

THE STANDARD DEVIATION

January 2007



Washington Educational Research Association
University Place, WA

<http://www.wera-web.org>

WERA Spring Conference 2007 Making the Grade

Gathering and Reporting Evidence of Student Learning

March 28–30, 2007

Hilton Seattle Airport Hotel Conference Center

We look forward to seeing current and new WERA members at the WERA Spring Conference, March 28 to 30, 2007 at the Hilton Seattle Airport Hotel Conference Center. Teachers need accurate information that informs classroom instruction and is supportive of student learning. NCLB and SHB2195 require us to monitor and report out student progress on the high stakes assessed standards. How confident are you that the grades students receive in your school are consistent, accurate, meaningful, and supportive of student learning?

Join us for a special conference with two of the North America's leading experts: Rick Stiggins and Ken O'Connor.

Rick's focus will be on *Understanding the Role of Grades in Communicating about Student Learning*. He will address the gathering, processing, and communication challenges of grading in our effort to promote student success.

Ken's focus will be on *How to Grade for Learning*. He will address the purpose, perspectives, guidelines and issues in current grading practices. Ken will also provide 2 half-day pre-conference sessions on Wednesday, March 28th.

More than 40 breakout sessions are organized into seven strands including assessment, gathering evidence, grading, content focus, using data to inform instruction, communicating results and OSPI

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updates. The sessions are also identified by level and job-alike. A list of sessions will be posted at www.wera-web.org when details are completed.

The Wednesday, March 28 pre-conference program offers half-day, in-depth workshops, including Making Middle School Meaningful, Assessment for Learning, Standards-Based Grading, Persuasive Writing, Released Items, Research on COE and Grading for Learning. Morning sessions start at 8:30 a.m.; afternoon sessions end at 4:30 p.m and lunch is included with your registration.

Why delay? Go to www.wera-web.org, find the WERA Spring Conference, and complete the credit card registration process online or download the registration form and mail it in today. Be sure to share a form with a friend. Free Clock Hours for all days will be available.

--Conference Chairs Dan Phelan, WERA Past President,
Lake Washington School District and Ric Williams,
Everett Public Schools

President's Column



Remember your mission and stay energized

Going through the school year reminds me of what the prophet Isaiah said about the faithful: "They shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint." We start on a high note, energized and soaring in the fall. Over time we hit our stride and make progress, albeit without the same energy level. By spring (perhaps around WASL time), our energy wanes and we plod along, hoping to make it through the day.

This winding-down process applies not only to educators and students, but to those in other professions as well. In fact, careers may go through this progression. Does it always have to be this way? Can a person stay energized through the long haul? Can burnout be avoided?

The story of the three stonecutters gives insight about how we can stay energized throughout the year and our working life. The first stonecutter was asked what he was doing, and he said that he was making a living, earning money so his family could eat. The second had a more lofty goal and wanted to become the best stonecutter in the valley. He was motivated to excel, perhaps to prove something to himself or others, and he did a great job of cutting swiftly and cleanly.

When the third stonecutter was asked what he was doing, he stopped and looked up glossy-eyed into the air as if looking at a vision. He replied, "I'm building a cathedral."

During the Middle Ages it took hundreds of years to build the massive European cathedrals. Effective and

energized stonecutters knew they would never see the finished product, but they endured because they kept the ultimate mission in mind. Other workers were busy making the cathedrals, too—architects, artisans making stained glass and sculpting wood. Their materials and working conditions were not very good, but they knew their hard work would pay off eventually and others would benefit. Working together, they built cathedrals that have inspired others for hundreds of years.

Educators are charged with building hundreds of cathedrals each year. The students in our schools are slowly built through the hard work and perseverance of many caring adults. Unfortunately we lack long-term indicators that can tell us if our work has produced responsible citizens who contribute to their own well-being and that of their families and communities (goals noted in our Basic Education Act.) Sometimes students come back and thank us for what we have done for them, but usually we never know how the students we served turned out. So we need to find ways to endure over the long haul.

Take time to reflect on what you do and why. Are you making a living or doing something with a much broader purpose? What is your energy level right now? Have you lost steam and perspective in your career? Are you having more bad days than good ones? If you are in a leadership role, are you consistently keeping your mission front and center in people's minds so they do not get weary or faint?

As you enter the second half of the school year and perhaps the twilight of your career, reflect on the lessons of the stonecutters: stay energized by lifting your eyes and keeping your ultimate mission in mind.

Pete Bylsma
WERA President

PS We're now sending this newsletter to members via email rather than snail-mail. This allows us to provide much more content. Please let me, a board member, or Peter Hendrickson (the editor) know what you think of the articles and method of delivery.

WERA President–Elect Ballots in February

WERA members will receive election ballots for the President–Elect position in February. Candidates are current Board of Directors Member Andrea Meld, an OSPI Research Analyst, and Nancy Arnold, formerly of OSPI, currently an Assistant Director for Special Services and Programs with the Puyallup School District.

This is a good time to pay your 2006–7 WERA dues if you have not done so. Ballots will only be sent to paid-up members.

At–Large Board positions are now three–year terms and now are expiring at the end of this year.

The mission of the Washington Education Association is to improve the professional practice of educators engaged in instruction, assessment, evaluation, and research.



WERA Services

- *WERA provides professional development through conferences, publications, and seminars.*
- *WERA provides forums to explore thoughtful approaches and a variety of views and issues in education.*
- *WERA provides consultation and advice to influence educational policy regarding instruction, assessment, evaluation, and research.*

Future Calendar

WERA Items

Confirmed items at this time are the conferences and workshop as shown below. Please add these events to your planners.

- 2007 Spring WERA Conference
March 28–30, 2007
Hilton Seattle Airport Hotel
- Classroom Instruction That Works
Dr. Debra Pickering
May 12, 2007, Puget Sound ESD
- 2007 State Assessment Conference
December 5–7, 2007
Hilton Seattle Airport Hotel
- 2008 Spring WERA Conference
March 26–28, 2008
Hilton Seattle Airport Hotel
- 2008 State Assessment Conference
December 3–5, 2008
Hilton Seattle Airport Hotel
Contact: <http://wera-web.org>

Other Calendar Items (Non–WERA)

- American Educational Research Assn, National Council on Measurement in Education, National Association of Test Directors, Directors of Research and Evaluation Annual Meetings and Conferences, Chicago, IL, April 8 to 13, 2007
- WSASCD Annual Conference, Seattle, November 1–3
- American Evaluation Association Annual Conference, Baltimore, MD. November 7–10, 2007. CFP Deadline March 16
- OSPI "Side by Side: Supporting Student Success" 2007 Community Collaboration Conference— March 28–30, 2007, Yakima Convention Center
- OSPI Conferences Contact
<http://www.k12.wa.us/Conferences/default.aspx>

AWSP Legislative Update

Jerry Bender, Director of Governmental Relations for AWSP (Association of Washington School Principals), provides a weekly legislative update to members. Below are highlights from the [January 19, 2007](#) posting culled for WERA readers. Many administrators also read the WASA (Washington Association of School Administrators) listing at <http://www.wasa-oly.org/governme/twio.htm>.

“The Senate Early Learning and K-12 Education Committee spend time on Wednesday [as reported January 19] reviewing alternative assessments to the WASL, including a report from the [Washington State Institute of Public Policy](#) regarding alternative assessments. The institute has four recommendations for the Legislature: Balancing the potential to increase rates of students meeting standard with costs and ease of implementation; limiting the number of alternatives; developing a diagnostic assessment alternative for math; and continuing to review the cultural appropriateness of the alternatives.

The committee also heard presentations from the State Board of Education, the Professional Educator Standards Board and Supt. Terry Bergeson regarding her Joint Action Plan for Mathematics. The plan would involve six steps: Aligning math standards; assessments and curriculum; ensuring quality teaching; adjusting high school math requirements; delivering efficient; effective and equitable math instruction and interventions; gathering meaningful data to strengthen accountability and engaging the public...

BIG ISSUES

Yesterday, the Senate Education Committee took action on the simple majority for levies (**SJR 8207**), and moved it on to the rules committee with a Do Pass recommendation. It remains to be seen if issue can garner the necessary 33 votes to be passed by the full Senate. The House will hear

public testimony of HJR 4201 this afternoon and AWSP will be testifying in favor of the bill. Learn more about the simple majority online at www.simplemajority2007.org/....

SB 5239 was heard on Wednesday. If approved, this bill would implement a new alternative assessment: A segmented assessment in math for the 10th-grade. This alternative would break the math assessment into more manageable segments throughout the year. There seems to be a fair amount of excitement on the capitol campus about this one.”

Winter Conference Photos



WERA President Pete Bylsma



OSPI Asst. Superintendent for Assessment and Research, Joe Willhoft

Praeger's Follies—Winter 2006

Once again WERA members played with words as the State Assessment Conference Praeger's Follies contest generated scores of entries. Conferees were asked by Bob Silverman and Michael Power to extend some familiar saying with references to themes around standards and testing. There was a bonus if the word, "Nantucket" was included. For webcam shots of Nantucket, point your browser to <http://www.nantucket.net/live/>.

First place was awarded to OSPI math whizzes Bev Neitzel and Mary Holmberg:

"If at first you don't succeed, try, try again:

- at the summer retake
- Spring of your Junior year
- in the summer of your Junior year
- in a Collection of Evidence
- in a segmented course
- in the Spring of your Senior year."

Second place: Larry Keller, Mansfield and Pateros School Districts

"To 'Be' or not to 'B' that is the question as to 'A' or 'A' just doesn't make sense!"

Third place: (and Honorable Mentions winner): Tom Owen of Portland, OR

"No teacher, the dog did not eat my homework, Nantucket!"

Fourth place: Team of Chadwick, Aho and Mock, District(s) unknown

"A fool and his money...are good to take to Nordstrom's"

Fifth place: Lisa Rollins, Puyallup School District

"It's my WASL and I'll cry if I want to."

Honorable Mentions

"Is Nantucket a safe harbor?" --Tom Owen

"Beauty is in the eye of the beholder. Nantucket is in Massachusetts." --Tom Owen

"A stitch in time saves 9 unless it is a WASL math question in which case it may equal a bowl of fruit composed of 6 apples and 3 bananas." --Larry Keller

"At the end of the day, it's still the end of the day."
--Nancy Angelo, retired

Winter Assessment Conference — A Winning Hand

The Winter Assessment Conference planning committee was very pleased that so many attendees enjoyed the WERA playing cards (no batteries required) that were given out as the conference keepsake this year. As an elementary school principal I created PowerPoint slideshows with photos of my school's students, staff, parents, school activities, data and future goals interspersed with quotes and set to music.

These slideshows were a way to create a visual history and to motivate everyone to continue to work hard so every child would meet standard. We celebrated the beginning and end of each year with a slideshow, as well as any special events. So when the conference committee decided that cards with quotes would be a different and fun incentive, it was easy for me to volunteer to create the cards.

My intelligent, delightful son, Jacob, is a Business/Computer Science major at WSU and had created a poker game in one of his programming classes. I immediately called him to get the cards to place the quotes on for the PowerPoint. We love a good family project! Then I culled through my favorite quote books (because of my school slideshows, staff gave me many such books during my tenure) and found quotes in four general categories, one for each suit.

Did you notice the suits' quotes were connected by a theme? To further my social justice agenda, I was careful to choose quotes from both men and women and paid particular attention to having quotes from persons of color. Hopefully some of you noticed this!

So, the real reason for this article...did you figure out the four general categories? If not, here they are:

Diamonds–World view/The future
Clubs–Leadership
Hearts–Children
Spades–Change

The conference committee thanks everyone who attended the Winter Assessment Conference for spending your professional development time with us. We trust you enjoyed the sessions and your colleagues. Just as Bob Silverman and Michael Power found a quote on one card to use to introduce Praeger's Follies, we hope you can find a use for the 52 quotes, perhaps inserting a quote on a newsletter, a memo or in your own slideshow to inspire those around you. The PowerPoint of the cards can be found on the WERA website. See you in March at the *Making the Grade* conference.

*--Lorna Spear, Ed.D., Executive Director, Teaching and Learning Services, Spokane Public Schools.
Lorna is WERA President-Elect.*



Beyond NCLB: From Measuring Status to Informing Improvement

NATD 2006 Proceedings Online

The 2006 National Association of Test Directors (NATD) Proceedings from the Annual Conference in San Francisco last April is now posted on the website.

This document is entitled "Beyond NCLB: From Measuring Status to Informing Improvement" and contains papers by Eva Baker & Gregory Chung, Gage Kingsbury & Ron Hauser and Judy Arter with comments by Karen Banks. I think all the papers will give you something to think about.

You will also find some very useful material in the appendices to Judy's paper.

The proceedings can be found at:

<http://www.natd.org/2006proceedings.pdf>

--Joe O'Reilly, Proceedings Editor. Joe is Executive Director for Student Achievement Support Mesa (AZ) Public Schools.

Register Now! 2007 WERA Spring Conference

"Making the Grade"
March 28-30, 2007

Hilton Seattle Airport Hotel and Conference Center
17620 Pacific Highway South
Seattle WA 98188

Excel: Using Pivot Tables

Introduction

One of the most powerful features of Microsoft Excel is the Pivot Table. Pivot tables allow rapid, dynamic, flexible data analysis. This article describes how to create pivot tables and pivot charts, and how to create normal charts from pivot tables.

Creating a Pivot Table

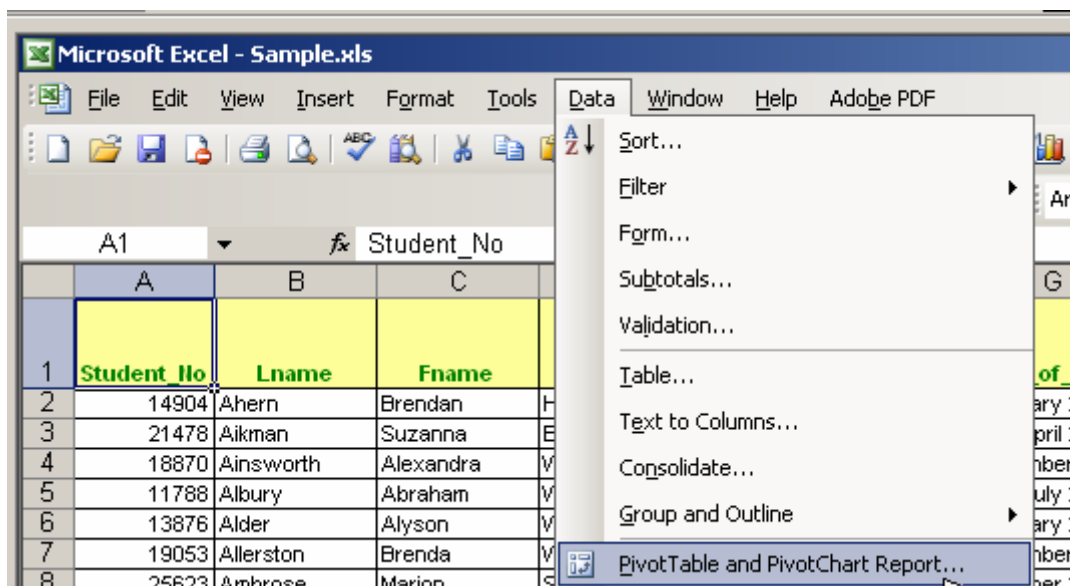
I am providing a sample data set of WASL scores to use with this tutorial (link address to [sample.xls](#)). This is a simple file of test scores including nine columns that we use frequently when analyzing WASL data [Student_No], [Lname, Fname], [School], [Teacher], [Ethnic], [Date_of_Birth], [MathScaleScore], [MathMetStandard]:

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1	Student_No	Lname	Fname	School	Teacher	Ethnic	Date_of_Birth	Math Scale Score	Math Met Standard
2	14904	Ahern	Brendan	Happy Dale	Adams	White	February 26, 1991	360	0
3	21478	Aikman	Suzanna	Bloomer	Smith	White	April 22, 1991	384	0
4	18870	Ainsworth	Alexandra	Windsor Ridge	Hendrickson	White	December 1, 1991	394	0
5	11788	Albury	Abraham	Windsor Ridge	Hendrickson	Black	July 29, 1992	392	0
6	13876	Alder	Alyson	Windsor Ridge	Hendrickson	White	February 24, 1992	379	0
7	19053	Allerston	Brenda	Windsor Ridge	Hendrickson	White	November 9, 1991	400	1

Getting Started

Start Excel and [Open and save] the file called [sample.xls](#)

- Make sure the active cell is within the set of data (e.g. click on cell A7)
- From the **Data** menu choose **PivotTable and PivotChart Report...** – the Wizard now runs.

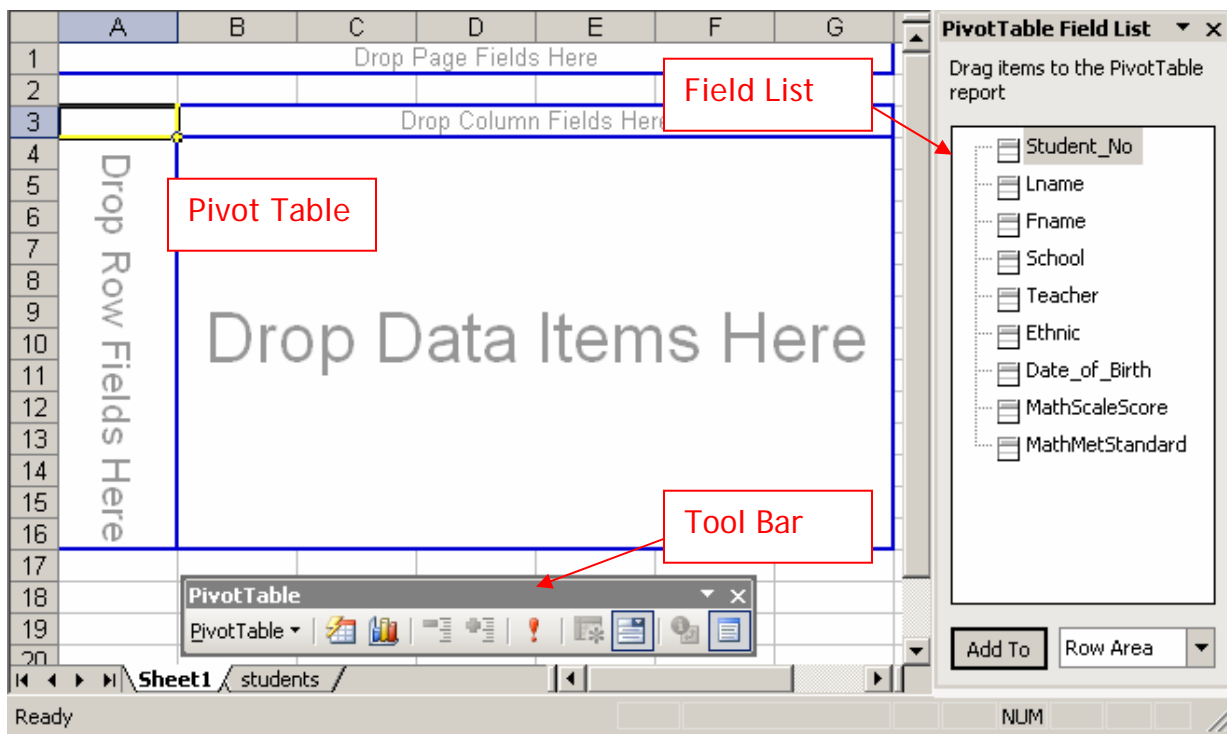


Excel: Using Pivot Tables (Continued)

- Check **Microsoft Office Excel list or database** and **PivotTable** are selected then press <Enter> or click on **[Next>]**
- Accept the default area (or type in **A1:I391**) – press <Enter> or click on **[Next>]**
- Place the Pivot Table on the **New worksheet** – press <Enter> or click on **[Finish]**

Getting Started

A skeleton **Pivot Table** is now drawn and a special PivotTable **Field List** and **Pivot Toolbar** are displayed. You have to specify which data series you are using in your cross-tabulation by dragging the field buttons from the *field list* into the skeleton.



A One-Dimensional Table

One-dimensional pivot tables are very useful for obtaining counts, averages or basic calculations. Here, for example, you might want to know the average **Math Scale Score** by **School**:

- Drag and drop the **[School]** field list button into the area marked *Drop Row Fields Here*
- Drag and drop the **[MathScaleScore]** field list button into the area marked *Drop Data Items Here*

The Pivot Table is now automatically filled in with the data. The table defaults to a “count” of Math WASL Scale Scores by School:

Continued on next page...

Microsoft Excel - Sample.xls

File Edit View Insert Format Tools Data Window Help Adobe PDF

Arial 10 B I U

A5 Bergeson

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1						
2						
3	Count of MathScaleScore					
4	School	Total				
5	Bergeson	123				
6	Bloomer	26				
7	Happy Dale	31				
8	Hillside	12				
9	Mansfield	13				
10	Maple Valley	9				
11	Oak Grove	23				
12	Sherfield	23				
13	St Patrick's	49				
14	Wantage	10				
15	Wells	21				
16	Windsor Ridge	40				
17	Grand Total	380				
18						

PivotTable Field List

Drag items to the PivotTable report

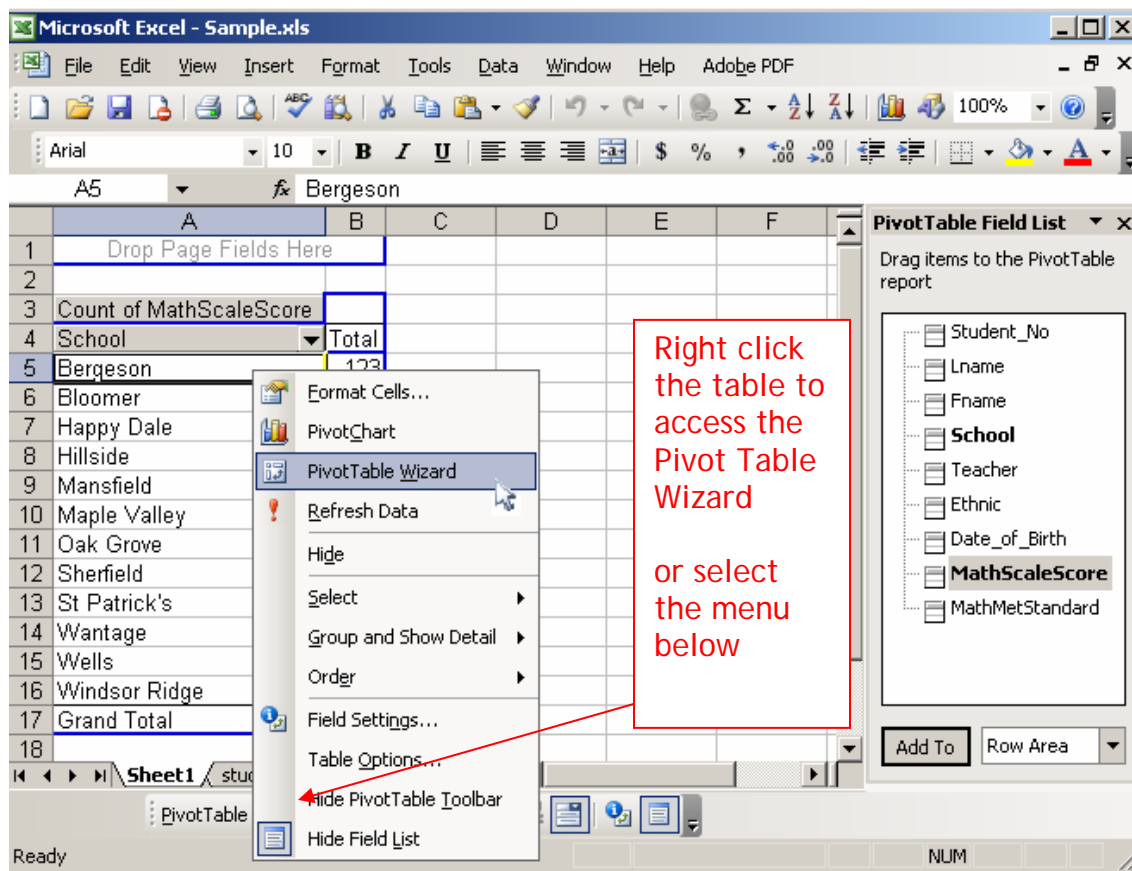
- Student_No
- Lname
- Fname
- School**
- Teacher
- Ethnic
- Date_of_Birth
- MathScaleScore**
- MathMetStandard

Add To Row Area

Ready NUM

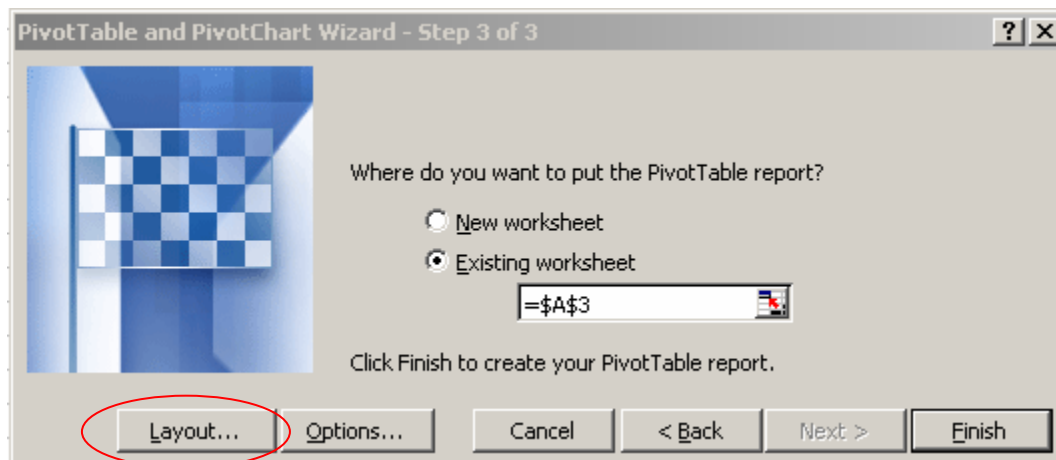
Next let's run some calculations with the data in the pivot table. First we need to access the **Pivot Table Wizard** by right clicking the table or selecting the **PivotTable** drop down:

Continued on next page...

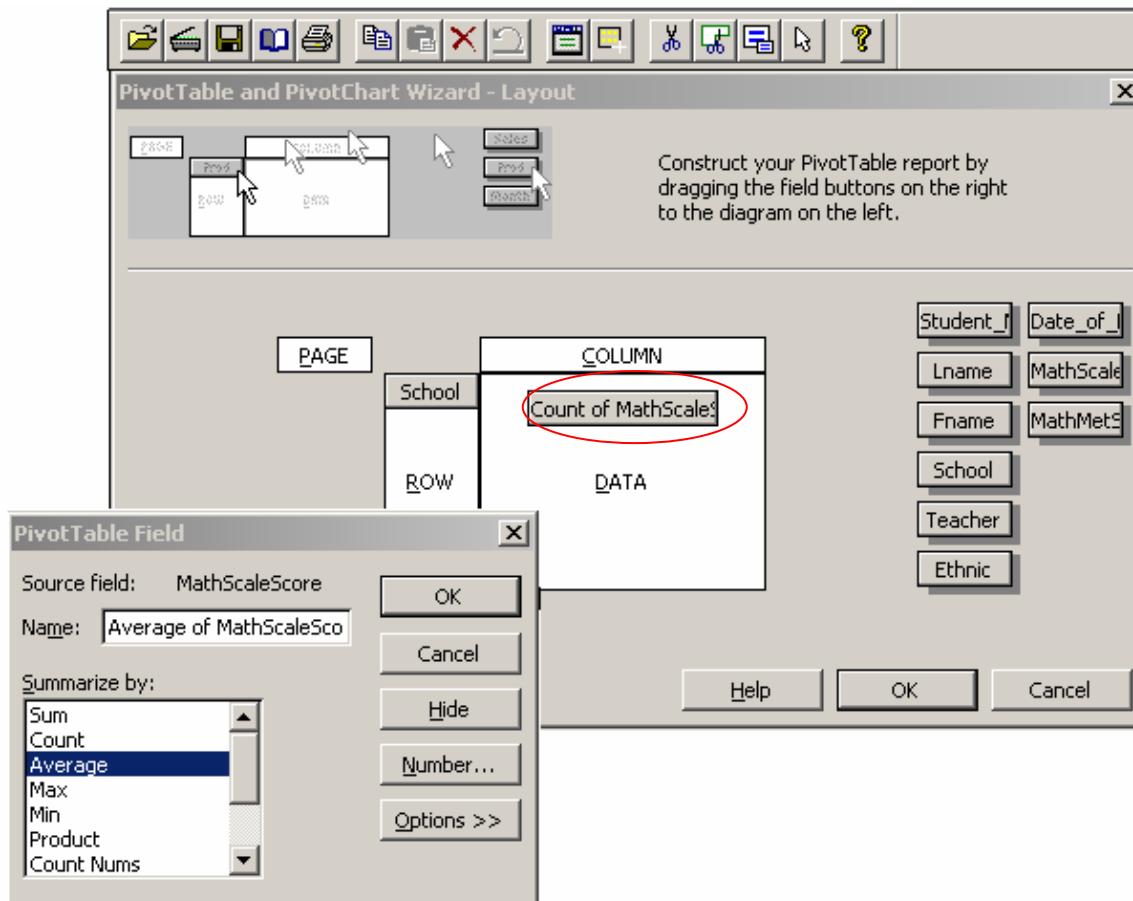


Right click the table to access the Pivot Table Wizard
or select the menu below

Once the **PivotTable Wizard** is displayed select **[Layout]** to change the display options.



Click on the **Count of MathScaleScore** and change to **Average**.



The pivot Table is now displaying the **Average WASL [MathScaleScore]** by **[School]**.

Continued on next page...

School	Average of MathScaleScore
Total	
Bergeson	386.1788618
Bloomer	381.6538462
Happy Dale	374.9032258
Hillside	387.4166667
Mansfield	394.6923077
Maple Valley	385
Oak Grove	393.9130435
Sherfield	381.7391304
St Patrick's	393.5918367
Wantage	390.8
Wells	376.7619048
Windsor Ridge	388.75
Grand Total	386.2789474

Average of WASL Math by school

A Two-Dimensional Table

Another option is to construct the table to display by two dimensions; scores by [School] and [Ethnic] category. Access the [Layout] and drag [Ethnic] label to the [PAGE] section of the Pivot Table

Construct your PivotTable report by dragging the field buttons on the right to the diagram on the left.

Diagram Labels: ROW, COLUMN, DATA, School, Average of MathSca

Field List (Right): Student_f, Date_of_!, Lname, MathScale, Fname, MathMetS, School, Teacher, **Ethnic**

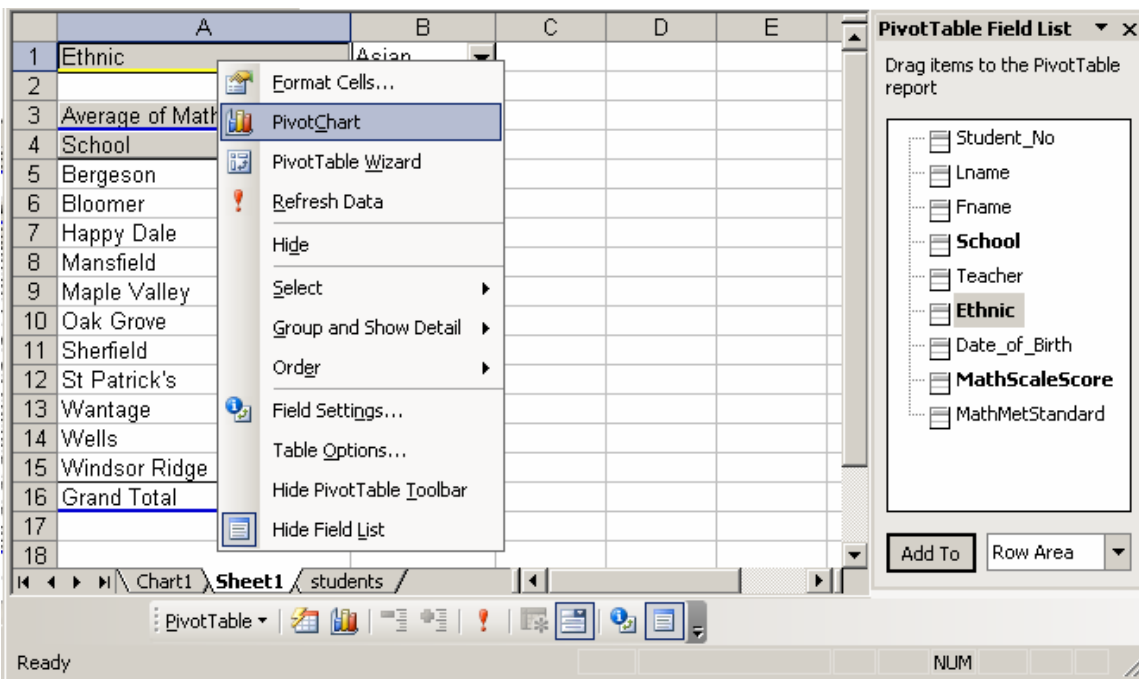
Now the pivot report gives us the option to filter by [Ethnic] group.

The screenshot shows Microsoft Excel with a PivotTable. The PivotTable is filtered by the 'Ethnic' field, with a dropdown menu open showing options: (All), Am. Ind., Asian, Black, Hispanic, and White. The PivotTable field list on the right shows 'Ethnic' selected for the filter.

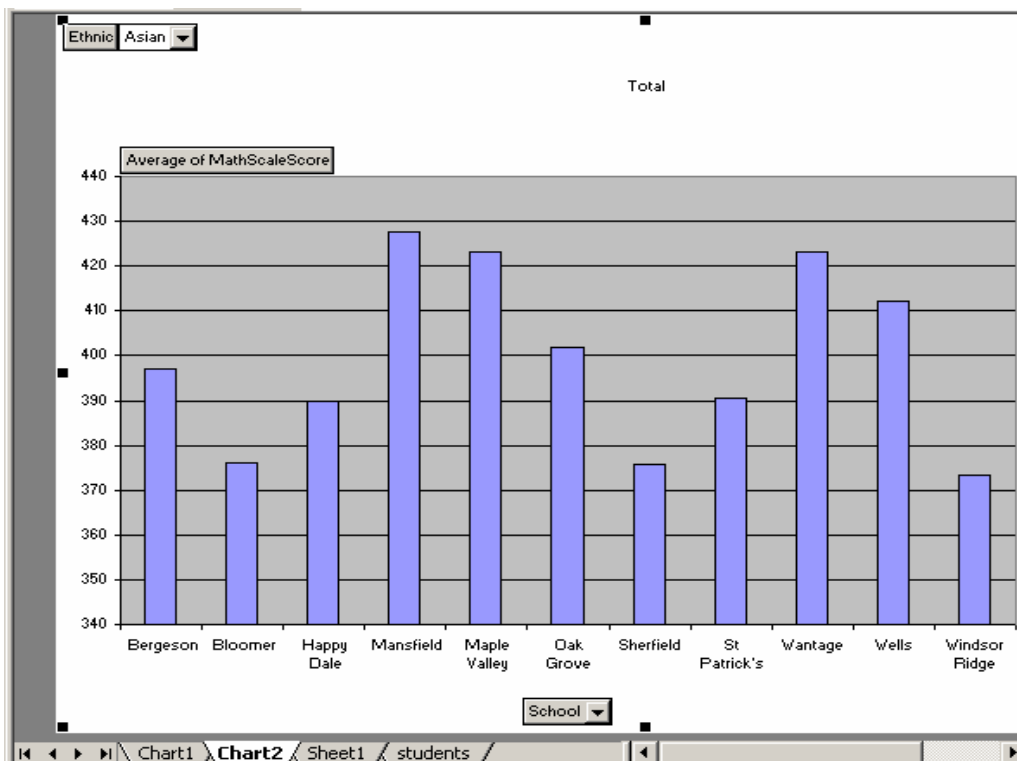
	A	B	C	D	E
1	Ethnic	(All)			
2					
3	Average of MathScaleScore				
4	School				
5	Bergeson				
6	Bloomer				
7	Happy Dale				
8	Hillside				
9	Mansfield				
10	Maple Valley				
11	Oak Grove				
12	Sherfield				
13	St Patrick's				
14	Wantage				
15	Wells	376.7619048			
16	Windsor Ridge	388.75			
17	Grand Total	386.2789474			
18					

Chart Option

Pivot tables also give us the option of charting the results rather than just displaying in a table format. Right click the table and access the **PivotChart** option.



Now the data is displayed in a chart format. Again, you can easily toggle to a different display by filtering to another ethnic category.



--Pat Cummings. Pat was recently appointed to be Director of Research and Evaluation for Tacoma Public Schools, after serving in a similar position for Federal Way Public Schools.

Conclusion:

We have only scratched the surface on the power of pivot tables. I hope you find this feature of Excel useful in managing your data.

SPSS: Exploring My WASL Data, Initial Scrubbing

When I get my WASL data file from WAMS, the first thing I want to do is look for anomalies—missing IDs, duplicates, etc. Before doing anything else, I save the file as an SPSS file.

Next I run a compute statement to create a case number for each record. That way if I want to return the file to its original order I can do it. I select **Transform** from the menu bar, and then select **Compute**. Under target variable, type *case* under *numeric expression type \$casenum*. Then I go to the variable view tab (at the bottom of the screen), scroll to the very bottom to find my new variable and change the *decimal* column to 0, the *width* to 4. Next, I right click on the case variable, and drag it to the top of the variable list. Finally I save the file. Now, no matter what I do, I can return the file to its original order.

A second way to do this would be to create a syntax file **File, New, Syntax**. In the new syntax file I would type

**Compute case=\$casenum.
Execute.**

Then I would select it all and hit the “run” key. ►

Next I look for missing IDs. I run a sort case on the district ID file, and all of the missing IDs come to the top. This way I can look up student names in our student information system and fill in the IDs. I do note which student IDs were missing so that I can correct them in WAMS, or know that the next data file I get from OSPI could still have missing data. Next I sort the data by the SSIDs—again looking for missing numbers. This time, however, I am careful to note any SSIDs I fill in, since those are probably missing on the

official data file, and I know that eventually I will have to get those SSIDs into the official OSPI data file.

After filling in missing IDs and SSIDs, I am now ready to look for duplicate records. SPSS has made this fairly easy; I select **Data, Identify Duplicate Cases**. I drag the variable of interest (either district ID or SSID) to the box marked **Define matching cases by**. I also check the box toward the bottom of the screen titled **sequential count of missing cases in each group** which tells me how many duplicate records I have for each ID. Running the duplicate cases function this way gives me two new variables, **PrimaryLast & MatchSequence**. **PrimaryLast** assigns a “1” to the last record in each matched group, and 0 to the other records. The **MatchSequence** variable assigns 0 to each unique case, and then numbers those records which are duplicates as 1, 2, 3, etc. (Imagine, with 3 books for writing at grade 10, we could now have as many as 6 books for a student who took the tests at the same school—for those who move around—don’t think about it!)

This makes it fairly easy to generate a report that prints out the names and IDs for students with duplicate records. By going to **Data, SelectCases** and clicking on **if condition is satisfied**, click on the If button, then select the variable that starts with sequential count of match cases, and type in > 0 . This will filter out those records that are not duplicates

Continued on next page...

SPSS: Exploring My WASL Data, Initial Scrubbing (Continued)...

Now I can run a report: **Analyze, Reports, Case Summaries**. Now I can select important variables such as ID, SSID, last and first names, and **MatchSequence**, and have a printed list that I can now use in WAMS as I clean up the records.

At this point I save the file!!! Next I'll go through and consolidate matching records so that I can have a single record for each student. I'll eventually delete duplicate records, save the file under a different name, and use the "cleaned-up" file as the basis for running further analyses.

--Linda Elman, Ph.D., Director, Research & Evaluation, Central Kitsap School District



Winter Conference Photos (Continued)



Left: Keynoter Kati Haycock,
President of the Education Trust

Right: Washington Superintendent
of Public Instruction, Terry
Bergeson



Below:
Highline High School Jazz Band



