

THE STANDARD DEVIATION

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Washington Educational Research Association
University Place, WA

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

Applied Survey Research

–By Sylvia E. Dean, Ed. D.

Accountability is the defining headline for public education today (Jerald, 2000; Lewis & Shaha, 2003). In the past, districts spent money on programs, instructional techniques, materials, curriculum, and professional development with a selection criteria based in rigorous research reviews. Yet, once the innovation was adopted, there often was no effectiveness data collected. Limited resources, technology, and expertise are some of the reasons this is so.

Evergreen Public Schools' (EPS) Research, Evaluation, Assessment and Survey (REAS) department provides data and processes to schools, programs and departments to enable the evaluation of their effectiveness. Student assessment data is a large part of our work, while Applied Survey Research has become an additional critical tool used to contextualize outcome data. Surveys are generated in–district in partnership with departments, schools, and programs seeking to examine practice. Other surveys are contracted with outside agencies, while still others are generated at a specific site supported by REAS.

2006–2007 Surveys

Some Examples of web based and scanned EPS surveys are:

- School Perception (Staff, Parent, Student)
- All District Staff Climate
- Professional Development Needs
- Professional Development Coaching Model
- IEP On–Line Use
- Senior Exit
- Title IX students 6th –11th
- Pre–post program implementation (Math, Lit)
- Title I Instructional Program Effectiveness

Web based surveys have become the preferred survey method because they are inexpensive to administer, easy to modify, and they provide the ability to create rapid response reports.

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Use of Survey Results

EPS survey results are used to support school improvement planning; satisfy grant requirements; comply with federal requirements for needs assessment data; respond to a school or community crisis; improve the delivery of service; and improve school climate. With professional development and research grants, EPS has increased district leadership capacity to use survey results for program improvement.

- 1. Personnel should not be over-surveyed.** Monitoring the purpose, audience, number and timing of surveys will produce more reliable data.
- 2. Ensure response anonymity/confidentiality.** Fear of disclosure of responses can inhibit honesty, prevent participation. Protect respondents.
- 3. Produce useful and timely reports.** Custom reports based on audience needs are best.
- 4. Limit the use of open ended response items.** This will come back to haunt you. Less is more.
- 5. Keep the survey items clear, simple and sparse.** Too many items will discourage respondents, and complex items will negate responses.
- 6. Pilot your survey.** Headaches and errors will be eliminated if you pilot, check, and recheck your items.
- 7. Link quantitative and qualitative responses by correlating your responses.** You will enrich insights the data reveals.

Continued on page 2...



Applied Survey Research *(Continued from page 1)*

8. Use technology to work smarter not harder. Web based surveys are cost effective and easy to use, as well as convenient for respondents.

9. Investigate *Principia Surveys, Survey Monkey, SPSS, and Qualitative Coding* methods. Use of good software, and on line collaboration with other survey developers is essential to working smart.

10. Make the survey results easily accessible to all in the absence of information, people create it.

Planning to create a good survey is important but often difficulties arise in the fast paced–school district environment. An example of a project plan for a survey is offered.

WEEK	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
A. Initiate Project													
B. Planning													
C. Obtain permission													
D. Create survey													
E. Create data collection plan													
F. Produce survey													
G. Distribute survey													
H. Summarize data													
I. Prepare final report													

The following web sites offer Applied Survey Research On–Line Resources:

- [American Association for Public Opinion Research \(AAPOR\)](#)
- [European Survey Research Association \(ESRA\)](#)
- [Ajeebo: Web based survey software tools directory](#)
- [Conducting Web–Based Surveys](#)
- [Council of American Survey Research Organizations \(CASRO\)](#)
- [Marketing Research Association \(MRA\)](#)
- [Online Survey Best Practice](#)
- [Short Courses in Survey Methodology, sponsored by the Joint Program in Survey Methodology \(IPSM\) – University of Maryland–College Park and University of Michigan–Ann Arbor](#)
- [Surveying sensitive subjects](#)
- [Survey Professionals Using Electronic Surveys](#)
- [American Statistical Association – Survey Research Methods Section](#)
- [Free Resources for Methods in Evaluation and Social Research](#) links to tons of free resources about how to do surveys.

Applied Survey Research can enhance district efforts to improve practice with the use of survey data. Hopefully, this brief description of one district’s use of Applied Survey Research will help guide other districts in their quest to continually improve practice.



–Dean is Manager of Research and Evaluation for Evergreen Public Schools in Vancouver. She was recipient of the Art Maser Service Award from WERA last Spring. Contact her at Sdean@egreen.wednet.edu.

President's Column



There is no denying the student achievement gap to standard that exists in our state and our nation regardless of which assessment results we examine. After years of rhetoric about the issue,

why are children of color not meeting standard at the same or even higher rates than their white peers? I would offer that perhaps the gap remains because while white educators talk about the gap and devise many strategies to close it, we can only view the cause and solutions through our lens of white privilege. That is to say, we need to listen much more closely to the voices of the oppressed if we are to truly create educational institutions that will support our children of color in an equitable manner.

How do we begin to understand that our white perspective is contributing to the gap to standard? I believe that four new behaviors have contributed to my learning and the learning of other leaders in Spokane Public Schools. We're thinking differently about the gap to standard for our children of color.

The first new behavior is to seek out and read the research of black scholars. Among the first books was *Black Education: A Transformational Research and Action Agenda for the New Century* (King, 2005). The book is a result of the work of the Commission of Research in Black Education and it opened a new world to me. I began to see the oppression of people of color in a new light. Among other topics, the book catalogues the educational community's systemic and systematic repression of black scholars. I highly recommend it to anyone who truly wants to close the gap to standard for children of color. My colleagues and I are continuing to devour books by black authors and researchers including Janet Hale, bell hooks, Lisa Delpit, Gloria Ladson-Billings, Asa Hilliard, and Pedro Noguera who spoke at the 2006 Winter Assessment Conference.

The second new behavior was to engage in dialogue about the books we were reading in the context of our white privilege and our colleagues of color experiences. To say these were hard conversations cannot convey the depth of emotion and tension that existed in our discussions. But we persisted mostly because our

colleagues of color allowed us into their world and the world of their children. When people you care about and value share what it is like to be a person of color in your community and your school system, it brings the conversation right into your heart. These families are not some anonymous statistic. They were people we respected professionally and considered friends. How can you not listen, come to understand (at least minimally) the racism they live with everyday and not be called to action for the benefit of all children of color for whom we are responsible?

Third, we now identify and name social injustice within our organization when we see it. We are relentless in examining our data. Just the act of making public the disproportionality in our AP and honors classes and discipline data is assisting the entire system in questioning our practices. Our administrators are now acting on this information based on our reading. Gone are the times when we would look at the data, wring our hands, and move on to other things. For example, we are reexamining our reading lists to ensure that all students can select a book to read where characters represent them and their reality. Principals are expected to engage their staff in learning how to be culturally responsive to students and families. Cultural competency is a prominent stand throughout our recently revised Strategic Plan.

The first three behaviors have lead us to the fourth. The leaders in the system, beginning with the superintendent, are engaging more frequently in what Singleton and Black (2006) call courageous conversations with families and staff. White educators cannot continue to conduct ourselves as if our own race, our own white privilege, is not coloring the lens through which we view the world. The gap to standard will only close when colleagues of all skin color and ethnicity listen, learn, and work together for the benefit of all children in our school systems. This work is not easy and the gap to standard will not be closed overnight. We have much work yet to do and are engaged in many more strategies than discussed here, but our leaders are committed to becoming a socially just school system.

King, J. E. (Ed.) 2005. *Black Education: A Transformational Research and Action Agenda for the New Century*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates for AERA.

Singleton, G. E. & Linton, C. (2006). *Courageous Conversations about Race: A Field Guide for Attaining Equity in Schools*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

—Lorna Spear, Ed.D., WERA President



Future Calendar

WERA Items

- 2007 State Assessment Conference
December 5–7, 2007
Hilton Seattle Airport Hotel
- 2008 Spring Conference
March 26–28, 2008
Hilton Seattle Airport Hotel
- 2008 State Assessment Conference
December 3–5, 2008
Hilton Seattle Airport Hotel
- 2009 Spring Assessment Conference
March 25–27, 2009
Hilton Seattle Airport Hotel
- 2009 State Assessment Conference
December 9–11, 2009
Hilton Seattle Airport Hotel

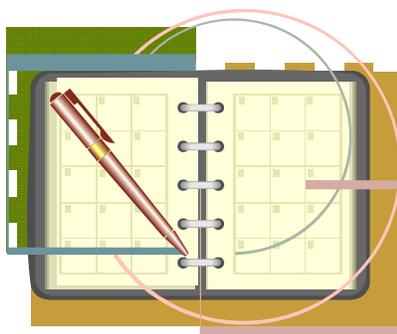
Contact: <http://Wera-web.org>

Other Calendar Items (Non-WERA)

- WSACD Annual Conference, SeaTac,
November 1–3.
www.wsacd.org/pdf/07regform.pdf
- American Evaluation Association Annual
Conference, Baltimore, MD. November 7–10
- OSPI January Conference, Spokane Convention
Center, January 29–31, 2008
- Association for Supervision and Curriculum
Development Annual Conference, New Orleans, LA.
March 15–17, 2008
- American Educational Research Association,
National Council on Measurement in Education,
National Association of Test Directors, Directors of
Research and Evaluation Annual Meetings and
Conferences, New York, NY. March 23–28, 2008

OSPI Conferences Contact:

<http://www.k12.wa.us/Conferences/default.aspx>



The mission of the Washington Educational Research 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.

Announcing the 23rd Annual Washington State Assessment Conference
Seattle Airport Hilton Hotel Conference Center
December 5–7, 2007
“TESTING ASSUMPTIONS”

Register now at www.wera-web.org for this year's premier educational conference! Our theme “Testing Assumptions” will be represented in the keynotes of three outstanding educators, Laura Lipton, Tony Alvarado, and Terry Bergeson and two days of breakout presentations from K–12 and university educators as well as OSPI staff.

Join your colleagues to explore what it means to believe that all children learn at high levels and meet rigorous standards? Does **all** really mean **all**? How can we use data to assist us in this goal? The OSPI/WERA Winter Assessment Conference sessions will test your assumptions by providing not only the data about the achievement of all learners, including English Language Learners, special needs children, culturally and racially diverse students, and gifted children, but will provide proven strategies based on the data and best practices that are making a positive difference in student success.

Breakout strands include assessment, research, OSPI updates, instructional leadership, and social justice. Samples of topics include reform efforts at the elementary, middle, and high school levels; effective instructional practices; data analysis; curriculum and assessment materials in math, science, and literacy; accountability and NCLB; lessons learned from COE in math and reading; and many other thought-provoking sessions that will challenge you to think about the assumptions you make in testing. A list of all sessions will be posted in November at www.wera-web.org.

Laura Lipton, Ed.D is Co-Director of MiraVia, LLC. She is an international consultant whose writing, research, and seminars focus on effective and innovative instructional practices and on building professional and organizational capacities for continuous learning based on data. Laura will share with us her research and expertise in facilitating data-driven dialogue, action research and learning focused collaboration in schools and districts. Her recent publications include:

[“Data Driven Dialogue: A Facilitator's Guide to Collaborative Inquiry”](#) (with Bruce Wellman, MiraVia, LLC)

[“Mentoring Matters: A Practical Guide to Learning-focused Relationships”](#) (with Bruce Wellman, MiraVia LLC)

[“Pathways to Understanding: Patterns & Practices in the Learning-Focused Classroom”](#) (with Bruce Wellman, MiraVia LLC)

“More Than 50 Ways to Learner-centered Literacy” (Skylight Press)

“Shifting Rules, Shifting Roles: Transforming the Work Environment to Support Learning Organizational Learning: The Essential Journey” (with Arthur Costa and Bruce Wellman)

Tony Alvarado is the former Chancellor of the New York City Board of Education and Superintendent of New York City Community District 2, where he pioneered nationally recognized district organizational changes that centered on professional development for teachers and principals. This effort resulted in unprecedented growth in student achievement in a complex and challenging urban school district setting. As Chancellor of Instruction in San Diego Unified School District, he led a massive reform effort to accelerate the learning of all children based on the theory of action that the key element of reform is the improvement of classroom instruction. Tony will discuss with us how he uses data generated within a system to guide the planning of continuous improvement for the students it serves.

There are also pre-conference workshops on Wednesday that will be packed with useful ideas and information.

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!**

[Registration form and Conference Schedule link](#)



DRE Service: Sharing Program Evaluations

The Educational Research Service (ERS) is developing a document share website with the cooperation of the Directors of Research and Evaluation (DRE), an independent national organization formerly allied with the National Association of Test Directors (NATD). Districts will be encouraged to post their program evaluations and other reports. Access will be free unless the owner of the site commands a fee. Current DRE members may click on:

<http://www.ers.org/drewelcome.php>

Not a DRE member? If you have these responsibilities, you are encouraged to join DRE, at no cost. The single, annual meeting is held prior to the annual AERA conference, this year in New York City.

Test Director Network—A WERA Affiliate

The WERA Test Director Network will continue their activities for a fourth year. Directors met in early August to review WASL results and discuss means of displaying longitudinal data. The next session is during the pre-conference day of the OSPI/WERA State Assessment Conference, December 5.

Test directors will be web-surveyed to collect a current picture of duties, challenges, and district testing programs. Two WERA professional develop sessions are also in the planning:

- One day technical training in spring 2008 on a topic to be determined.
- June drive-in professional seminar along the lines of the 2006 growth models symposium.

Convener for the Network is Bob Silverman in Puyallup Schools. Contact him at SilverRJ@Puyallup.k12.wa.us.

A Few More Favorite Links

<http://www.math.uiowa.edu/~rlenth/Power/>

This software is intended to be useful in planning statistical studies with Java applets for power and sample size. It is not intended to be used for analysis of data that have already been collected. Each selection provides a graphical interface for studying the power of one or more tests.

They include sliders (convertible to number-entry fields) for varying parameters, and a simple provision for graphing one variable against another.

<http://www.statistics.com/ourcourses/sampleize>

Statistics.com is a provider of professional development courses in statistics. Teaching assistants provide regular feedback on practical exercises, and they offer CEU's, course completion certificates, and program certificates.

<http://nces.ed.gov/quicktables/index.asp>

This search tool lets you locate all tables/figures/charts published in the inventory of NCES' National Education Data Resource Center (NEDRC) [Postsecondary Tables Library](#); the [Condition of Education](#); the [Digest of Education Statistics](#); [Indicators of School Crime and Safety](#) and other NCES publications. Tables are constantly being added (thousands of tables, graphs & figures are now available).

<http://www.gapminder.org/>

Gapminder is a non-profit venture for development and provision of stunning, free software that visualize human development. This is done in collaboration with universities, UN organizations, public agencies, and non-governmental organizations.

Facing a challenging accountability dilemma? Need expert advice?

Do you have a question about assessment or testing? Let noted assessment authority W. James Popham have a crack at it. Author of more than 20 books on education assessment, Popham is well known for his insightful analyses of sticky assessment issues as well as for his colorful commentary. Send your questions by e-mail to el@ascd.org with "Ask About Accountability" in the subject line. Responses to selected questions will appear in Popham's monthly column in *Educational Leadership*.

Comparing Schools Online: A Washington Guide

–By Peter Hendrickson, Ph.D.

There are many web based school comparison sites for parents, real estate agents, researchers, school staff, and others. Below is a review of five commonly used sites for Washington schools.

Caveats:

- Some sites do not update data with great regularity.
- Ratings by correspondents are suspect on their face as they do not represent a fair sample and authorship is murky.
- Information about principals (or ostensibly by principals) is often out-of-date and skewed. There are few common metrics for gauging principal effectiveness.
- The ecological fallacy is alive and well. There are often pockets of excellence, even brilliance, in some of the most unlikely places. A small cadre of very fine teachers may be reaching students in extraordinary ways in some pretty mediocre schools. Wikipedia: The ecological fallacy is a widely recognized error in the interpretation of [statistical](#) data, whereby inferences about the nature of individuals are based solely upon aggregate statistics collected for the group to which those individuals belong. This [fallacy](#) assumes that all members of a group exhibit characteristics of the group at large. Stereotypes are one form of ecological fallacy.
- Many years of Gallup polling show that parents and others in the local community consistently rate their local schools higher than they do other schools
- In many cases, low test scores are a proxy for higher poverty or concentrations of English language learners. Look for the schools that beat the odds.

Websites:

1. **OSPI Report Card** is the official source for school, district and state performance and demographic data. It has a wide suite of data displays with disaggregation by many types of groups and longitudinal data.

<http://reportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/>

2. **SchoolMatters** is a service of Standard and Poors, an acknowledgement that the health of our economy is deeply dependent on the health of our schools. SchoolMatters is provided by the National Education Data Partnership, which was created to help transform the way education information is used by educators, policymakers, superintendents, and parents. The National Education Data Partnership is a collaborative effort of the Council of Chief State School Officers, Standard & Poor's School Evaluation Services, and the CELT Corporation and is generously funded by The Broad Foundation and The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. <http://www.schoolmatters.com/>

3. **Just for the Kids** is a well established school comparison site (1995) now sponsored by the Center for Educational Accountability with services for many states. Texas was the first and Washington the second to provide this analysis. This is targeted at school professionals interested in school improvement. <http://www.just4kids.org/en/washington/>

4. **School Digger** is a commercial comparison site which ranks schools based on a composite of state test scores compared to all test scores. Private schools and other services advertise on the site. <http://www.schooldigger.com/>

5. **GreatSchools** is a not-for-profit school comparison site. Parent ratings are highly subjective but the achievement data is culled from state databases. Target comparisons focus on narrow geographic areas, clearly targeting home shoppers. <http://www.greatschools.net>



Collecting Evidence about the COE

Option

–By Nancy Katims, Ph.D.

The 2006–07 school year marked the first opportunity for Washington state students to submit a Collection of Evidence (COE) as an alternative to the WASL to demonstrate what they know and can do. To complete the COE, students compile a set of classroom work samples, under the guidance of a teacher, that address appropriate standards in the area of reading, writing, or math. State-trained scorers evaluate each COE to determine if the student has met standard in that area. During the first year, many educators felt tentative about investing time and resources to implement this approach, especially in the context of no available data regarding the likelihood of students' success.

State Results

The state results for the 2006–07 COE are now available and can help us better understand the efficacy of this option. Specifically, out of 718 students who submitted a COE in math, 331 (46%) passed. Out of 18 students who submitted a COE in reading, 15 (83%) passed. Out of 31 students who submitted a COE in writing, 7 (23%) passed. Because so few students statewide submitted COEs in reading or writing, the state was not yet able to set standard on these subjects, and each COE had to be scored independently.

The Edmonds Story

In the Edmonds School District, 62 students submitted COEs, all in the area of math. The demographics of the overall group were:

- 33 girls and 29 boys
- 20 students (32%) were ELL
- 3 students (5%) were Special Education

In terms of ethnicity,

- 8 students (13%) were African American
- 13 students (21%) were Asian
- 29 students (47%) were Caucasian
- 12 students (19%) were Hispanic

Of the 62 students who submitted COEs, 51 (82%) met standard on the math COE. Of the 11 students who did not meet standard, two met standard on the Spring '07 Math WASL.

Of the nine students who did not meet standard on either the COE or the Spring '07 WASL,

- 3 were girls, 6 were boys
- 5 were ELL students, 4 were not ELL
- none were Special Education students

In terms of ethnicity, these nine students were about equally spread across the four ethnic groups.

Each of the eight strands on the math COE were scored on a rubric with a maximum of 16 points per strand, for a total possible COE score of 128. COEs that earned a score of 78 or above were deemed as meeting standard. Representing about 61% of the possible points, this passing score on the math COE is similar to the percentage of points that meet standard on the WASL. Math COEs with scores that fell in the range from 70 – 77 points are eligible for augmentation. Students with COEs in this range may simply submit additional work samples in the strands that showed deficits, whereas students with COEs below this range must resubmit an entire COE.

In Edmonds, seven of the nine students who did not meet standard scored in the augmentation range.

The 62 Edmonds students who submitted COEs were from three different comprehensive high schools. An Innovative Grant from OSPI helped to support teachers working with ELL students on their COEs. One of the high schools used a model in which students worked with a teacher three days a week after school. The other two high schools embedded the collection of work samples into classes.

In the 2007–08 school year, all five high schools in Edmonds are implementing the COE, many using the Segmented Math class as an avenue for the collection of work samples in math. The COE approach is being expanded to include reading and writing, as well as math. Two of the schools plan to use an after-school model, and a third high school plans to use an after-school program specifically for the collection of the on-demand pieces. District staff are meeting with faculty from all five high schools to build awareness of this option across all disciplines. The goal is to provide opportunities for students to complete appropriate work samples in many classes.

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Conclusion

We now know much more about the efficacy of the COE model than we did a year ago. We know that this approach can benefit students who have a variety of needs, including ELL and Special Education students. We know that the approach can be implemented in both an in-school and an after-school model. But most important, we know that each student who is able to show that he or she can meet standard in this alternative way is a student who is one step closer to graduation. The power of this model is best exemplified in the words of an ELL student in a letter that she wrote to the COE Mathematics Scorer. Although we were unable to send her letter with the binder, the student's words are very compelling:

While doing this process it helped me a lot to understand the math concepts. Because we had to do a lot of math stuff that show the thinking, processing, and math skills. We had to do the similar problems that we had on the WASL. So we could get enough practice to do well. I think my reason why I did not pass the WASL is because of my language, which I took first time the WASL I lived in US like one and half years. And when I came to US I didn't speak any English. It was really hard for me to take the WASL because I couldn't understand much like what it asking me to do. And another reason it was because the problems were confusing. And this is a better way for me, because we know how to do it, we just need more explanation. And I want to thank you for this opportunity that we have. It helped me a lot to understand the mathematic concept more than I knew before. So I want to thank you again.

This student was one of the many who passed the math COE.

–Katims is Director of Assessment, Research and Evaluation for the Edmonds School District. She was a test developer for the Educational Testing Service. Contact her at katimsn@edmonds.wednet.edu.

Spring Conference Preview

The Spring WERA conference will be held March 26–28 at the Hilton Seattle Airport Hotel. The theme of the conference is “Leaders, Learners, and Change Agents.”

Dean Fink, co-author with Andy Hargreaves of *Sustainable Leadership* (2006), will give the Thursday keynote address. He will also hold a full-day pre-conference session March 26 to explore in more depth the elements required to sustain educational leadership. Dr. Fink is a former teacher, principal, and superintendent, and he has worked with school and district leaders in 30 different countries over the past decade. He has authored other books on leadership and educational change as well, including *Leadership for Mortals: Developing and Sustaining Leaders of Learning* (2005) and *Good Schools/Real Schools: Why School Reform Doesn't Last* (2000).

Carl Cohn is the Friday morning keynote speaker. Dr. Cohn is superintendent of the San Diego Unified School District and has more than 35 years experience in education, serving as a teacher, counselor, central office administrator, and superintendent. Before going to San Diego in 2005, Cohn worked for 10 years as superintendent of the Long Beach School District, making him the nation's longest serving superintendent in a large urban district. While at Long Beach, the district was awarded the Broad Prize for Urban Education, symbolizing the best improvement in student achievement in the nation.

The Pete Dodson Symposium promises to be a stimulating discussion related to the state and federal role in educational change. With 2008 being an election year, the various candidates and political parties will have geared up to discuss their perspectives.



Three Slots Open for the WERA Board

WERA is now accepting nominations for three positions on the Board of Directors: two at-large positions and the President Elect. All board positions are for three years.

Board members help plan and oversee WERA's activities and policies. They are expected to attend 3 regular board meetings held at the Hilton Seattle Airport Hotel, a 2½-day retreat in May, and a brief meeting before each of the two conferences. At-large members lead one functional area (e.g., professional development, communications, grants and awards). Those serving in the President's role help plan the conferences and oversee WERA's operations during their second year. Leonard Winchell, the Executive Secretary, oversees the day-to-day operations of the organization.

To nominate a person (including yourself) or for more information, please contact Jim Leffler at NWREL at lefflerj@nwrel.org or 503-275-9549. **Nominations are due to Jim by October 29, 2007.**

The board will review the nominees and present a slate of candidates at the December conference. When preparing the slate, the board takes into consideration the geography, gender, and positions held by the potential candidates to ensure a diverse set of perspectives. Elections will take place in February, and the winners will be announced at the Spring conference.

Another WERA Award Created

At its September meeting, the WERA Board approved a new *Distinguished Paper* award to recognize an outstanding paper related to an important educational topic. The author(s) of the winning paper are expected to present the paper at the next AERA annual meeting. The paper is automatically accepted for presentation at AERA and is not required to undergo the lengthy and competitive nomination process that other papers must undergo.

To nominate a paper for the award, send the following two documents in electronic form to Leonard Winchell at LenWWA@aol.com by **December 15**. Self nominations are accepted.

- A cover letter listing the author(s) and affiliation(s), a brief summary of the paper, a statement about its educational significance, and the author(s) contact information (email, address, phone number).
- One copy of the paper.

Example papers for this award include:

- Papers presented at a spring or December WERA conference
- Papers by recent recipients of the WERA Research and Product awards
- Papers written to meet graduate school requirements
- Other research and evaluation reports or papers.

The awards committee of the WERA Board will review each paper and may select one to be recognized for this award based on its significance and quality. Authors of nominated papers will be notified of the committee's decision by January 10 in order for WERA to notify AERA of the paper's title and author(s) and for the recipient(s) to make plans to attend the AERA conference.

The recipient of the award is expected to attend the upcoming AERA meeting and provide a brief summary of the paper (several other papers will also be presented at the same session). The author(s) will receive a plaque at the spring WERA conference, and WERA will reimburse the author(s) up to \$750 for registration, accommodations, and transportation costs associated with attending the AERA conference. (When multiple authors are involved, they must determine how the reimbursement will be handled, up to the \$750 maximum.)

Call for 2008 Grant Applications

The Washington Educational Research Association (WERA) sponsors competitive grants (maximum award of \$6,000) for studies of educational issues. Studies lasting up to 18 months may be proposed. The 2007–2008 WERA budget allocates a total of \$16,000 for the 2008 awards. The purpose of the awards is to support studies that focus on instructional improvement, classroom assessment, educational measurement at both the district and state level, and the evaluation of education programs. Research and evaluation proposals focusing on issues associated with school reform that include partnerships with school districts are encouraged. Complete grant guidelines may be found on the WERA website at <http://www.wera-web.org/pages/awards/grants.php>.

Call for Nominations for 2008 WERA Awards

WERA recognizes contributions to educational research with five awards that may be given at the spring 2008 conference. Members are encouraged to make nominations for the awards. Self-nominations are accepted. Complete information on these awards may be found on the WERA website at http://www.wera-web.org/pages/awards/award_winners.php.

WERA Outstanding Dissertation Award

Purpose – To recognize exemplary dissertation research by doctoral students related to improving K–12 or higher education.

Eligibility – Candidates must have successfully defended their dissertation and been awarded a doctorate degree by an accredited Washington state institution in the calendar year in which the application is due.

WERA Research Award

This award is given to an individual, group, association, or agency for outstanding educational research. Research should have state-wide application in terms of results, methodology, or analyses. Research should have long-term value.

WERA Product Award

This award recognizes outstanding professional products related to testing, assessment, program evaluation, policy research, instructional research, school or district profiles, instructional evaluation, test, or evaluation reporting. Products should be of high technical quality, original, of broad interest, and of long-term value.

Gordon B. Ensign Award

This award is presented to a person or institution that has demonstrated and exemplified outstanding contributions to the education of students in Washington State in keeping with WERA's mission.

Art Maser Service Award

This award is presented to a WERA member (or institution, education service association or organization) who has demonstrated and exemplified outstanding service to WERA and who has made a significant contribution to the field of educational research.



Stupid Excel Tricks for Assessment Folks

–By Patrick Cummings

Introduction

How many times have you have had trouble finding an Excel file? You have paper copy of the printed table or chart and yet can't seem to find where the file is located on your computer. One way I solve this problem is to consistently add a file path and date printed on all Excel files. By using the Macro feature in Excel this can be accomplished in just a second. An Excel Macro offers a powerful and flexible way for automation of formatting, charting and other often-used spreadsheet tasks. Here's how:

Recording a Macro

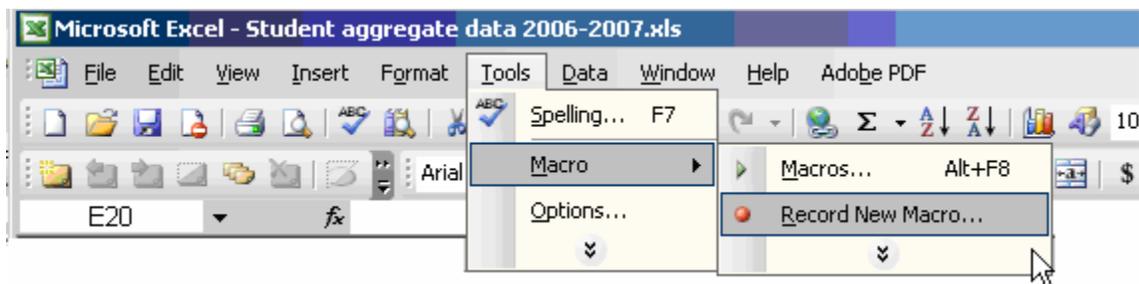
Let's say you just opened an Excel spreadsheet and want to quickly format the header and footer with your school district name, department, date, page number and path. By recording a Macro, you need only set-up the spreadsheet once then save the formatting to be recalled with a few key strokes. Let's start with a following sample worksheet:

School	School Population ***	# Kids Served	Contact Hours	Avg DIBELS1	Avg DIBELS2	Avg Math1	Avg Math4
Happy Dale Elementary *	250	128	8,964	75.44	109.56	38.02	48.98
Maple Grove Elementary	315	87	10,098	80.55	106.74	28.60	55.39
Roosevelt Elementary	192	79	7,902	47.20	82.86	28.06	46.67
Sandy Beach Elementary **	510	76	994				
Stafford Elementary	278	211	18,171	77.72	107.69	41.49	60.88
TOTALS	1,545	581	46,129	70.23	101.71	34.04	52.98

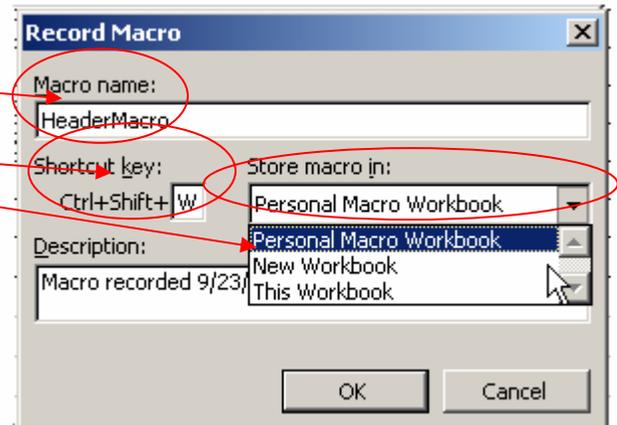
Start Recording

Once you start recording a Macro Excel remembers every key stroke you make which is saved and recalled the next time you run the Macro.

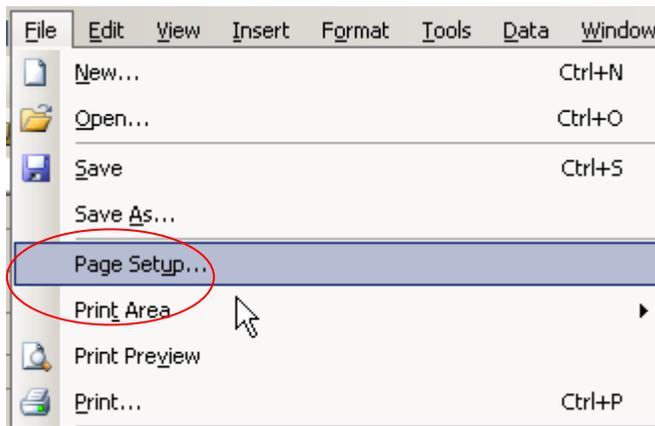
- Select **Tools, Macro, Record New Macro** to display the Record Macro dialog box.



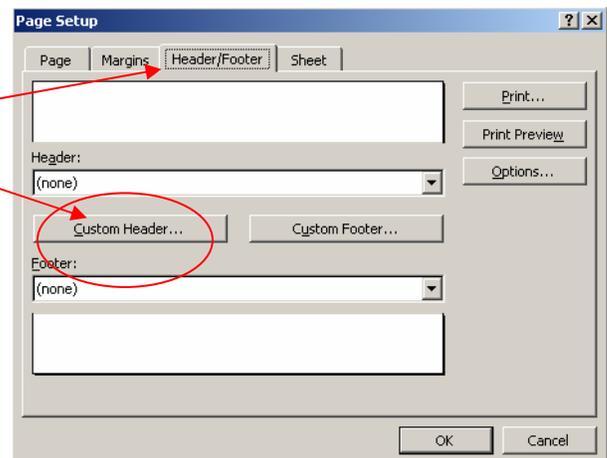
- Next you will want to name your Macro. I used the name **HeaderMacro**.
- Create a shortcut key that will be associated with the Macro. Here I used **Ctrl+Shift+W**
- Make sure you save this Macro in your **Personal Macro Workbook** so it will be available any time you start Excel.



- The word "Recording" will appear on the status bar at the bottom of the Excel window to remind you that all keystrokes and mouse actions are now being recorded. Depending on how your system is configured, a Stop Recording toolbar may also appear in the window. If you make a mistake, simply correct it as you normally would and continue; both the mistake and its correction will become part of the macro, and may be edited out later if desired.
- Now start the process of adding information to your header and footer. Remember, every key stroke you are making is being recorded. Open **Page Setup**

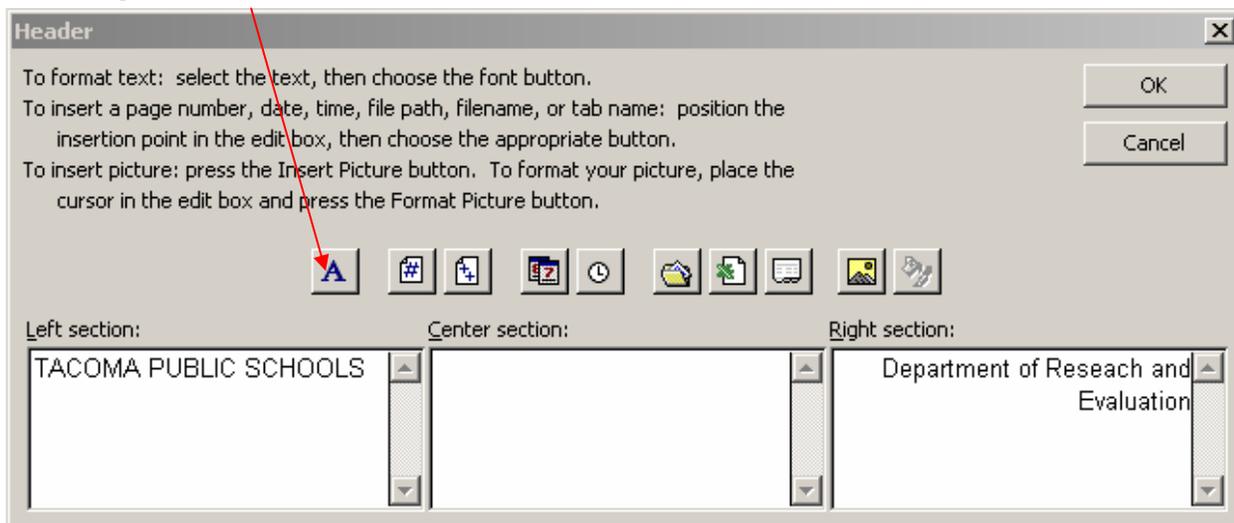


- Select **Custom Header**

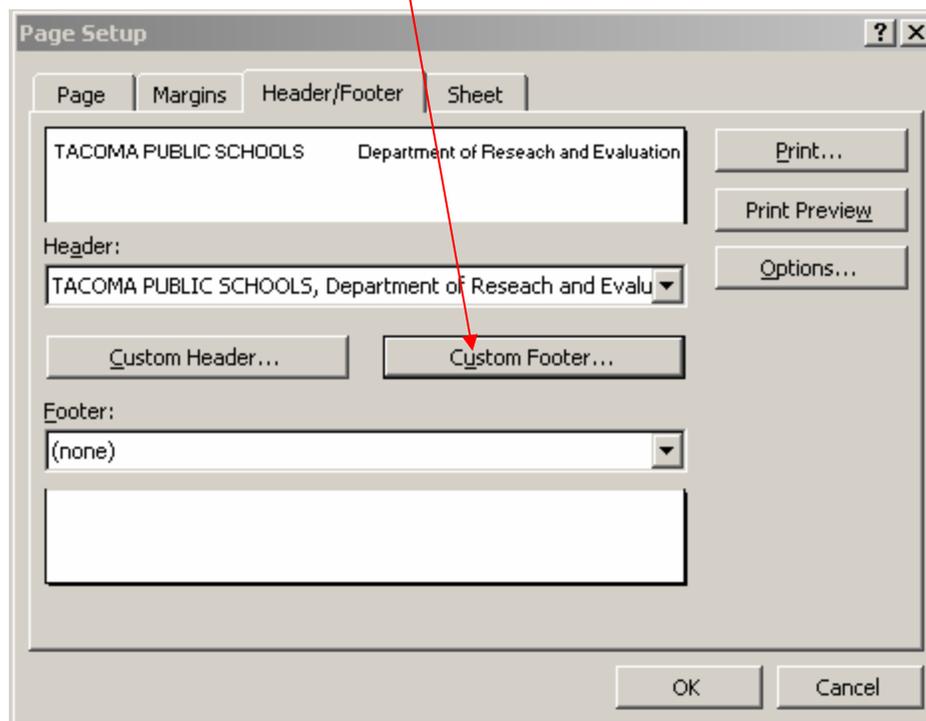




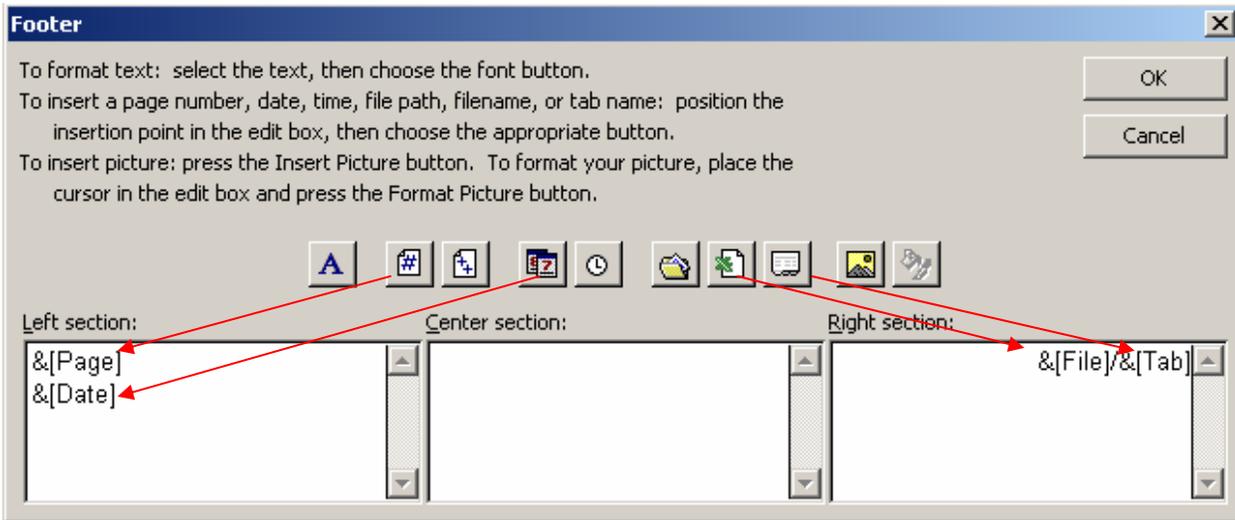
- Add the text you want to your worksheet header. You can format the text by size and type if you would like by selecting the "A"



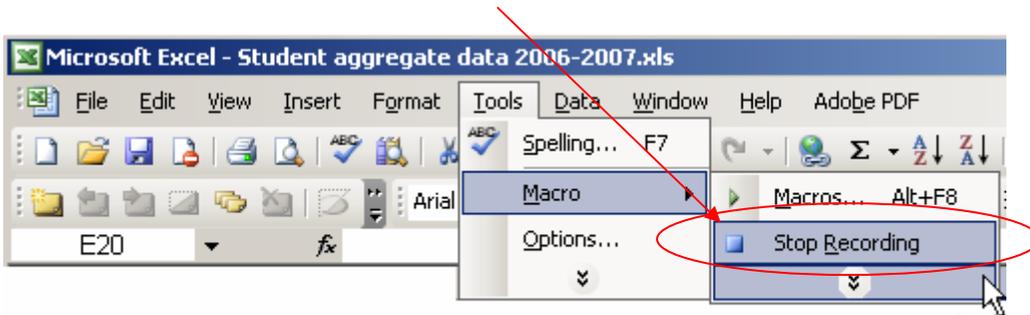
- Click OK then select **Custom Footer**



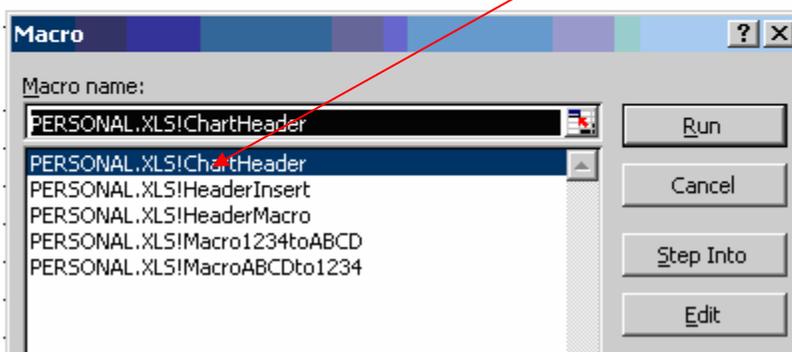
- Next, select add the **Page Number**, **Date** and **File Path** and **Worksheet Name**. Icon buttons makes adding these items easy.



- Click OK then select **Stop Recording** and your Macro is now complete..

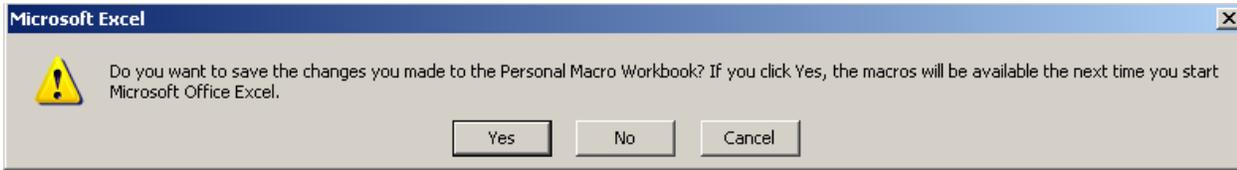


- Now just to check, select Macro and your will see that a copy of your **Header Macro** has been saved to your Personal Macro Folder.





- One more step... when you exit Excel you will be prompted to save the macro you just created to your Personal Macro Workbook. Make sure you do so by selecting **Yes**.



Conclusion

There you go.... The next time you are working a spreadsheet all you need to do is a quick key stroke, **Ctrl+Shift+W** and immediately you will have added a consistent formatting to the file. Makes you want to shout, "Holy Macro!"

Next Previous Zoom Print... Setup... Margins Page Break Preview Close Help

TACOMA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Department of Research and Evaluation

**Communities In Schools of Tacoma
Aggregated Student Data
2006-2007 School Year**

School	School Population***	# Kids Served	Contact Hours	Avg DIBELS1	Avg DIBELS2	Avg Math1	Avg Math4
Happy Days Elementary*	250	128	8,964	75.44	109.66	38.02	48.88
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1
9/23/2007

xxx.xls/Summary

Preview: Page 1 of 1 NUM

Annotations:

- District Name:** TACOMA PUBLIC SCHOOLS
- Department:** Department of Research and Evaluation
- File Path:** xxx.xls/Summary
- Page Number Date:** 1 9/23/2007

-Cummings is Director of Research and Evaluation for Tacoma Public Schools and is a regular contributor. Contact him at pcummin@tacoma.k12.wa.us

Job Profile: Institutional Research in Washington Community Colleges

–By Darryl Dieter

I'm writing this short article to briefly share with you the nature of institutional research work at a community college. My job very generally, is to provide information and data analysis that inform policy decision-making at the College.

Part of the job simply involves reporting. Some of this is more mundane formal reporting to state and federal authorities. Alternatively, some of it is internal. From which high schools are new students coming from? Is that trend increasing? Are these students direct from high school or have they been working for some time? Students coming to us directly from high school typically take a full or near-full load of coursework, whereas a student who has been out of high school for some time is much more likely to be a part-time student. This is important because community colleges are in an endless race to meet funding allocation targets. And higher targets (and thus more funding) are achieved only by meeting the previous ones. So, while we view every student who walks through the door as an opportunity to expand a mind and improve a life, we know that some types of students contribute more heavily to enrollment targets than others. I make estimates about the likelihood of our achieving allocation targets.

In graduate school I became fascinated with the power of statistics (uh-oh, did I just lose 98% of the readers?), and as such, the use of inferential statistical analysis comprises a much more interesting part of my job. That is, based upon a sample, can we make inferences or generalizations about the larger population? Some of the analyses I've done investigate which factors contribute to success in math courses, or which types of activities are associated with overall success in college. Identifying related factors assists in improving student learning.

A prime focus of my work is looking at those students who come to us from high school, since they make up a large stream of incoming students.

About 900 students come to the College directly from high school each year, and the largest groups of them come from Marysville-Pilchuck, Snohomish, Lake Stevens and Everett high schools, in that order. We know that high school graduate numbers will be flat for the next four to five years, so this will affect our enrollment picture. We also know that about 11 percent of 17 to 22 year-olds attends college, whereas that figure falls to only 6 percent in the 23 to 29-age range.

While many students come to us well prepared, some do not. This is not surprising, since some students originally did not even plan to attend college. We track the percentage of students who test into college-level math and English coursework. Data from recent years show that approximately half of all students are college-ready in writing, though only one in five is ready to start at the college level in math. We make no judgments about students' preparedness, but we do want to track this so that we can anticipate course offerings.

Like many of you, I also engage in assessment. This takes place at varying levels: the classroom, programs, and at the degree level. If you think there might be fruitful opportunities to work collaboratively on assessment or any other research project, don't hesitate to contact me in Everett.

–Dieter is the Institutional Researcher for Everett Community College. He may be reached at ddieter@everettcc.edu.

Look for pieces from other Higher Education Institutional Researchers in upcoming issues.





Resource for Researchers:NCES

School Lists

–By John Sietsema

In the course of its survey operations, NCES (National Center for Educational Statistics) maintains statistical databases on public schools and school districts, private schools, colleges, and libraries. These databases are available to the public at no charge and free of copyright considerations, since they are maintained at government expense and are in the public domain after approval and release by the NCES Chief Statistician. (They are not necessarily the same as commercial lists, shown below.)

Public and private schools are in separate NCES data files. Both of these files are based on statistical surveys and generally contain data collected 1–2 years prior to release on the web site. (These files do not contain fax numbers, e–mail addresses, or personal names.)

To download data files from the Private School Survey, go to the PSS home page at <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/pss/> and contact the survey director, Steve Broughman.

To download data files from the Common Core of Data (public schools), go to the CCD home page at <http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/> and click on Data Resources. You will see a page showing several options for accessing the data. (1.) If you only need one or a few states, the easiest way is to use the school or district locator. Just enter the state and do a search. When the list comes up, scroll to the bottom of the page and request an Excel file. Be sure to save it as an Excel file. (2.) Another way to get an Excel file is to use the Build–a–Table tool. Just specify the row and column variables you want, then set any selection criteria and view the table. You can then download the table into Excel. The BAT will only do 20,000 lines at a time so if you want all the elementary schools in the US you will have to do at least 5 iterations of the table. (3.) The third option is to download the Address files into Access.

These files, both school and agency, contain only basic directory information. The intro page will explain what variables are on the files and what the various codes stand for. (4.) For the complete data sets you need to

use the Data Files option. The CCD files go back to 1986. (There are other files going back farther but they are not standard and are difficult to use.) To use these files you need to have appropriate large–file data handling software such as SAS or SPSS. You will also need to read the introductory material and file documentation to understand the significance of the various items. The information in the CCD databases is reported by state education officials and is subjected to extensive editing and review procedures. Directory information on these files is usually at least one year old.

These options are designed to balance the needs of the user with the staff resources of NCES. We encourage you to browse the options and the web tools before you contact staff for assistance. When you are familiar with the options feel free to contact me to discuss the pros and cons of the various options and to ask any questions you may have about the data.

Link to informational PowerPoint –[NCES PowerPoint Commercial Lists](#) -- Not endorsed by NCES; listed here for your information.

American School Directory – <http://www.asd.com/>
 QED (Quality Education Data) – <http://www.qeddata.com/>
 Market Data Retrieval – <http://www.schooldata.com/>

–Contact John Sietsema, Data Consultant, National Center for Educational Statistics, 202–502–7425
john.sietsema@ed.gov

WERA Board Goals

- ☛ Visibly and purposefully advance a social justice agenda specifically highlighting the research and strategies that result in all children achieving or exceeding standard.
- ☛ Increase the participation and membership of Washington State higher education professors and students in WERA and the sharing of their research at conferences.
- ☛ Increase the membership's awareness of current research taking place in Washington State through conference sessions, the Standard Deviation and the WERA website.
- ☛ Increase the applications and nominations for the awards and grants.

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www.wera-web.org



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