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# SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

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October 4, 2017

( X ) Action Required

Due date: October 6, 2017

( X ) Informational

BULLETIN NO. 086-17 Assessment Development, Science

TO: Educational Service District Superintendents  
School District Superintendents  
School District Business Managers  
School District Assessment Coordinators  
School Building Principals

FROM: Chris Reykdal, Superintendent of Public Instruction

RE: Washington Comprehensive Assessment of Science (WCAS) & Washington  
Access to Instruction & Measurement (WA-AIM) Achievement Level Setting  
Events

CONTACT: Dawn Cope, Lead Science Assessment Specialist  
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Toni Wheeler, Alternate Assessment Coordinator  
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## **PURPOSE/BACKGROUND**

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, Science Assessment Office will facilitate four events November 2017 through August 2018 to articulate new Achievement Level Descriptors (ALDs), evaluate alignment of the WCAS to the *Science K–12 Learning Standards (Next Generation Science Standards, NGSS)*, and recommend WCAS “cut scores” in grades 5, 8, and 11.

The Alternate Assessment Office will facilitate achievement level setting events for WA-AIM along a similar timeline.

We are seeking a broad audience of educators to participate in the important events described below to reach the goals for the WCAS and WA-AIM assessments. The events are critical components of the Washington Comprehensive Assessment Program.

### **WCAS Achievement Level Descriptors**

Educators will develop ALDs intended to describe to the field and to parents the performance exhibited by a student at a particular level (e.g., Level 2, Level 3) on the state assessment. The ALDs will appear on Individual Student Reports (ISRs) sent to families each fall. ALDs can enhance parents' understanding of their children's academic strengths and weaknesses and guide educators in planning for the instructional needs of their students. The WCAS ALD development event will convene November 15–16, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. day one and 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. day two.

Educators chosen to participate in the WCAS ALD event must also commit to attending Achievement Level Setting for their grade level in August 2018. Exact dates for Achievement Level Setting have not yet been determined.

### **WCAS Alignment Study**

Educators will evaluate the alignment of the WCAS to the *Science K–12 Learning Standards (NGSS)*. The results of the alignment study will provide evidence regarding the validity of inferences students, teachers, and policy makers can make regarding assessment results. The Alignment Study will be conducted in February 2018.

### **WCAS Contrasting Groups Study**

Educators will use the ALDs to predict how their students will perform on the WCAS. Educators will receive online training on the ALDs from OSPI staff to make their predictions. Their predictions will be compared to actual student performance on the WCAS to produce the Contrasting Groups Study data. The results of the Contrasting Groups Study will inform the process used during Achievement Level Setting. The Contrasting Groups Study will be conducted over several months during the winter and spring of 2018.

### **WCAS Achievement Level Setting**

Educators will participate in an Achievement Level Setting process to make WCAS “cut score” recommendations corresponding to each performance level (e.g., Level 2, Level 3). The final recommendations by committees will be reflective of the whole group rather than the opinion of any individual member. These recommendations will be presented to the State Board of Education for approval. Achievement Level Setting will be conducted in August 2018.

### **Candidate Qualifications**

We are dedicated to bringing together educators for each event who represent Washington's diverse population. The ideal candidate possesses the following qualifications:

- At least three years teaching experience in science
- Ability to function well in large and small groups
- Ability to respond professionally to diverse opinions

- Ability to listen well and to communicate thoughts clearly
- Ability to attend an event in its entirety

All expenses for travel, lodging, and meals will be provided—within state guidelines—for all in person events. Substitute reimbursement will be provided to classroom teachers who attend events during the school year. Events held during summer months will offer compensation.

### **Washington Access to Instruction & Measurement (WA-AIM)**

The WA-AIM assessment, specific to students with significant cognitive challenges, will be conducting the same activities for the transition to the new science learning standards. The dates of events will not be the same as the WCAS program, but will follow a similar timeline.

Educator representation will focus on teachers with special education backgrounds, but participation by general education science teachers will ensure balance with respect to understanding the student population and the content of the WA-AIM science standards and science assessment.

### **INFORMATION AND APPLICATION**

Interested educators must complete an application by October 6 to be considered for the WCAS ALD event.

- A preview of the application questions can be accessed at: [Science Application Example](#)
- The online application can be accessed at: [2017 Science Assessment Application](#)

The application for the WA-AIM Alternate Achievement Level Descriptor (AALD) activity will be posted to the [WA-AIM webpage](http://www.k12.wa.us/assessment/WA-AIM/default.aspx) (<http://www.k12.wa.us/assessment/WA-AIM/default.aspx>) the week of Oct 2. The application deadline will be communicated at the time of posting.

Invitations to apply for the ALD/AALD events will also be distributed through the science assessment and WA-AIM listservs. Invitations to apply for the additional events will be distributed through the listservs at least two months prior to each event. Please encourage all educators interested in applying for one or more events to [sign up through the listservs](#).

BULLETIN NO. 086-17 ASI

Page 4

October 4, 2017

For questions regarding the WCAS events, please contact Dawn Cope, Lead Science Assessment Specialist, at 360-725-4989 or email [dawn.cope@k12.wa.us](mailto:dawn.cope@k12.wa.us).

For information specific to WA-AIM events, please contact Toni Wheeler, Alternate Assessment Coordinator at [toni.wheeler@k12.wa.us](mailto:toni.wheeler@k12.wa.us). The OSPI TTY number is 360-664-3631.

This [bulletin is also available](#) on the OSPI website at <http://www.k12.wa.us/BulletinsMemos/bulletins2017.aspx>.

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