



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

March 7, 2022

The Honorable Jill Underly
Superintendent of Public Instruction
Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
125 South Webster Street
Madison, WI 53707-7841

Dear Superintendent Underly:

Thank you for your participation in the U.S. Department of Education's (the Department) assessment peer review process under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA). I appreciate the efforts of the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (WIDPI) to prepare for the most recent peer reviews. Specifically, WIDPI submitted additional evidence regarding the general assessments in reading/language arts (R/LA) and mathematics for grades 3-8.

State assessment systems provide essential information that States, districts, principals and teachers can use to identify the academic needs of students, target resources and supports toward students who need them most, evaluate school and program effectiveness and close achievement gaps among students. A high-quality assessment system also provides useful information to parents about their children's advancement against and achievement of grade-level standards. The Department's peer review of State assessment systems is designed to provide feedback to States to support the development and administration of high-quality assessments.

The Department carefully evaluated WIDPI's submission and the Department found, based on the evidence received, that this component of your assessment system meets all the statutory and regulatory requirements of sections 1111(b)(1) and (2) of the ESEA. As a result, I have determined the following:

- General assessments in R/LA and mathematics grades 3-8 (Wisconsin Forward): **Meets the requirements of the ESEA.**

Congratulations on this significant accomplishment. Assessments that produce valid and reliable results are fundamental to a State's accountability system. Please be aware that approval of WIDPI's assessments is not a determination that the system complies with Federal civil rights requirements, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964, Title IX of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and requirements under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Also, please remember that, if WIDPI makes significant changes in its assessments, the State must submit information about those changes to the Department for review and approval. The full peer review notes are enclosed. We encourage you to read the full peer review notes for additional suggestions and recommendations for improving your assessment system.

400 MARYLAND AVE., SW, WASHINGTON, DC 20202
<http://www.ed.gov/>

The Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.

The Department placed a condition on WIDPI's Title I, Part A grant award regarding its general and alternate assessments in R/LA and mathematics and its English language proficiency (ELP) assessments. While WIDPI has demonstrated that the general assessments for R/LA and mathematics in grades 3-8 meet the ESEA requirements, the condition will continue until WIDPI meets all the requirements in the ESEA for all of its assessments, including the alternate assessment based on alternate academic achievement standards in grades 3-8 and high school, the high school R/LA and mathematics assessments, and its ELP assessments.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to improving educational outcomes for all students. I look forward to our continued partnership as we move ahead with this critical work. I appreciate the work you are doing to improve your schools and provide a high-quality education for your students.

If you have any questions, please contact my staff at: ESEA.Assessment@ed.gov.

Sincerely,

/s/

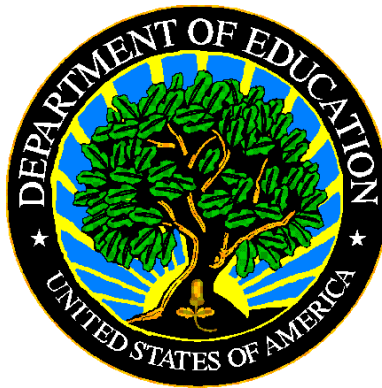
James F. Lane, Ed. D.
Senior Advisor, Office of the Secretary
Delegated the Authority to Perform the
Functions and Duties of the Assistant Secretary
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education

cc: Visalakshi Somasundaram, WIDPI Director of Assessment

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Peer Review of State Assessment Systems

February 2022 State Assessment Peer Review Notes



U. S. Department of Education
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education
Washington, D.C. 20202

Note: Peer review notes provide the combined recommendations of the individual peers to the U.S. Department of Education (Department), based on the statute and regulations, the Department's peer review guidance, and the peers' professional judgement of the evidence submitted by the State. These assessment peer review notes, however, do not necessarily reflect the final set of additional evidence, if any, that a State may need to submit to demonstrate that its assessment system meets all of the critical elements for assessment peer review. Although the peer notes inform the Secretary's consideration of each State's assessment system, the Department makes the final decision regarding whether the assessment system meets the requirements in the statute and regulations. As a result, these peer notes may not completely align with the final determination made by the Department.

STATE ASSESSMENT PEER REVIEW NOTES FOR WISCONSIN

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Consistent with the note on page 1, the evidence requested by the peer reviewers does not necessarily reflect the final set of additional evidence, if any, that a State may need to submit to demonstrate that its assessment system meets all of the critical elements for the assessment peer review. As a result, a State should refer to the letter to the State, including the list of additional evidence needed, if any, from the Department.

STATE ASSESSMENT PEER REVIEW NOTES FOR WISCONSIN

Department note:

Following peer reviews of the Wisconsin Forward Reading/language arts (R/LA) and mathematics assessments in 2018 (see <https://www2.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/nclbfinalassess/wi7.pdf>), only one critical element remained where additional critical evidence was still needed. These review notes document the review of that additional evidence, which was provided to the Department by WIDPI staff in 2019.

SECTION 4: TECHNICAL QUALITY – OTHER

Critical Element 4.1 – Reliability

Critical Element	Evidence (Record document and page # for future reference)	Comments/Notes/Questions/Suggestions Regarding State Documentation or Evidence
<p>For the Forward assessments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence the State has documented adequate reliability of its assessments, for each student group, consistent with nationally recognized professional and technical testing standards, specifically: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Analysis and interpretation of potential reasons for lower reliability estimates of Forward test scores for English learners. 	<p>File 001 TAC Notes File 002 Forward EL Reliability</p>	<p>The State provided evidence from its test vendor with an analysis that focused on estimated reliabilities for the EL population on the Forward assessments. The State also provided evidence of an interpretation of these results from two of its Technical advisory committee (TAC) members.</p> <p>The TAC member's wrote that, in their opinion, the analyses demonstrated that the score distribution is a factor that exacerbates reliability differences, upholding the theory that a restricted range of scores may affect reliability.</p> <p>The TAC members noted that the Wisconsin-specific data shown against national data sets demonstrates those types of irregularities. The TAC members also noted that here is much evidence in the field of language acquisition that older students arriving to the United States as English Learners tend to be further behind than younger students.</p> <p>The analysis of reliability gaps by grade shows there are bigger gaps in higher grade levels and that this pattern is not unique to Wisconsin. When long term ELs are included in the reliability analysis, adding that group to current ELs increases the distribution of scores. The reliability increases when that group is included in the analysis.</p>

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STATE ASSESSMENT PEER REVIEW NOTES FOR WISCONSIN

Critical Element	Evidence (Record document and page # for future reference)	Comments/Notes/Questions/Suggestions Regarding State Documentation or Evidence
		<p>The TAC members concluded that these results support the hypothesis that a test designed for a population with a large amount of variance in performance might not perform as well for a subpopulation (such as ELs) with a much narrower range of performance. In conclusion, the TAC members did not believe that Wisconsin has a particularly large or alarming issue in this area that warrants further investigation or oversight.</p> <p>After reviewing the data, Department staff are in agreement with the conclusions of Wisconsin’s TAC and believe no additional evidence is now needed.</p>
Section 4.1 Summary Statement		
x No additional evidence is required		

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