

# THE STANDARD DEVIATION

May 2006



Washington Educational Research Association  
University Place, WA

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

## Achievement Growth Models Symposium June 2

The WERA Test Directors Network and OSPI are co-sponsoring a symposium on achievement growth models. Keynoter will be Pete Goldschmidt, UCLA Senior Researcher and lead author of *Policymakers' Guide to Growth Models for School Accountability: How Do Accountability Models Differ?* from the Council of Chief State School Officers, found on the web at <http://ccsso.org/publications/details.cfm?PublicationID=287>.

Mike O'Connell of Seattle and Phil Dommies of North Thurston will give district-level perspectives on the use of growth models while OSPI Assistant Supt. Joe Willhoft will describe current state efforts

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and future plans for the WASL. Symposium planners are bringing sample data displays for the WASL 2006 data for discussion and critique.

At this writing a few registration slots were still available at \$50.00 (which includes lunch) at [www.wera-web.org](http://www.wera-web.org) for the 8:30-3:30 Symposium at Puget Sound ESD in Renton.

## May 11 Forum on High School Reform

May 11 marked the 6<sup>th</sup> annual spring Washington Education Research Network (WERN) meeting. OSPI began holding this meeting in 2001 and WERA became a co-sponsor several years ago. Held at the SeaTac Hilton, this year's meeting featured four presentations on high school reform issues. OSPI staff discussed research and practical aspects related to improving high schools as well as issues related to career and technical education.

In addition, representatives of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation discussed lessons learned from their work with high schools in Washington state.

## New WERA Board Members

Lorna Spear of the Spokane School District was elected as president-elect and will serve in that capacity in 2006-07. She becomes WERA president for 2007-08.

- Andrea Meld, OSPI, was elected for a three-year term as board member-at-large.
- Jim Leffler, NWREL, was elected for a three-year term as board member-at-large.
- Emilie Hard has been appointed to take Cathy Taylor's place on the Board. Cathy, a University of Washington Associate Professor, had to step down due to her teaching and research demands but will stay active with WERA activities. Emilie is Principal at Glacier Park Elementary School in Tahoma School District. She co-chaired the December 2005 WERA Conference that featured Michael Fullan and Andy Hargreaves. She will fill the last two years of the at-large position.

## President's Column



Despite the frequent outcries about the quality of public education, various indicators of student achievement and success have steadily improved over time. Most educators in Washington have taken school reform seriously and have increased their own learning. WERA has played an important role in that process by providing quality professional development for educators. Involvement in WERA activities is a great way to expand one's learning through exposure to new ideas and a diverse set of colleagues.

WERA is currently the largest state-level education research association in the country, and Washington educators have benefited from its work in the past. As incoming President of WERA, I want to make the organization even stronger. This year we hope to:

- expand membership to include greater involvement of school administrators and those in the higher education community,
- continue providing high-quality and well-organized conferences and additional professional development opportunities, and
- increase our collaboration with other educational organizations.

By increasing our membership and working more closely with others, we can reduce professional development costs and build stronger ties with

others involved in the reform process. Education is about learning, and WERA will continue to provide timely and relevant information to its members and others who need to know about various educational issues.

Work has already started to plan the December and March conferences this coming school year. In addition, we are planning several special events to meet specific needs of some members. For example, we are co-sponsoring with OSPI an all-day symposium on the use of growth models (see details of this June 2 event on page 1). Many WERA members are involved in planning these events and making presentations at our regular conferences. By working together, we make a difference in our professional lives, which translates into better student outcomes.

I look forward to working with and learning from many of you during the coming year.

Pete Bylsma,  
WERA President

*P.S. Many thanks to Peter Hendrickson and Michelle Sekulich of the Everett School District for their work on this Standard Deviation.*

*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 WERA Calendar:

The only confirmed items at this time are the next three conferences and the June symposium, 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 the earlier announced schedule. Please check your planner in case you have incorrect dates.

- Growth Models Symposium, June 2, 2006
- State Assessment Conference, December 6–8, 2006
- Spring Conference, March 28–30, 2007
- State Assessment Conference, December 5–7, 2007

## Communications Toolkit

### June 2006 WASL Release

WASL Test Directors and others can attend one of three K–20 presentations to learn about OSPI's plans for a mid-June 10<sup>th</sup> grade WASL release of Individual Student Reports (ISRs.) Support materials are posted on the OSPI web site. Here is the schedule:

- Thursday, May 11, 2006 (2 to 4 p.m.)  
PSESD, ESD189, ESD114
- Monday, May 22, 2006 (3 to 5 p.m.)  
ESD105, ESD112, ESD113
- Wednesday, May 24, 2006 (3 to 5 p.m.)  
ESD101, ESD123, ESD171

## Code of Fair Testing Practices Revised

The Joint Committee on Testing Practices (JCTP) has reissued the Code of Fair Testing Practices in Education. This second edition (2004) included input from the National Association of Test Directors, one of the signatories to the project. Many of us are district test developers. Most of us administer tests—some score, too. And we all are involved in both reporting and interpreting test results and informing test takers of their rights. This Code provides a useful study topic for assessment offices and guidance to practitioners: <http://www.apa.org/science/FinalCode.pdf>.

JCTP was established in 1985 by the American Educational Research Association (AERA), the American Psychological Association (APA), and the National Council on Measurement in Education (NCME). The American Counseling Association

(ACA) and the American Speech–Language–Hearing Association (ASHA) joined JCTP in 1987. The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) and the National Association of Test Directors (NATD) has since joined JCTP, which now consists of ACA, AERA, APA, ASHA, NASP, NATD, and NCME.

Immediate Past NATD President Peter Hendrickson, who works for the Everett School District, was recently appointed to the JCTP.



## Mark Your Calendars Now! 2007 WERA Spring Conference

“Making the Grade”  
March 28-30, 2007

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

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## Program Evaluation Contacts in the Northwest

Program Evaluation is increasingly a key component of the job assignment for directors of research and evaluation and other program administrators. Two organizations welcome members from education although they serve the needs of the wider evaluation community.

The Oregon Program Evaluators Network (OPEN), headquartered in Portland, draws members from both Oregon and SW Washington. Founded in 1997, OPEN allows for the frank exchange of ideas and information that promote and encourage high-quality evaluation practices. The members of OPEN represent government agencies, universities, and private consulting firms. Contact them at <http://oregoneval.org>. Annual membership is \$20 (\$12.50 for full-time students).

OPEN is hosting several activities during the American Evaluation Association (AEA) Annual Conference to be held this year in Portland from October 30 to November 6. Details are available at <http://www.eval.org/eval2006>.

Program Evaluators Northwest (PEN) is centered in Seattle, and every other month it holds program meetings that are open to anyone. To subscribe or receive meeting notices, go to <http://mailman.pugetsoundcenter.or/mailman/listinfo/pen>.

PEN's May 11 meeting had two presentations on social network analysis.

## Professional Memberships, a National Perspective

*By Peter Hendrickson, Everett School District*

Graduate school was a time of lean family finances (think young kids) and tight University of Washington budgets. My advisor took me to a Washington Educational Research Association (WERA) conference at SeaTac Airport but the American Educational Research Association (AERA) and National Council on Measurement in Education (NCME) were out of the question. Later WERA work and better finances (think kids in graduate school) made possible the annual conference but a professional conference with over 10,000 in attendance was a bit of a mystery.

A colleague from Texas called this winter, planning to attend the National Association of Test Directors (NATD) Symposium and annual meeting for the first time, and I gave her a quick snapshot of four organizations often joined by test directors.

### **NATD**

This association meets once a year face-to-face. The Board and executive committee meet by conference call several times between annual meetings. All active members were invited to the breakfast during the AERA national conference last month in San Francisco. Test publishers host the event. UCLA Emeritus Professor Jim Popham, a longtime NATD member and friend, spoke about unique state testing programs in Wyoming.

NATD active members were also invited to a NATD dinner also hosted by test publishers. This was a great opportunity to catch up with old friends and make some new connections with colleagues from around North America. A brief awards ceremony was held and the outgoing president was administered a special oath.

### **NCME**

Many NATD members attended the NATD/NCME



Joint Symposium. The National Council on Measurement in Education (NCME) has offered a treasured spot on their program for many years. This year President Bonnie Wilkerson of Illinois invited Eva Baker of CRESST, Gage Kingsbury of NWEA in Portland, and Judy Arter of the Portland-based Assessment Training Institute to speak on "Beyond NCLB: From Measuring Status to Informing Improvement." Discussant was Karen Banks, a Vancouver, WA, measurement and evaluation consultant.

NCME also holds a three-day conference independent of but within the AERA conference window. They produce their own program and provide excellent pre-conference training sessions. See the web <http://ncme.org/annual/index.cfm>. The NCME Breakfast Sunday combined awards and a provocative presidential address by Jim Impara. Test directors with measurement interests join NCME for their sessions.

### **AERA**

Most NATD members are also AERA members. They account for much of the active membership in Division H, focused on research and accountability in the schools. Each Division has a Vice President. Steve Henry of Topeka is Vice President of Division H from 2006-2009. See <http://aera.net/divisions/?id=73>. Division H focuses on applied research in the schools.

*Continued on next page...*

*Continued from page 4*

## DRE

Test directors from large cities began meeting some years ago as the Directors of Research and Evaluation. They are hosted by NATD and have single one-day meetings prior to the AERA conference each year.

All but DRE produce professional publications. I have found them all to be invaluable for professional development and broad networking. While many of my colleagues have been or will be college faculty, most have chosen careers in the public schools. These organizations help maintain a bridge to academia.

## WERA Awards

### 2005–2006

#### Grants Awarded in March 2005:

Eddie Reed, Tukwila School District,  
“Adult/Student Communications Practices in a  
Reorganized High School” \$2,180.

John M. Krieg, Western Washington University, “A  
Response to Incentives: How Do Schools React to  
Negative AYP Funding?” \$3,500.

#### Grants Awarded March 2006:

Janet Gordon, university student, “Effects of  
Question Format on Student Performance on the  
8<sup>th</sup> Grade Science WASL.” \$2,000.

Katie Baird, University of Washington, Tacoma.  
“Using WASL Scores to Understand Cognitive  
Gains in Mathematics Among High Schoolers.”  
\$4,500.

Dale McDaniel, Onalaska School District, “Case  
Study of School Districts’ Responses to  
Washington State’s Compulsory Attendance Law  
(Becca Bill).” \$3,000.

Hilary Loeb, University of Washington student,  
“Exploring the Difference Between the General  
Population of Teachers and Those with National  
Board Certification: Profiles of Serving  
Washington’s Students of Color.” \$1,000.



Paul Stern, Washington State University,  
“Exploring the Relationship Between High School  
Math and English Courses and Grades and the  
Need for Remediation in College.” \$3,100.

Jack Monpas–Huber, Northshore School District  
and University of Washington student,  
“Assessment Data Use Among Washington High  
School Teachers.” \$4,400.

#### WERA Research Award

March 2005 to Michael Riley for the body of  
research on math and science standards.

March 2006 to Steve Hirsch for research  
correlating oral reading fluency with WASL  
performance.

#### WERA Product Award

March 2005 to Cathy Grimes of the Walla Walla  
Union–Bulletin for her series of newspaper  
articles on “No Child Left Behind.”

March 2006 to Lesley Klenk, Nikki Elliott–  
Schuman and Bev Neitzel of OSPI for outstanding  
professional products related to statewide  
assessments.

#### Art Maser Service Award

Ric Williams, Everett School District, March 2005

Joe Kinney, Spokane School District, March 2006

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

Present

The 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Washington State Assessment Conference  
“Preparing ALL Students for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”

December 7-8, 2006  
(Pre-Conference December 6)

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

**Mark your calendar now** and join your colleagues from across the state for this outstanding event. The conference will include two nationally known keynote speakers, State Superintendent Terry Bergeson, and two days of breakout presentations from educators across the state, including district OSPI staff. There will be presentations of value for teachers, principals, curriculum specialists, central office staff, and post-secondary educators.

- Kati Haycock, Director of the Washington DC-based Education Trust, will make the Thursday morning keynote address. The Trust advocates for youth, and provides hands-on assistance to educators working to improve student achievement at all levels.
- Pedro Noguera will make the keynote address on Friday. He is an urban sociologist and professor at New York University. His work has focused on ways to close the achievement gap and how schools are influenced by their surrounding social and economic conditions.

On Thursday and Friday the conference will offer more than 50 breakout sessions presented by local educators. In addition, OSPI staff will have sessions that present the latest information and plans from Olympia. The pre-conference workshops on Wednesday will focus on important topics that require more depth. ***Clock hours will be available free of charge.***

If you are interested in submitting a proposal to present a pre-conference workshop or a conference breakout session, complete the form on the next page and return it to one of the conference co-chairs listed at the bottom of the form.

**Registration for this conference will be mailed to you next September. Information will also be posted on the WERA website when it is available.**

**Washington Educational Research Association**  
**WERA/OSPI State Assessment Conference, December 6–8, 2006**  
**Seattle Airport Hilton Hotel Conference Center**  
*“Preparing ALL Students for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”*

Presenter’s Proposal Form *(available electronically on the WERA web site)*

Please indicate if this proposal is for a:  half-day pre-conference **or**  75 minute breakout session

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ FAX \_\_\_\_\_

Job Title \_\_\_\_\_ Employer \_\_\_\_\_

If you plan to have others assist in this presentation, list them below for inclusion in the program.  
 Include their name, institution/employer, and title:

Complete these lines *only if the presenter listed above is not the person to contact* about this presentation:

Contact Person \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Complete mailing address \_\_\_\_\_

**Presentation Title:**

**Brief Description of Presentation:** (Please limit to about 50 words, edit carefully, and write legibly.)

\*\*\*\* *This is for inclusion into the program. An interesting description will attract people to come.* \*\*\*\*

**Primary Audience(s):** (Check all that apply. This will not limit who comes to your presentation; it just helps us to assure there are presentations for each of these groups.)

- Teachers     Building Administrators     Central Office Staff     University Staff  
 Research/Evaluation/Assessment Specialists     Elementary     Middle Sch.     Sr. High

**Session Content** (Check all that apply)

- Assessment     Instruction     Curriculum     Student group(s)     Leadership     Research  
 Education reform     Support services     Accountability     Low-performing students  
 Early childhood/elementary     Secondary     Transition to college/work     Higher Ed.

**Schedule conflict:** (Please use only if you are unavailable to present on the indicated day/time.)

- Unable to present on Thursday, December 7 in  morning; in  afternoon  
 Unable to present on Friday, December 8 in  morning; in  afternoon

Return this ***completed*** form by June 15, 2006 to one of the following:

Pete Bylsma: pbylsma@ospi.wednet.edu (fax 360.586.2728) or

Lorna Spear: LornaS@spokaneschools.org (fax 509.354.5965)

## March 2006 Conference

“Doing What it Takes” was the theme of the 34<sup>th</sup> Annual Spring Conference held March 8–10.

Dr. Steve Constantino, the principal of a Time Magazine School of the Year, kicked us off with a stimulating description of how families can help support school reform.

Anne Conzemius, the keynote on Friday, described the role of professional learning communities in school reform and told touching stories to make her points. (Her PowerPoint slides are posted on WERA’s website at <http://wera-web.org/pages/activities.php>.) Eight pre-conference sessions and 35 breakout sessions rounded out the conference (the program is also found on the above URL.)

The Tacoma Performing Arts High School brought tears to our eyes with their presentation after lunch on Thursday about the importance of the arts in students’ lives. On Friday, the Pete Dodson Symposium featured members of the Washington Learns committees who gave the audience an early peek at the results of the comprehensive review of the state’s early learning, K–12, and higher education systems. The results of this review will receive much attention in the fall when the report is presented to the public.

## New Report on High School Reform

This month OSPI is issuing a new report entitled *The High Schools We Need: Improving an American Institution*. It describes various characteristics of current high schools and what research says needs to be done to improve them. This includes organizational reforms as well as changes that need to occur in the classroom. The report gives ideas about how to implement change and provides snapshots of the more prominent high school reform models. It ends with a short description of 11 schools and districts that merit special recognition. Sue Shannon and Pete Bylsma, co-authors of the report, hope the report and the extensive research base used to compile this report will provide a useful resource to educators and stakeholders who work on improving high schools. The report will appear this month on OSPI's research web site at <http://www.k12.wa.us/research/>.

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