

THE STANDARD DEVIATION

October 2006



Washington Educational Research Association
University Place, WA

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

22nd Annual Washington State Assessment Conference

"Preparing ALL Students for the 21st Century"

We look forward to seeing current and new WERA members at the 22nd Annual Washington State Assessment Conference, December 7–8, 2006 at the Seattle Airport Hilton Hotel Conference Center. Kati Haycock, Director of Education Trust, will be the keynote speaker Thursday morning. State Superintendent Terry Bergeson will give a keynote address after lunch on Thursday. On Friday morning Pedro Noguera, Professor of Education at New York University, will be the keynote speaker.

More than 50 breakout sessions are organized into 13 strands, including strategies to close the academic gap, meeting graduation requirements, school climate, effective mathematics instruction, leadership, developing and supporting teachers, data analysis, new assessments, and education policies. Sessions represent reform efforts within the elementary, middle, and high school levels. The new Collection of Evidence option to meet graduation requirements will be presented as well as many other presentations about the current initiatives and work at OSPI. A list of all sessions is posted at www.wera-web.org.

The Wednesday, December 6 pre-conference

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program offers half-day, in-depth workshops, including information about Washington Learns, science notebooking, the Promoting Academic Success (PAS) program, and three sessions related to mathematics instruction. The District Assessment Directors Network will meet in the afternoon. Morning sessions start at 8:30 a.m.; afternoon sessions end at 4:30 p.m. and lunch is included with your registration.

So don't delay! Go to www.wera-web.org, find the WERA/OSPI Assessment 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.

--Lorna Spear, WERA President-Elect

More Winter Conference details on page 13–14

President's Column



What Do High Expectations Look Like?

A superintendent once told me a true story about his high school's football team. It faced an upcoming game with its cross-town rival that was ranked in the top 10 and outweighed his team by 40 pounds a player. Moreover, his team had lost its two top running backs to injuries in the first two games of the season and was going to start a third-stringer with no varsity experience.

The coaches did not hold much hope for a victory, but they still acted as if victory was possible. The two captains of the team who had led strenuous workouts all summer long maintained high hopes and believed in their heart they could win. The captains kept up morale despite the overwhelming odds against them. The coaches didn't have it in their heart to dampen the players' hopes, so they faked it and continued to strategize while showing enthusiasm and encouragement. The coaches laughed with the superintendent a few days before the game, saying the players actually thought they could win!

As you might guess, they did win. I attended that game and was amazed at the outcome. You should have seen the hysteria among the players and fans that followed that victory! This is no Hollywood story, but rather a real-life example that teaches some important lessons.

First, we often shortchange ourselves and others by having low expectations. We will never know how much we can accomplish if we don't set our sights high. It's sometimes said that we should shoot for the stars so we can hit the moon.

Second, even if deep down you don't believe something is possible, act like you believe it anyway. Chances are, if you are a good actor, you will be surprised at the outcome and will probably have to rethink what is possible.

Third, never underestimate how influential a small number of people can be when they are committed to doing great things. While one bad apple can ruin the whole bunch, a good apple can inspire others to greatness.

Educators can be that apple. When discussing student motivation last month, Carol Dweck, a Stanford psychology professor, noted the importance of high expectations and making personal connections. "When teachers convey that they are there to help all students develop their abilities, students will trust and form strong connections with them... Teachers who believe that all students are capable of intellectual growth, who are there as resources for students' learning, and who set high, challenging standards for their students (which they help them achieve) will be teachers who are good motivators and memorable teachers." (See the September 13 *Education Week* for further details.)

Our December conference theme is **Preparing ALL Students for the 21st Century**. The emphasis is on all because too often we don't expect *all* students to meet high levels of achievement. But it is possible, and our two keynote speakers—Kati Haycock and Pedro Noguera—will share how it can be done and how it IS being done. (See more about the conference on page 13.)

A couple years ago when Ichiro Suzuki broke the Major League baseball record for hits in a season, he had a game in which he got five straight hits. When reporters asked him afterward about how he felt, his response was not focused on his accomplishments. Instead, he said that everyday he reflected on what he had learned and tried to do better the next time. The best hitter in the hardest sport had high expectations and was always pushing himself to do even better.

Continued on next page...

President's Column (Continued)...

May WERA help us all see the possibilities in ourselves and others, and may we never stop learning and striving for excellence. Set goals high, then try your best to have everybody meet them. Hope you have a great year!

Pete Bylsma
 WERA President

Note: Pete left OSPI in July to accept a position at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. He will continue his duties as WERA President and will complete his term on the WERA board.

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 as shown below. Note that the spring conference for March 2007 has been moved three weeks later than it was this year in order to work better with the WASL schedule. The March date for 2007 is a change from an earlier announced schedule.

Please check your planner in case you have incorrect dates.

- Assessment Conference, December 6–8, 2006
- Spring Conference, March 28–30, 2007
- State Assessment Conference, December 5–7, 2007
- Spring Assessment Conference, March 2008

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

Other Calendar Items (Non-WERA)

- American Evaluation Association Annual Conference, Portland, Oregon. November 1–4, 2006
 Contact: <http://www.eval.org>
- WSASCD Annual Conference, Spokane, Washington. November 4, 2006
 Contact: <http://www.wsascd.org>
- Program Evaluators Northwest (PEN) Annual Debrief of AEA Annual Conference, Site TBA
 November 16, 2006 3:30–5:30
 Contact: pen@mailman.pugetsoundcenter.org
- OSPI January Conference, Seattle, Washington.
 January 10–12, 2007
 Contact:
<http://www.k12.wa.us/conferences/JanConf2007/default.aspx>

Board Highlights

WERA's Board has held two meetings since the March conference. The following are some highlights of those meetings.

WERA had 604 members this past year. We're quite certain WERA is the largest state education research association in the country. Our budget balance is healthy, which enables us to keep our fees and dues low.

The board has approved two new awards. The first is given by the Assessment Directors Network to an individual who has made significant contributions to district assessment offices. The Network had given several of these awards already, and the board made it an official association award. The second is an Outstanding Dissertation award. A third award is being pursued—a distinguished paper for submission to AERA.

The board approved the theme of the Spring 2007 conference, which is **Making the Grade: Gathering and Reporting Evidence of Student Learning**. Ken O'Connor and Rick Stiggins will be the keynote speakers. Dan Phelan and Ric Williams are co-chairs of the planning committee.

At the last two conferences, attendees were surveyed about the location of future conferences. Feedback on those surveys revealed a preference to stay at the SeaTac Hilton. Negotiations are underway to have conferences there through 2008.

One of the board's goals for this year is to improve communications with our members. We will do this through publishing more frequent and informative newsletters (you are reading one of them), posting conference presentations on the WERA website, and reviewing and revising the WERA website as needed.

Another goal for this year is to hold several professional development trainings besides our conferences. In June we held a symposium on growth models. In the future, we hope to provide training on SPSS and to bring back Debra Pickering for training on best classroom practices.

This year we will only have one position up for election for the board, that of President-Elect. If you have ideas of who would be a good candidate, please contact Jim Leffler, the board member in charge of board nominations. One of the board's goals this year is to clarify the responsibilities and expectations of board members.

--Pete Bylmsa, WERA President

Mark Your Calendars Now! 2007 WERA Spring Conference

"Making the Grade"
March 28-30, 2007

SeaTac Airport Hilton Hotel and Conference Center
17620 Pacific Highway South
Seattle, WA 98188
(See page 5 for details)

Making the Grade

Gathering and Reporting Evidence of Student Learning.

WERA Spring Conference

March 28–30, 2007

SeaTac Airport Hilton

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 nation'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. Stiggins founded the ETS Assessment Training Institute in Portland, Oregon in 1992 and is the author of numerous books, articles and papers on assessment practices in the classroom.

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. O'Connor is an independent consultant on assessment and evaluation. He has held various positions in Ontario, Canada education.

Excel: Putting the Tool to Work

Excel users are invited to submit a column on some applications which may assist researchers, analysts and others in the WERA family.

How Do I Take Information from File 2 and Join to File 1?

Several among you have asked for a small tutorial on joining the information from one file with the information in another file without keying it record by record. You may have a class roster with student ID number, teacher name, and days of attendance in one file and you'd like to add WASL achievement scores to see if there is any relationship.

You could simply type the scores in one at a time, hoping for no errors. Or you could paste the WASL scores in a blank column, hoping they lined up and you didn't get "off by one." An ambitious person could learn Access and join them with a query.

Vertical Lookup

Or you could use the Vertical Lookup function (VLOOKUP) in Excel to do the work for you. Most find it easiest to do this within a single Excel workbook, but using two separate sheets (those tabs at the bottom of a worksheet.)

1. Your original data is in Sheet 1 (Sheet1!), the default which opens when you start Excel. It may also be named something different if you have changed the name. It must contain one column with student ID numbers. This is what the formula will use to make the matches.
2. Paste your additional data into Sheet 2 (Sheet2!). It must also contain one column with an array of student ID numbers. That common set of student ID numbers is the key to this operation. If no match is found, n/a will appear.

3. In Sheet 1 insert a new column for data you are adding to be included.
4. Enter this formula in the top cell of your first new column, right under the heading: `=VLOOKUP(A2,Sheet2!A:D,2,0)`. This formula will work if:
 - A2 is the first student ID number in column A
 - Sheet2!A:D covers the column in Sheet 2 with the second list of student ID numbers
 - Sheet2!A:D covers the column in Sheet 2 with the new information you wish to add
 - The new information is in the second column (2) from the left in A:D
 - You're OK having a 0 (zero) entered if the Lookup does not find a match.
 If you have columns in different places, you'll need to adjust the formula following the same model.
5. If Excel accepts the formula for that first new cell to be filled with the information, you're on your way.
6. Drag down that first cell to all the cells underneath and click CTRL D for a fill down.
7. More data to move? Repeat the process column by column.

--Peter Hendrickson, Ph.D., Assessment Specialist,
Everett Public Schools

SPSS: Putting the Tool to Work

You've got data file out there with parents responses to a survey, or you've heard that OSPI has put complete student-level WASL data out in WAMS and you want to compare performance on the first writing prompt to performance on the second writing prompt. How do you do it?

One tool that you can use is SPSS (The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). It can be a power analytic data tool. You can do analyses of variance, calculate chi-squares, or run regressions. In fact, researchers all over the world use SPSS as one of their analytical tools. But on a more "local" level, SPSS is wonderful for calculating simple frequencies, calculating means, or cross-tabulating responses from one item to another.

The program can be run from menus, or for the more adventuresome types, through a syntax language. Those of us who have been using SPSS for a long time (try 27 years in my case) began with syntax language typed first on cards, and then on *talking teletype machines* (TTY). I started by handwriting my code on green and white sheets of paper, then transferring them to either cards or the TTY. The SPSS that sits on my desktop computer is at least 100 times more powerful than the mainframe version I started with, and it is infinitely easier to use.

I can read in an Excel file (ideally with variable names in the first row and data in subsequent rows), recode the items so that the 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 that was entered to represent Strongly Agree (1) to Strongly Disagree (5) so that Strongly Agree becomes a 5 and Strongly Disagree a 1, and compute the means for the items, run frequencies, and generate tables that I can cut

and paste into a document to summarize the findings, all through the use of menus.

This past year we SPSS users were able to get our WASL 2006 data from SPI. It came as a text file, with syntax file that read the data in, labeled all the variables, and gave us an analysis ready file. The big trick we found was that we had to save the original data file on our c:\ drives. Once we did that, we could open the syntax file, go to edit, "Select All" and then hit the little arrow on the menu bar to run the program. All we had to do next was save the SPSS save file to an appropriate drive.

But alas, we only had raw scores for the grade 3, 5, 6, and 8 reading and math. Once OSPI shared the cut scores, I wrote syntax code that converted raw scores into scale scores. With the help of my secretary and colleagues, we got the syntax file proof-read, and I sent it out to other SPSS users. All they had to do was open the file in SPSS, go to edit, "Select All", push the little arrow (to run the syntax) and presto they had scale scores, levels on each test and whether students met the standard. *Screen shots see next page...*

SPSS can be a powerful analytical tool, it can also be a simple tool to calculate frequencies, or check WASL data from OSPI—more on this later.

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



SPSS: Putting the Tool to Use (Continued)...

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45	437	L4	YES	Y	TS	WASL	WASL		16	16	L2	NO
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.	.	NS	NO	N	NB	WASL	WASL		.	.	NS	NO
43	427	L4	YES	Y	TS	WASL	WASL		18	18	L3	YES
20	358	L1	NO	Y	TS	WASL	WASL		15	15	L2	NO
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41	417	L3	YES	Y	TS	WASL	WASL		20	20	L3	YES
42	422	L3	YES	Y	AU	WASL	WASL		.	.	NS	NO
47	451	L4	YES	Y	TS	WASL	WASL		17	17	L3	YES
36	400	L3	YES	Y	IC	WASL	WASL		.	.	NS	NO
37	403	L3	YES	Y	TS	WASL	WASL		18	18	L3	YES
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41	417	L3	YES	Y	TS	WASL	WASL		16	16	L2	NO
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.	.	NS	NO	N	TS	WASL	WASL		20	20	L3	YES
31	387	L2	NO	Y	TS	WASL	WASL		16	16	L2	NO
36	400	L3	YES	Y	TS	WASL	WASL		20	20	L3	YES
42	422	L3	YES	Y	TS	WASL	WASL		18	18	L3	YES
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.	.	NS	NO	N	RF	WASL	WASL		.	.	NS	NO
49	474	L4	YES	Y	TS	WASL	WASL		24	24	L4	YES
.	N	ME	WASL	
.	.	NS	NO	N	CS	WASL	WASL		.	.	NS	NO
30	384	L2	NO	Y	NB	WASL	WASL		.	.	NS	NO
46	443	L4	YES	Y	TS	WASL	WASL		13	13	L2	NO
36	446	L4	YES	Y				
24	398	L2	NO	Y				
22	392	L2	NO	Y				
37	454	L4	YES	Y				

WASL reading scores from the SPSS file.

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SPSS Processor is ready | Ln 1 Col 1 | NUM

Running a syntax file in SPSS.

NAEP: The Nation's Report Card in Washington

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is one of the only measures of student performance that can be used to compare progress across the nation and between states. A survey assessment administered to fourth, eighth and twelfth graders, it provides a common metric that researchers and policy makers can use to confirm states' results on their own census assessments.

In 2007 NAEP will be administered to roughly 15,000 students in Washington. Questions some have asked include how NAEP relates to our own WASL and how we can use information from NAEP.

HOW DOES THE NAEP RELATE TO THE WASL?

During the debates about NCLB, lawmakers discussed using NAEP as a validation of state reported test results for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Eventually, because many state tests are not similar to the NAEP, it was determined that NAEP would provide an informal verification of

statewide assessment results. The WASL and NAEP are quite similar, however. For example, NAEP and WASL frameworks measure the same five content strands in mathematics and three strands in reading. In addition, both are criterion referenced assessments that use a similar mix of multiple choice and constructed response questions. Considered the "gold standard" of assessments, NAEP has been used as a guide by Washington and other states for many assessment development activities. Trend results from NAEP reflect very well the progress we have seen over the years on the WASL.

WHY ARE SOME SCHOOLS SAMPLED REPEATEDLY?

NAEP uses a systematic sample design based on a number of district and school characteristics, including location (urban, suburban, rural), minority characteristics, and size. After organizing for these characteristics, the sample frame uses probability proportional to size (PPS)

Continued on next page...

WERA On the Move

WERA members who know of an open position in research, evaluation or assessment are invited to send a brief notice for publication. The editorial staff of the Standard Deviation will scan the state for open positions in those areas shortly before publication for posting. Notices of postings are welcomed. More positions are posted on the WERA website.

Research Associate, State Board of Education. K-12 education policy research, \$65,000 to \$75,000. Screenings begin November 6. Contact Kristin Collins, OSPI, kcollins@ospi.wednet.edu.

Director of Assessment and Evaluation, Federal Way Public Schools. Plan and direct programs in assessment and evaluation, \$77,000 to \$83,000 DOE. Screening November 4. Contact HR (253) 945-2072.



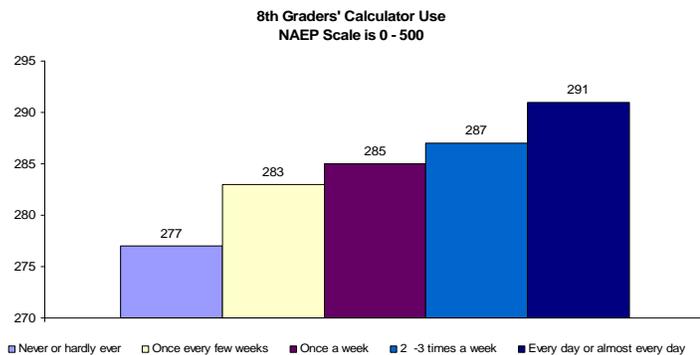
NAEP: The Nation's Report Card (Continued)...

to select the schools; thus, larger schools have a higher chance of being selected for NAEP repeatedly. At the school level, however, a random sampling program is used to select the students who sit for the assessment.



HOW CAN I USE THE NAEP RESULTS TO SUPPORT RESEARCH ABOUT STUDENTS OR INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES IN MY SCHOOL?

NAEP reports data from responses to many background questions to which schools, teachers, and students respond. These background characteristics include information on effective teaching practices, among other things. For example, did you know that Washington 4th and 8th graders whose teachers regularly assign hands-on science activities scored significantly higher on the 2005 science assessment than their peers who did not do hands-on activities? Or that 8th graders who regularly use a calculator scored significantly higher on the math assessment than those who do not?



HOW CAN I USE THE RELEASED NAEP ITEMS IN MY INSTRUCTION OR ASSESSMENT WORK?

WASL and NAEP items are quite similar and the NAEP items provide a plethora of additional resources that can be used in the classroom. NAEP releases about one-third of its test items after each cycle; there are hundreds of questions available on the searchable public website. Data available from student responses to the released items include scale scores as well as achievement percentages for the nation and by state for the same groups for which we report data. Visit

www.nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard to access NAEP results and to download released items.

ARE THERE DISTRICT LEVEL RESULTS FOR SOME DISTRICTS?

Washington NAEP results are only available at the state level. In 2002, NAEP began the Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA) to provide student data for large city districts. Currently, 10 districts and Washington D.C. participate in and receive results from the TUDA.

For more information about NAEP, contact Kathryn Sprigg (kathryn.sprigg@k12.wa.us) at OSPI.

Unfinished Business: Closing the Racial Achievement Gap in Our Schools

By Pedro A. Noguera and Jean Yonemura Wing (Editors), 2006
Reviewed by Andrea Meld, Ph. D., OSPI

Pedro Noguera and Jean Wing chronicle the Diversity Project, a major research effort at Berkeley High School from 1996–2002. The Berkeley School District, situated in a community that takes pride in progressive values and social action, was one of the first districts in the country to voluntarily integrate in 1968. Yet by the time that the Diversity Project was initiated, Berkeley High School was described as “two schools under one roof.” The book describes the challenges faced by teachers, staff, parents and students who collaborated with a team of University of California at Berkeley researchers to address the causes of the achievement gap and find solutions together. The chapters are organized in two parts: 1) research data, analysis, and background of Berkeley High School and the Diversity Project and 2) essays by teachers, parents and students who participated in the project.

At Berkeley High, the achievement gap starts in 9th grade and widens throughout the high school years. White students, for example, load up on AP classes in preparation for college, while African American and Latino students take and often re-take classes in basic skills, and select the least demanding teachers, often without any academic counseling. Extra-curricular activities and social groups tend to fall across racial and class lines. The school’s system of discipline and attendance also contribute to the “normalization of failure.”

Noguera uses the image of the “false top,” a perspective he experiences while cycling in the Berkeley Hills. The “false top” is a perspective which leads you to believe you are at the summit,

when you are only heading into a curve. One of the “false tops” discovered by the Diversity Project was that discussing highly visible disparities in academic achievement did not necessarily change educational policies or result in the adoption of the project’s recommendations by the Berkeley School Board.

Although this is not a story with a happy ending, it offers valuable lessons and raises important questions about cultural attitudes that put students on the path to success or failure in Berkeley and other urban schools nation-wide. Noguera remains optimistic about the possibilities for change and an educational system where all students can achieve their potential.



Publication Data: *Unfinished Business: Closing the Racial Achievement Gap in Our Schools* by Pedro A. Noguera and Jean Yonemura Wing (editors), 2006. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, CA. Hardcover, 336 pages, \$24.95 (US) ISBN 0-7879-7275-4.

Pedro Noguera is a keynote speaker at the December Conference.

Mastering Assessment, A Self-Service for Educators

By W. James Popham

Reviewed by Peter Hendrickson

Jim Popham's newest book is not a textbook, but a series of 15 slim booklets, each on a different assessment topic targeted at teachers, not grad students. These booklets are written for use in schools for staff development. In our district they would work well in professional learning communities where each faculty member would be responsible for presenting one topic over the course of several weeks.

The booklets are color coded and Popham envisions one or two sittings each. In less formal settings they could be "pluck and peruse". In more formal presentation a leader could guide or teach all the discussions. You'll not find practice exercises, end of chapter quizzes, an index or lengthy reference sections. Instead each booklet has a few guiding anticipated understandings, a brief glossary and short reference list (including 2006 citations.)

The tone of the writing is classic Popham, light, witty and tongue-in-cheek. If this was a "Name That Author" contest, most assessment directors would easily peg this as a Popham publication. His bias for instruction which emphasizes mastery of a few key learnings plays out in the rubrics booklet where he states, the "most important factor in making a teacher's instruction effective is clarity of curricular intent."

It would be helpful to have these booklets at hand when briefing reporters who are doing the annual SAT release story or when there is doubt about the reliability of scoring the state writing tests. They could also serve as a quick primer for a Board of Directors presentation. Job descriptions for test directors would wisely include mastery of the topics included in *Mastering Assessment* and many test directors would be well-served to brush up on skills with a read of the booklets.

The booklets are:

Appropriate and Inappropriate Tests for Evaluating Schools

A history of accountability is offered with a critique of large scale norm referenced and standards-based tests both of which he claims are instructionally insensitive. Popham touts the current Wyoming efforts as a counter example.

Assessing Students' Affect

Likert's classic 1932 article is referenced and Popham warns of the perils in measuring affect. He further makes the case that affect is important as is anonymity of responses.

Assessing Students with Disabilities

NCLB's impact is clearly stated as it is throughout the booklets. He is critical of subgroup size variability across the states. He promotes use of the CCSSO Accommodations Manual.

Assessment Bias: How to Banish It

One of the more technical booklets, this contains a nuanced discussion of DIF and sources of test bias.

Classroom Evidence of Successful Teaching

A few more references would've been helpful in this booklet as the topic is at the heart of considerable activity in every state. Popham provides sobering advice about the difficulties in measuring growth for individual students and provides a "split-and-switch" design as a replacement for pre, post-test designs.

College Entrance Examinations: The SAT and the ACT

Popham highlights the irony that a purpose of the SAT was to counter the advantage of students from affluent families, the very students who can afford expensive test-prep classes.

Continued on next page...

Mastering Assessment, A Self-Service for Educators (*Continued*)...**Constructed-Response Tests: Building and Bettering**

See-also balloons direct readers to other booklets for this topic, as these booklets are not entirely independent. Cartoons provide yet another source of humor in navigating item writing difficulties. Time to score and accurate scoring are noted as drawbacks to these items.

How Testing Can Help Teaching

Assessment for learning gets its due and student engagement is highlighted with purposes for testing along the instructional timeline clearly noted.

Interpreting the Results of Large-Scale Assessments

This rather standard treatment of technical measurement terms is as close as the booklets get to a classic assessment textbook, but Popham's humor leavens the writing.

Portfolio Assessment and Performance Testing

The step-by-step guide to portfolios and continuum of tasks defining performances provides quick guides for teachers. There is the customary clear advice about student involvement in generating evaluative criteria.

Reliability: What Is It and Is It Really Necessary?

Another fairly technical booklet, this one even includes a formula for SEM.

The Role of Rubrics in Testing *and* Teaching

The rubrics booklet is included in the publisher's review packet and contains enough practical advice to both get started and to provoke a rich seminar discussion.

Selected-Response Tests: Building and Bettering

Popham acknowledges that MC items can elicit high level thinking but that writing good items is hard work. Like most authors, he provides lists (commandments) of dos and don'ts. He avoids the debate about two vs. three distractors. References are provided if more in-depth guidance is needed (Haladyna, 2004).

Test Preparation Sensible or Sordid?

In this high stakes testing environment, Popham persists in respecting both the integrity and efforts of teachers, claiming that ignorance rather than dishonesty taints test preparation. The emeritus UCLA professor continues his drumbeat against instructionally insensitive tests.

Validity: Assessment's Cornerstone

The years teaching graduate students emerge with the clarity of examples around this topic. "Assessment validity refers to the accuracy of score-based inferences," he states after a visualization exercise.

Publication Data: *Mastering Assessment, A Self-Service System for Educators* by W. James Popham, 2006. Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, NYC, NY. Paperbound, boxed, 15 booklets, 32 pages each, \$149. ISBN 0-415-95240-9. Web www.taylorandfrancisgroup.com

Peter Hendrickson is an assessment specialist with Everett (WA) Public Schools.



WERA Financial

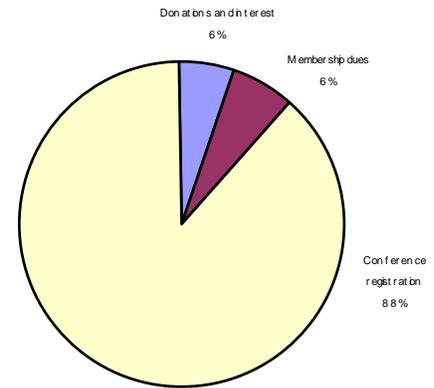
WERA's Financial Status Healthy

WERA President Pete Bylsma reported that entering the new fiscal year (the same as the school year), "WERA is in solid financial shape." The charts below show the sources of revenue and how WERA spends the money it receives. The two annual conferences account for the majority of income and expenses. "We ran a deficit last year and expect to spend more than we receive again this year, but our balance is still healthy. This enables us to keep our dues and conference registration relatively low," Bylsma noted.

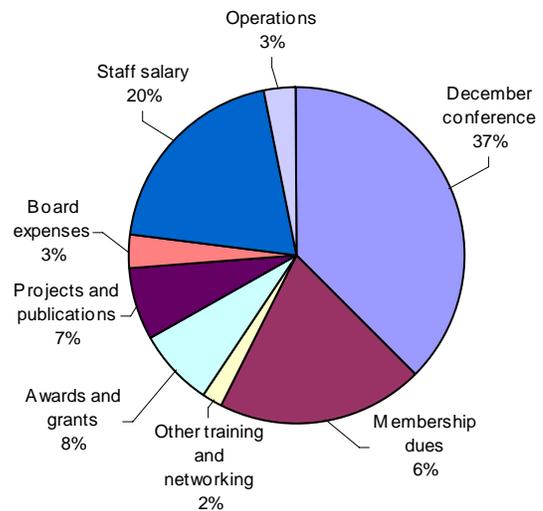
Asset Balance as of

September 1, 2005	\$ 117,810
September 1, 2006	\$ 96,664
September 1, 2007 (<i>est</i>)	\$ 82,964

Income, September 2005–August 2006



Expenses, September 2005–August 2006



WERA Has a History!

By Duncan MacQuarrie, Ed.D.

This summer a "history" of WERA was completed. The Board started this project in 2004–05 and asked two long time members to dig through the archives and their own memories to prepare what has been published as *A 40-Year History of the Washington Educational Research Association (WERA)*. The authors were well suited to the task. Jim Kiefert has been a member of WERA since the organization was founded in 1966 and served as president in 1976–77. Jim also acted as the Executive Secretary for many years when he was the Assistant Superintendent at Puget Sound ESD. His coauthor, Leonard Winchell the current Executive Secretary, has been a member of WERA since 1970 when he was with the Research Department in the Tacoma Public Schools.

They have done a wonderful job of capturing the

journey WERA has taken over the past forty years. We are very fortunate that Jim and Len accepted the challenge of pulling this story together. I was sent a copy this summer and once I opened it I could not put it down. Their well written work contains so many memories and reminders of the tremendous contribution that WERA has made to Washington's education family. Long time members will be surprised, as I was, at the wonderful detail that they have captured. Newer members will find insights into WERA's rich heritage.

To try and summarize the history would be to do a disservice to what Jim and Len have given us. I encourage the readers of the Standard Deviation to download a copy of the history and find out for your self what a treasure it truly is. You will find a copy of the history by going to the following link:

http://www.wera-web.org/links/WERA_history.pdf

--MacQuarrie is a past WERA president (twice!)

**The Washington Educational Research Association
and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction**

present

The 22nd Annual Washington State Assessment Conference

"Preparing ALL Students for the 21st Century"

**December 7-8, 2006 (Pre-conference December 6)
Seattle Airport Hilton Hotel Conference Center
17620 Pacific Highway South
Seattle, WA 98188**

Plan to attend this year's premier educational conference. It will include three outstanding keynote speakers and two days of breakout presentations from K-12 and university educators as well as OSPI staff.

- *Kati Haycock, Director of Education Trust*, will be the keynote speaker Thursday morning. *State Superintendent Terry Bergeson* will give a keynote address after lunch on Thursday. On Friday morning *Pedro Noguera, Professor of Education at New York University*, will be the keynote speaker.
- More than 50 breakout sessions will provide lots of useful information and interaction. Samples of areas to be covered in breakouts include reform efforts at the elementary, middle, and high school levels, effective instructional practices, data analysis, the new Collection of Evidence option to meet graduation requirements, curriculum and assessment materials in math and other content areas, accountability and NCLB, insights for working with struggling students, and closing the achievement gap. A list of all sessions will be posted in November at www.wera-web.org.

There are also pre-conference workshops on Wednesday that will be packed with useful ideas and information on current topics. **FREE Clock Hours** for all days will be available at the registration desk. **Interest in this assessment conference is always high. Send in your registration early to guarantee yourself a spot and get the lowest conference rates. Space is limited, so register soon!**

WEDNESDAY, December 6
Pre-Conference Workshops
(See inside for topics)

THURSDAY, December 7

Keynoter: Kati Haycock, Education Trust

AM: Breakout session 1

Lunch Keynoter: State Superintendent Terry Bergeson

PM: Breakout sessions 2 and 3, followed by a hospitality session (great food!)

FRIDAY, December 8

Keynoter: Pedro Noguera, New York University

AM: Breakout session 4

Lunch: Results of Praeger's Follies contest and student-led entertainment

PM: Breakout session 5

SEE NEXT PAGE FOR MORE DETAILS

Wednesday, December 6 pre-conference (optional)

The pre-conference program offers nine half-day trainings and an assessment directors network meeting. You can attend one half-day workshop in the morning and one in the afternoon. Lunch is provided for all who attend. *Pre-registration for specific sessions is required* (See registration form.) Continental breakfast and check in begin at 7:30 a.m. *Morning sessions start at 8:30 a.m.; Afternoon sessions end at 4:30 p.m.*

Pre-conference Session Descriptions**1. (a.m.) Washington Learns: The Road Ahead (WA Learns staff and Governor Gregoire's education policy advisors)**

This session will discuss the results and recommendations from the comprehensive review of the state's education system (early learning, K-12, and higher education). It will also preview issues that will likely be discussed in the upcoming legislative session.

2. (a.m.) No Math Process Left Behind (Sandy Christie, Puget Sound ESD and Glenda Blankenship, Clover Park SD)

Participants will align College Readiness Standards/11-12 GLE's to different math tasks related to content and process skills and will gain ideas that apply to curriculum and instruction. The session will consider and apply the research regarding mathematics content knowledge and the many representations of student thinking that lead to greater retention of math skills.

3. (a.m.) Update on Promoting Academic Success (Cathy Davidson & Cal Brodie, OSPI; Annie Pennucchi, Washington State Institute for Public Policy; staff from schools and districts)

This session will discuss the Promoting Academic Success (PAS) program from multiple perspectives, including a preliminary evaluation on the effectiveness of remedial programs funded by PAS, financing and implementation issues, an overview of students served by the program, and the experiences of educators using different program models.

4. (a.m.) The Collection of Evidence: In-depth Understanding of the Content Guidelines (Lesley Klenk, OSPI)

OSPI staff will assist teachers and administrators in developing a deeper understanding of the CAA Options and the Collection of Evidence (COE) in particular. The session will discuss the implementation of the Content Guidelines and Administrative Protocols for the COEs, the organization of the COE system at the school level, and the teacher's role. We will review exemplar work samples, draft scoring criteria, and sample collections in order to prepare for the spring scoring window.

5. (a.m.) Understanding Standard Setting for WASL and WLPT (Yoonsun Lee and Joe Willhoft, OSPI)

This session will discuss the purpose of standard setting, what procedures are used, and how cut scores were determined on the WASL and WLPT-II. Participants will have a better understanding of how to interpret WASL and WLPT-II scores. Examples from WASL released items will be used.

6. (p.m.) 2006 Mathematics WASL Released Items for Grades 3-8 (Beverly Neitzel and Mary Holmberg, OSPI)

Participants will receive information on how the newly released 2006 items for grades 3-8 are connected to the Standards, how they are scored, and "Lessons Learned." The session will share information gleaned from student work that demonstrates both strengths and weaknesses in student understanding. Suggestions on how to help students increase their mathematical knowledge will also be shared. Participants will receive copies of all the newly released 2006 items.

7. (p.m.) No Child Left Behind: Everything You Want to Know (Bob Harmon, Gayle Pauley, Mary Jo Johnson, Alfonso Anaya OSPI) NCLB's Title I, Title II and Title III programs have common elements that require the three programs to work together to provide effective support systems to school districts. This session will present how the programs are similar and how districts can use resources from each. Updated information on federal AYP, Title I Part A, Title II Highly Qualified Teacher, Title I Part C, and Title III Part A and the ever-changing federal guidelines will also be discussed.

8. (p.m.) Rich Problems—More Mathematical Bang for the Buck (Karen Hall, OSPI and Art Mabbott, Seattle Schools & Seattle University) A rich problem is non-routine, cognitively complex, and accessible to most students at a routine level but leads students to generalizations and applications. Participants in this session will learn to identify, adapt, and score rich problems for use in their mathematics instructional units.

9. (p.m.) Assessing Students through Science Notebooks (Dawn Sparks and Kathy Scribner, Thorp School District)

Participants will learn strategies that tap into the thinking of students via the use of science notebooks as an assessment tool. Effective ways for giving critical feedback and making instructional decisions will be discussed.

10. (p.m.) District Assessment Directors Network (Bob Silverman, Puyallup School District) This is the regularly scheduled network meeting. The group plans its own agenda and conducts business/discussion under Bob's leadership.

[CLICK HERE FOR REGISTRATION FORM](#)

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We're on the Web!

Visit us at:
www.wera-web.org



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