

In state with EOCs, the assessment:

- Varies widely with respect to number and kinds of courses assessed;
- Can measure a broader as well as deeper range of standards, but only if there are a sufficient number of EOCs in each subject;
- Does not assess all students against common standards, unless states require all students to take certain courses and/or require all students to take certain EOCs;
- Can promote more consistency of teaching and provide more timely information on learning and course quality;
- Motivates students to learn through exit exams as well as other forms of lesser student stakes (e.g. counting results in course grades;
- Makes it more complicated to hold schools accountable, yet offers the potential to produce more validity and reliability; and
- Can be better-suited for placing students in postsecondary education courses than comprehensive tests given by states in the 10th grade.

Other states with EOCs in high school almost always have comprehensive assessments in grades 3-8. English (reading and writing) tests are usually comprehensive; other subjects have EOCs. Washington is moving to EOCs for high school math. One perceived advantage of EOCs is closer alignment between curriculum and assessment, and greater uniformity across classrooms and across the state.

Commercially-Developed Tests

(September 22, Discussion with Delaware/Pearson, Illinois/ACT, Maine/College Board)

States use commercially-developed tests as part of a statewide assessment system in one of three ways:

- The commercial test serves as the base for the state (and NCLB) assessment and accountability system and is augmented by the state with items to cover the state's content standards.

- The state assessment serves as the base and is supplemented with commercially-developed items.

- Commercially-developed tests are used for non-accountability purposes as part of an overall assessment system (e.g., for college readiness, progress monitoring, or diagnostic purposes).

In Delaware, state law requires that the state assessment provide information that is norm-referenced so that results can be compared to other states. The state has a long history of using an abbreviated version of the SAT-10 for the norm-referenced portion of the state exam. The criterion-referenced portion that is used for measuring state standards has gradually become the majority of the test. One question that arises with using a commercially-purchased product is ownership of the questions, which makes changing vendors a challenge. Release of questions also becomes an issue.

Illinois decided to use the ACT, plus two portions of the WorkKeys assessment, for its high school assessment in reading and mathematics. The test is augmented with special questions in mathematics to align with state standards. There are two scores reported: the combined score for state purposes and the ACT-only score for college readiness. Students must take the assessment to earn a diploma, but there is no minimum score required. State policymakers believed students would be motivated by a college entrance exam. The results are not diagnostic at the individual student level. The purpose is primarily a summative one for school and district accountability.

Maine policymakers felt the previous high school assessment did not motivate students or schools to improve performance. Maine has created a new emphasis on having all students be college, career, and citizenship-ready. The choice of test was the SAT. The Reading portion was well-aligned with state standards, but 18 math questions were added to the 54 on the SAT to better align with the math standards. Students get two scores, differently scaled. Achieving a passing score is not required for graduation. Maine is working with the College Board to add some additional score reports that will provide additional information for schools.

Multiple Choice Questions

(September 22, Discussion with Dr. Jim Popham, Professor Emeritus, UCLA)

Legislation in 2008 (ESHB 3166) directed OSPI to reduce the number of open-ended questions on the elementary and middle-school WASL in reading, mathematics, and science. The estimated savings on the WASL contract was $15.9 million. OSPI recommended NOT reducing open-ended questions on the high school WASL in order to preserve measurement accuracy around the cut score due to the high stakes nature of the test.

According to Dr. Popham, one reason to have open-ended and extended response questions on state assessments is to ensure that teachers continue to teach students how to apply their knowledge in situations where the possible answers are not presented. Open-ended questions demand a different use of skills (and therefore instruction) that is valuable and more similar to life outside the classroom. However, a test need only have as many of these questions to ensure the instruction occurs. There is little added value from a measurement perspective because students who perform well on one kind of question tend to perform well on the other.

The purpose of testing should be to improve teaching. There should be a limited number of standards, that are clearly stated and measurable. A test measuring too many things won't succeed.

Request for Performance Audit of WASL

(September 22, Discussion with Ruta Fanning, JLARC)

Rep. John McCoy and more than two dozen other legislators requested a performance audit of the WASL, from the State Auditor's Office and/or the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC). Rep. McCoy asked the WASL Workgroup to include this audit as one of its recommendations. Ruta Fanning discussed various types of performance audits and the types of questions that can, and cannot, be answered through such a process. Keys to a successful performance audit are precisely stated objectives and aspects of performance that are measurable and comparable to some type of benchmark. JLARC can work with legislators to craft audit objectives and questions that can be answered.

Diagnostic Assessments

(September 22, Staff & OSPI Presentation)

State policy (statutory and fiscal) regarding diagnostic assessment has evolved over the last four years. Technically, the term “diagnostic assessment” means an assessment given during instruction or within a course of study whose purpose is to determine the specific causes of learning problems for an individual student so that instruction can be adjusted. The statutory definitions of "diagnostic" assessments tend to describe norm-referenced tests or formative assessments that measure overall student progress but do not necessarily diagnose problems of individual students. OSPI has produced a guide to diagnostic assessments for use by school districts.

In 2006, $250,000 was provided for grants to school districts to purchase diagnostic assessments (according to the statutory definition). Most school districts used the grants to purchase Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) from the Northwest Evaluation Association. In the 2007-09 biennium, $4.9 million was appropriated and about 30% of the funds went for MAP during the 2007-08 school year. Funds for the 2008-09 school year were redirected toward development of a statewide system of diagnostic assessments. There is still $3 million in the 2007-09 budget for diagnostic assessments that has not been allocated.

The current connection between diagnostic assessments and the overall state assessment system is not entirely clear.

Balanced Assessment: Trends in Other States

(October 13, Discussion with Dr. Brian Gong, National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment)

Many states are talking about their assessment systems, but relatively few have taken concrete actions to redesign them. Those that have are in the early stages. Common concerns include:

- Desire to include multiple measures of student performance in accountability decisions
- Concerns about distortion (narrowing) of the curriculum resulting from state assessments
- Concern that current systems do not adequately support instruction and improvement

It's generally not possible to make traditional large-scale assessments diagnostic, although periodic "interim" or formative assessments that provide useful information and are aligned with the summative statewide assessment may be valuable.

States should develop a coherent view of the purpose and goal of the assessment system and provide support for that view. State roles in creating additional "balance" range from highly centralized (establishing a state approval or vetting process for interim assessments, tying state funding to use of approved assessments) to highly localized (provide funding for professional development or assessments selected by districts).

Balanced Assessment: Three Districts

(October 13, Discussion with Nooksack Valley, Spokane, Kent)

The Grade Level Expectations and Math Performance Expectations, and by extension the WASL, provide a clear target to guide instruction. The most powerful professional development comes when teams of teachers closely examine the curriculum, individual test scores, student work, and compare these to the learning targets. The CBA's (classroom-based assessments) focus attention on non-WASL subjects and are a valuable addition.

Districts use a very wide range of classroom based assessments, some initiated by the teacher, others common across classrooms, others directed by district policy. Everything must be aligned: curriculum, instruction, assessment of all types (diagnostic, interim, summative), grading practices, and report cards. There should not be a disconnect within the system or miscommunication to students and parents about how well students are performing.

Opportunities for state assistance:

- Consider making the Writing WASL a CBA
- Support professional development in high quality classroom assessment, including in pre-service
- Support standard math diagnostic assessments
- Don't move the target
- Reward (rather than punish) schools and districts for results
- Support multiple forms of assessment to create a clearer picture of student achievement

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy, Achievement, and Assessment

(October 13, Presentation by Dr. Christine Katayama, City University-Seattle and Dr. Lila Jacobs, California State University-Sacramento)

Achievement of cultural competence is a journey and a process. Attitudes, believes, behaviors, and policies can be placed on a continuum from destructive to proficient. But it is possible to achieve cultural competence when supported by instruction that is culturally relevant (contains content that students recognize and can place in context) and culturally responsive (active listening, collaboration, respect).

Three strategies will improve the cultural competency of student assessments:

- Direct instruction for students and parents about the psychology of testing
- Tests that themselves are culturally relevant and as free as possible from cultural bias
- Use of the assessment results to identify weaknesses that are then addressed with culturally relevant curriculum and instruction

Update on Math End-of-Course Assessment

(October 13, OSPI Presentation)

Based on the new mathematics standards, there are 119 discrete "Performance Expectations" (rather than Grade Level Expectations) that cross four courses and will be used to design the four mathematics EOCs (Algebra I, Geometry, Integrated I, and Integrated II).

Rather than create a series of four re-take tests for graduation purposes, OSPI is examining a single re-test that covers the common core of all four courses. While the EOCs are being phased in, this Common Core test would serve as the WASL. The implementation schedule for the Algebra I and Integrated I EOC has been changed due to later adoption of the new math standards. All four tests will now be available beginning in 2010-11.

Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)

(November 12, Presentation by Bob Baker, Northwest Evaluation Association)

MAP assessments help teachers by providing information about each student. The assessments are online, with overnight feedback. The assessment is adaptive so that when students answer correctly, they go on to more challenging material and when they answer incorrectly, they return to less difficult material. The test is vertically scaled across grades to show longitudinal growth over time. MAP results are very closely predictive of WASL performance.

NWEA has a very large item bank and a scoring system that has been stable for 30 years. Adaptive assessments produce results that allow teachers to adjust curriculum and instruction individually for each student. MAP produces a wide array of score reports that teachers, principals, and districts can use to improve classroom instruction. It is not the test itself that improves instruction but the use of the data.

The NCLB does not recognize adaptive tests. NWEA is working with two school districts in another state to pilot a "blended" model that includes both grade-level questions for accountability purposes and adaptive questions for diagnostic purposes. NWEA also has end-of-course assessments for mathematics.

MAP: Experiences in Two Districts

(November 12, Discussion with Vancouver and Richland)

Vancouver has been using MAP since 2003 for all students in grades 3 through 10 in Reading and Math. MAP forms a part of the district's overall assessment system that also includes classroom -based assessment and the WASL. Results are used as part of a system of "tiered" instruction where struggling students receive additional interventions and high achieving students are provided with more challenging material. There is "overlap" with the EALRs and GLEs, not necessarily "alignment." There may be some difference between a students' MAP performance and their WASL performance because the WASL expects students to write and explain their thinking. This is valuable. For example, because of the Writing WASL, teachers are focusing much more on developing students' writing skills. Achieving consistency in scoring of classroom-based assessments is a challenge.

Richland adopted MAP because the district felt a need for systemic data on student performance throughout the year. MAP is offered three times a year in grades 3 through 9, with the winter assessment as a teacher-option. A lot of professional development is offered to help teachers interpret and use the data. The WASL is not the best tool to measure academic performance of students. Data from MAP allows teachers to focus on the instructional needs of each individual student. It has changed the role of the principal to being more purposeful in working with teachers about how they are addressing individual students with specific interventions. The district believes that MAP measures Washington's standards.

Summary Discussion - Preliminary Findings

(November 12, Workgroup Discussion)

- We need an assessment that helps us help students. Teachers, students, parents, and principals need to know how to help that individual child. That's not what the WASL was designed for, but that's what we want now.
- We need to substantially reduce the cost of the WASL and substantially reduce the amount of time it takes to administer it. We must significantly reduce the quantity of open-ended questions - at all grade levels - while maintaining the integrity of the test.
- In the short-term there is funding left in the current budget for diagnostics; Writing could be made a classroom-based assessment; the number of open-ended questions could be reduced to reduce scoring costs. In the long-run, perhaps a different test could be used for graduation rather than the test we use for NCLB purposes.
- We still haven't addressed what to do about Science.
- Based on what we have heard and learned, it is hard to say there some unique benefit to what we have now that justifies the high costs, high burden, and the features that we all acknowledge are problematic.
- A balanced assessment system is one that does not rely on one test to accomplish all things. We know we need to have summative assessments in grades 3 through 8 and 10. But we also want to have formative and diagnostic assessments.
- The ultimate product of this group should be recommendations about what we want from an assessment system - what are we trying to accomplish. We continue to have two different objectives: improve student learning and improve the education system. But there is only one test that tries to measure both. We have seen that perhaps it is possible to have one test that does both, but it still an open question of how do you get that test to be NCLB-compliant.
- We now have a good vocabulary about how to use a test. MAP appears to be a good example of the type of test that we would like to have: online administration; immediate feedback; multiple testing points within a year; measurement of progress; accountability for teachers.
- One thing that MAP and other assessments do not measure is student factors such as culture and learning styles. An open question is how we might better accommodate different learning styles and different cultural frames of reference.
- We continue to grapple with how best to measure students learning and simultaneously drive improvement in instruction.
- There is a place within the overall system for classroom based, diagnostic, end-of-course, and summative high stakes assessments. An array of assessments is what provides users of the system with the fullest understanding of what students need to know and need to focus on, and what teachers need to be able to improve their instruction.

Appendix

Meeting Agendas

July 28, 2008

Monday July 28, 2008 9:00 am	UW Bothell Building 2, Room 005 18115 Campus Way NE Bothell, WA

Agenda

1. **Overview of origins of the system and current assessment system, including federal and state requirements, changes made in the 2007 and 2008 sessions, and cost.**
    a. Susan Mielke, Barbara McLain, Ben Rarick, Committee Staff
2. **Update on OSPI implementation of 2007 and 2008 changes and WASL contract selection.**
    a. Jennifer Priddy & Joe Willhoft, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction
3. **Summary of WSIPP research on barriers to success on the WASL and possible alternatives.**
    a. Annie Pennucci, Washington State Institute for Public Policy
4. **Workgroup discussion of a draft work plan, including needed technical expertise and overall approach.**
5. **Next steps and setting of future meeting agendas.**
6. **Public comment.**

August 25, 2008

Monday August 25, 2008 9:00 am	UW Bothell Building 1, Room 010/020 18115 Campus Way NE Bothell, WA

Agenda

1. **Follow-up from previous meeting.**
2. **Washington Alternate Assessment System Portfolio**
   (alternate assessment for special education)
    a. Joe Willhoft, Assistant Superintendent, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction
    b. Judy Kraft, Alternate Assessment Specialist, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction
3. **Wisconsin's New Alternate Assessment (WAA-SwD).**
    a. Sandra Berndt, Special Education Consultant
    b. Brian Johnson, Alternate Assessment Consultant.

c. Phil Olsen, Assistant Director, Office of Educational Accountability, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
(via conference call)

4. **Purpose and Design of Assessments**
   a. Dr. Rick Stiggins, ETS Assessment Training Institute, Portland, OR.

5. **Exit Exams in Other States.**
   a. Jennifer Vranek, Education First Consulting, Seattle, WA.

6. **Public comment.**
7. **Work group discussion**

September 22, 2008

Monday September 22, 2008 9:00 am	House Hearing Rm B John L. O'Brien Building Olympia, Washington

Agenda

1. **Follow-up from Previous Meeting**
2. **Commercially-Developed Tests**
   Introduction: Susan Mielke and Barbara McLain, Committee Staff
   A. **Delaware**
      *Wendy Roberts Pickett, Director of Assessment and Analysis Delaware Department of Education
      *Herb Harris and Jon Twing, Pearson Education
   B. **Illinois**
      *Megan Forness, Assessment Consultant, Illinois State Board of Education
      Fred Mickle, Director, Postsecondary Education, ACT
      Jennifer Kelly, Consultant, ACT
   C**. Maine**
      *Dan Hupp, SAT Initiative Coordinator, Maine Department of Education
      *Brian O'Reilly, SAT Executive Director, College Board
      Kris Zavoli, State Government Relations, College Board
   **Via Conference Call*
3. **Multiple Choice Questions**
   Introduction: Bryon Moore, Committee Staff
   Discussion: Dr. James Popham, Professor Emeritus, UCLA
4. **Request for WASL Performance Audit**
   Discussion: Ruta Fanning, Legislative Auditor, JLARC
5. **Diagnostic Assessments**
   Overview: Barbara McLain, Committee Staff
   Update: Joe Willhoft, Assistant Superintendent for Assessment, OSPI
   Dr. Cathy Taylor, Director of Assessment Alternatives and Innovations, OSPI

6. Public Comment/Next Steps

October 13, 2008

Monday October 13, 2008 9:00 am	House Hearing Rm B John L. O'Brien Building Olympia, Washington

Agenda

1. **Follow-up from Previous Meeting**
2. **Balanced Assessment Systems: Trends in Other States**
   Introduction: Barbara McLain, Committee Staff
   Presentation: Dr. Brian Gong, Executive Director, National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment
   Via Conference Call
3. **Update on Implementation of Math End-of-Course Assessments**
   Joe Willhoft, Assistant Superintendent for Assessment, OSPI
4. **Balanced Assessment at the District Level: Experiences in Three Districts**
   Bruce Herzog and Joni Heutink, 5th Grade Teachers, Nooksack Elementary School
   Nooksack Valley School District
   Dr. Sharon Robinson, Director, Professional Learning
   Tammy Campbell, Executive Director, Teaching and Learning, Spokane School District
   David Staight, Executive Director for Elementary School Improvement, Kent School District
5. **Culturally Responsive Pedagogy, Achievement, and Assessment**
   Introduction: Susan Mielke, Committee Staff
   Presentation: Dr. Christine Katayama, City University
   Dr. Lila Jacobs, California State University, Sacramento
6. **Public Comment**
7. **Workgroup Discussion: Next Steps**

November 12, 2008

Wednesday November 12, 2008 9:00 am	L.E. Scarr Resource Center Lake Washington School District Sammamish Conference Room 16250 N.E. 74th Street Redmond, Washington

Agenda

1. **Follow-up from Previous Meeting**
2. **Measures of Academic Progress – MAP**
   a. **Introduction**

i. Susan Mielke, Committee Staff

b. **Presentation**:

i. Bob Baker, Dir. of State Relations, Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA)

3. **MAP from a school district's perspective**
   a. **Vancouver School District**
      i. Layne Curtis, Curriculum Director -- Elementary
   b. **Richland School District**
      i. Dr. Jean Lane, School District Superintendent
      ii. Jennifer Hubbard, 5th Grade Teacher, White Bluffs Elementary
      iii. Mike Hansen, Principal, White Bluffs Elementary
      iv. Todd Baddley, Exec. Dir. Student Services
      v. Pete Knollmeyer, School Board Member
4. **Workgroup Discussion** *(walk through the recap of topics heard and questions)*
5. **Next Steps**
6. **Public Comment**

December 15, 2008

Monday December 15, 2008 9:00 a.m.	Northshore School District Board Room 3330 Monte Villa Parkway Bothell, WA 98021

Agenda:

1. **Discussion of preliminary recommendations and development of final recommendations.**