

# WAAS-Portfolio Questions and Answers

(Created 11/8/11)

## Training and Resources

**Q1: Are the training PowerPoints available?**

**A:** Both the teachers' training PowerPoint and the administrators' training PowerPoint are posted on the WAAS-Portfolio web-page:

<http://www.k12.wa.us/assessment/AlternativeAssessment/Portfolio.aspx>

**Q2: Are the portfolio resources posted to the assessment site, special education site, or both?**

**A:** These materials are on the WAAS-Portfolio web site, from the Assessment page:

<http://www.k12.wa.us/assessment/AlternativeAssessment/Portfolio.aspx>

**Q3: Why were Saturdays selected for teacher training?**

**A:** The Saturday trainings were a decision made by OSPI and the Washington Education Association (WEA) to accommodate as many people as possible.

When the revisions to the Portfolio process were ready to begin training, we had a very short window in which to train as many teachers as possible. We had heard from teachers/districts that teachers were not being allowed to leave during the regular school day and we were committed to using current teachers as part of the training team, so the Saturday option, while unpalatable, was the most viable. We were pleased that 560 teachers opted to participate in a Saturday training, about triple the number that have been able to attend in previous years.

**Q4: When will ProFile be available?**

**A:** OSPI is checking the application right now and hopes to be able to approve it to go live in the next day or so, no later than Nov 10<sup>th</sup>.

**Q5: Do assessment coordinators need to submit anything to give teachers access to ProFile?**

**A:** No, teachers can access ProFile with just their district email accounts.

**Q6: Are the Entry Cover Sheets Auto Fill again?**

**A:** Yes, once ProFile comes live for this school year (this week) the Entry Cover Sheets will auto-fill.

**Q7: Will there still be drop down boxes for the extensions in ProFile?**

**A:** Yes, Measured Progress is loading all of the new extensions into ProFile.

**Q8: Can District Assessment Coordinators earn clock hours for the collection of Webinars we watch during the year?**

**A:** OSPI is not currently offering clock hours for the various assessment webinars.

**Q9: Should District Assessment Coordinators sign up for the list serve, or will they receive information in the Washington Assessment Weekly (WAW)?**

**A:** District Assessment Coordinators are welcome to join the list serve, but all operational communications regarding the WAAS-Portfolio will also be communicated through the WAW.

**Q10: Is the list serve is operational?**

**A:** Yes, it is. Request membership by sending an email to:  
[WAAS-PORTFOLIO@lists.measuredprogress.org](mailto:WAAS-PORTFOLIO@lists.measuredprogress.org) ?

**Q11: I tried to sign in at the listserv but it does not seem to be working.**

**A:** For membership in the list serve send a request to the following address: [WAAS-PORTFOLIO@lists.measuredprogress.org](mailto:WAAS-PORTFOLIO@lists.measuredprogress.org) . If you don't get an acknowledgement back within 24 hours, please email the [WAAS@k12.wa.us](mailto:WAAS@k12.wa.us) so we can follow-up.

**Q12: Are we required to use the reading passages or are they just suggested passages?**

**A:** The posted reading passages are just a resource; you can use other passages.

### **Eligibility for WAAS-Portfolio**

**Q13: One of our administrators was told that the decision regarding eligibility for WAAS-Portfolio was an IEP team decision and a student did not need to have a cognitive challenge. But the administrator would like the IEP team to choose the WAAS for students who are functioning below grade level but do not have cognitive limitations.**

**A:** How a student participates in the statewide assessment is an IEP team decision. It is not an administrative decision. The WAAS-Portfolio option is designed for students with significant cognitive challenges.

Please refer to the "IEP Team Decision Making Guidelines Regarding Student Participation in Statewide Assessments" posted on the [Assessment](#) and [Special Education](#) OSPI web sites. This document provides eligibility criteria that should be considered by the student's IEP team when deciding in which assessment the student will participate.

**Q14: Can a teacher get in trouble for using a WAAS-Portfolio with a student that falls between a Portfolio and a general statewide Assessment (MSP/HSPE/EOC)?**

**A:** Again, the decision regarding an eligible student's participation in the statewide assessment is an IEP team decision. It is not an administrative decision. The WAAS-Portfolio option is designed for students with significant cognitive challenges. A teacher needs to follow the IEP team's decision regarding an eligible student's participation in the statewide assessment.

Since the decision regarding the assessment most appropriate for a student is an IEP team decision, an individual teacher would not be held responsible if an incorrect decision is made. If concerns arise regarding a school's or a district's intentional disregard for *any* requirement of the state's assessment program, however, an investigation will be conducted by OSPI and concerns of professional practice will be referred to the Office of Professional Practices.

**Q15: How do we document that present level from the IEP in the portfolio? Do you want a copy of the present level from the IEP?**

**A:** You do not need to submit a copy of the present level of performance from the student's IEP. You would simply document the present level as the data point for baseline data if the PLAAFP is serving as baseline data.

**Q16: If an awareness level waiver cannot be given until grade 11, how can a passing a state assessment be achieved in the lower grades for students who will be eligible for an awareness waiver at that time?**

**A:** State and federal regulations require that all students in grades 3-8 and high school (Grade 10 in Washington) be assessed against a state's learning standards. IEP teams must determine how a student will participate (i.e., the general student assessment system with or without allowable accommodations, or one of the alternate assessments: the WAAS-Portfolio or a general assessment with a Basic (Level 2) score counting as proficient). The Basic option does not count for NCLB but is available in grades 3-8 and 10.

Not all students will be able to meet standard on these assessments so, for graduation purposes, the state has added additional opportunities for students in special education: the Developmentally Appropriate Proficiency Exam, a Locally Determined Assessment, and the Awareness Level Waiver. If a student is unable to earn a passing score on the Portfolio given the revised extensions, the IEP team could consider requesting an awareness level waiver in the student's 11th or 12th grade year. If the student is eligible for an awareness level waiver, this would be an option for the student to meet the assessment requirement for graduation purposes after the alternate assessment has at least been attempted.

**Q17: We have a student that is 3rd grade age who came to our district from the Philippines. He was never enrolled in school until this year. It does not seem appropriate to assess him with the WAAS-Portfolio or any other state test due to having never been in school before. How should we handle this? Is there a form we can fill out?**

**A:** All students who are ELL must participate in all state testing scheduled for their grades except students who are in their first year of enrollment in U.S. schools, who are not required to participate in reading or writing tests, but must take the math and science exams. A 3<sup>rd</sup> grade student eligible for special education who is in his/her first year in a U.S. school would be required to participate in one of the statewide math exams, but not the reading exams. If the student is a New Non-English Proficient student using the WAAS-Portfolio for math and science (older grades), please mark NNEP on the demographic cover sheet of the WAAS-Portfolio. This is a new box on the demographic page.

## **Extensions**

**Q18: In the past, there has been insistence that student evidence must be clearly linked to grade-level standards. I understand from the WAAS-Portfolio administrators' webinar that we can now link to pre-requisite skills. What is the background to how this change happened?**

**A:** No Child Left Behind mandates that students be assessed on grade-level standards or pre-requisite academic skills linked to those grade-level content standards. Washington's WAAS-Portfolio has always been built around assessing pre-requisite skills, called extensions, of grade-level content standards. The shift this year is the further articulation of pre-requisites to the pre-requisites, or further extending the extensions. Indeed this year's extensions are still linked to the grade-level content standards.

**Q19: If you are working with a 3rd grade student are you able to use both the 3rd and 4th grade extensions?**

**A:** You can use an extension listed as being in a grade band with students in any of the grades within that band. In other words an extension in the 3-4 grade band can be used with 3rd or 4th graders.

**Q20: I have questions about tying the extension to the PE. How would we tie 'identifying name' say to grade level text? Would we be looking for text that had that student's name in it? If we don't tie the extension to the original PE, such as counting small number of objects that is not written in a story problem context, how will the scorers know if the activity is aligned or not?**

**A:** Teachers can be assured that their WAAS-Portfolio extensions are aligned to the grade level content standards when the OSPI Extensions are used (WAAS-Portfolio Teacher's Guide, 2011, page 10). The extensions reflect pre-requisite academic skills that, when mastered, lead to mastery of the GLE/PE.

Having a student identify his/her name in a written text would be one option to assess the extension, "Identify own name in print" (Reading 1.3.2.15), as would activities designed to have the student:

- identify his/her name in print in locations around the classroom,
- select his/her name from among three choices (two distractors),

- Introduce self-using augmentative communication device (by selecting his/her name from among other symbols/words).

This is not intended to be an exhaustive list, and the activities will depend on the student's needs and present levels of performance. The Entry Cover Sheet will provide scorers with information about the content Extension being assessed, the goal for increased accuracy, fluency or level of independence, the student's performance from each data point, and the context of each data point.

**Q21: What if student is very low functioning?**

**A:** Once the IEP team determines appropriate goals, the special education teacher should review all of the revised extensions to identify an extension that may be appropriate for a student such as you describe. Ideally the extension would relate to the student's IEP and instructional program. For example, if a student is working on basic communication of wants/needs, then an extension that may align with this student's IEP would be, "Sign, gesture simple words to convey meaning" (Reading 1.3.2.19).

**Q22: What does PE stand for?**

**A:** Performance Expectation, which is a content standard in some content areas.

**Q23: Last year you emphasized definitions of the words used in extensions (e.g., 'identify' was different than 'choose'). Are you going to have a list of these definitions this year? You say pay attention to key words (slide 35) as we ensure the evidence is aligned to the extension.**

**A:** This year words like 'identify', 'choose', and 'select' are not defined but teachers can feel confident that common definitions of these words are what is intended. There are no precise rules distinguishing these words based on the number or types of distracters. Rather the number and type of distracters should be based on the student's skill level. Key words related to the content area are presented as part of the extensions list.

**Q24: Please define the term, "determine" as written in Extension # 5 & 6 of Numbers & Operations (Ext. 3.1.C; p. 5 of Math Extensions).**

**A:** There is no special or hidden meaning to the verbs used in the extensions this year. 'Determine', in "Determine basic addition and related subtraction facts up to 18." or "Determine addition and related subtraction facts up to 10.", only means to 'answer' or 'say' or 'figure out'. It could also be to 'write' or 'select'. The point is "does this student know basic math facts?".

**Data Collection Windows**

**Q25: The date on the ProFile form and on the reading extension data collection sample is "prior to**

**Nov. 24, 2011". Hasn't that changed to December 16th?**

**A:** Yes, the baseline data window is now through Dec. 16th. It originally was Nov 24th but was extended to mid-December because of the delay in getting the science and writing extensions completed.

**Q26: If a student moves in after Feb. 1st and we are unable to collect data, is the teacher still required to submit a blank notebook along with the student demographic sheet?**

**A:** No. It is important though to work with the district assessment coordinator to make sure the student's enrollment date (of after Feb 1st) is accurately reflected in the student information system so it will be reported accurately to CEDARS (the state's student data collection system). When OSPI sees that the student enrolled after Feb 1st from another school district (or out of state) we will know to count the student as not enrolled during the assessment window.

**Q27: What if WAAS-Portfolio information was started in a prior WA State school and transferred to current school?**

**A:** For new students (e.g., transfer students), initial baseline data is to be collected no later than February 1st. If the student's portfolio was started in the previous school but comes with the student, the ideal situation would be for the new district to complete the portfolio started at the previous school district. If the student transfers from another district after Feb. 1, and there was no portfolio started, or it cannot be completed as started, the student will be considered not enrolled during the assessment window and therefore will not have to be assessed.

**Q28: When the student reaches their goal on data point two and you take the confirmatory data point a week or so later, would the third assessment be exactly the same or a new context?**

**A:** The third data point should be with a new context; even if it is as the confirmatory data point a week or so after the student reaches their goal.

**Q29: If student masters at the second data point how do we know that the scorer is not going to hold it against our students for mastering earlier?**

**A:** Scorers of the WAAS-Portfolio follow the procedures requested by the state. Since OSPI has authorized a confirmatory third data point a week or so after a student unexpectedly reaches mastery at the second data point, the scorers will score this appropriately as described in the scoring section of the WAAS-Portfolio Teachers' Guide.

**Q30: If baseline is missed (e.g., student/teacher illness, school closure, etc.) does the teacher continue the assessment? If yes, does the Portfolio still have a chance of passing if all else is done correctly?**

**A:** It is hard to imagine that with the extended baseline data collection window (now closing Dec 16th) the baseline window would be missed, but yes if a student is enrolled in a school district prior to Feb 1st, the student is expected to be assessed. The guideline is to have a month

between data points but if that is not possible schools should squeeze in as much time between the three data points as possible, finishing no later than March 23rd. The reduced data collection windows will not impact scoring, per se, but the fact that the student had less time to be instructed might be reflected in less achievement. In scoring the WAAS-Portfolios we are emphasizing student achievement so the more opportunity for growth the better for the student.

## Evidence

**Q31: In step 4 of the WAAS-Portfolio process can you please clarify the 2nd bullet on slide 45 especially the piece that says, “if there are not five items occurring within 1 minute.” What does that even look like? Example please.**

**A:** Some fluency tasks are conducive to multiple tasks (5 or more) in a 1 minute timing; examples include a math facts worksheet, or the teacher presenting small sets of objects to the student asking the student to identify the number of objects in the sets. The number of trials or items the student gets right in one minute would be the measure, and a single 1 minute timing would be sufficient for the data collection. Other tasks might take a minute or more to do; examples include identifying the main idea or answering a simple story problem that uses subtraction. These don't give the student five opportunities unless five timings are taken. The idea behind the notion of five is to give students plenty of opportunity to demonstrate the skill. If they can do that skill 5 times within a minute, a single 1 minute timing suffices; if the skill itself takes longer, more timings are needed.

**Q32: Extension 3.2.3 (3) is ‘Match a list of adjectives to appropriate nouns’; last year we used this extension. We had different nouns and adjectives on each worksheet but the worksheets had the same format. Will that be adequate this year in terms of context or do we need to do something different (i.e., different looking worksheets or “themes” or...).**

**A:** Different lists would be sufficient.

**Q33: Are there going to be examples for the Extensions and what they may look like? Last year you had one and it was really helpful.**

**A:** We have tried to incorporate some examples in the extensions themselves, and will try to add examples to the website throughout the year. But given the lack of a WAAS Coordinator, the resources at OSPI are very minimal so I don't want to promise that these will be available. I hope the list serve can help with providing examples. For membership in the list serve send a request to the following address: [WAAS-PORTFOLIO@lists.measuredprogress.org](mailto:WAAS-PORTFOLIO@lists.measuredprogress.org)

**Q34: If you use photos for one data point are you required to use photos for the other two data points?**

**A:** No

## Five item/trials/opportunities

**Q35: Extension 1.1.1 and others: Several times I have read or heard that we had to have 5 items on our data sheets but there are several extensions that say at least or a minimum of 3 or 4. Does that only apply to the specific extension sub number and we have to have 5 if we use different sub-extension numbers or is the 5 item rule voided extensions that specify a number.**

**A:** The idea behind five items is to more precisely measure the student's skill on a particular task, and to give the student an opportunity to demonstrate smaller increments of growth on that skill over time (over the different data collection periods). In the case of an extension that specifies a number of things that must be identified, the skill itself is identifying/listing/writing/etc. the three things, and we'd want to give the student 5 opportunities to demonstrate that they can do that.

For purposes of illustration I am going to make up an extension: *"Student will identify two modes of transportation depicted in a photograph."* For each data collection, then, the student should be given at least 5 photographs to identify two modes of transportation in each. In scoring those five opportunities/trials, if the student named two modes in three of the photos, the teacher would give a score of 3 out of 5 right or 60% accurate.

**Q36: If you are doing Data Collections Sheet how do you show 5 different items?**

**A:** For each data point the data collection sheets would show how many of the five items or trials or attempts or opportunities the child got right (for accuracy) or the time it took to do five items or trials or attempts or opportunities (for fluency) or the level of prompting needed for the five items or trials or attempts or opportunities (for levels of independence).

**Q37: An extension says, "Label or name at least three different parts of an animal (legs, body, arms, head, tail, ears, mouth." How can you do five responses when the guide asks for at least three?**

**A:** The student could have five opportunities to "label or name at least three different parts of an animal." During each data point the student would be shown 5 animals (i.e., dog, cat, horse, pig, and cow) and asked to identify, for instance, a leg, the head, and the tail. For different contexts across the three data points the student might be given stuffed animals during data point one, photographs during data point two, and drawings during data point three.

**Q38: Are students expected to perform 5 experiments per data point? That's a LOT of experiments. The example of growing plants would take a month just for that one experiment; for 'choose materials needed for an experiment', would they need to choose materials for 5 different experiments?**

**A:** The number of experiments would depend on the kind of experiment and what skill(s) the student is developing. For a longer term experiment like Science extension: 5. INQB.3 that involves the student documenting "observations, in words or drawings, about the appearance of a plant or animal over a period of 5-15 days (e.g., color, height, number of leaves of a plant; length, color, actions of a beetle)" baseline data could include the first five days of documenting plant height, 30 or more days later data point two could be the next 5 days of documenting plants height, and 30 or more days later data point three could be the final 5 days of documenting plant height. The selection of materials needed for an experiment (Science

5.INQB.4) could include the student selecting the materials needed to document plant height (e.g., ruler, pencil, paper, etc.) for each of those 15 days.

**Q39: Relating to Extension 1.3.2 Building Vocabulary (p. 3 Reading Extensions): Extension 18 states: 'Follow verbal directions for simple actions (e.g., point, sit, hold, look).'**

Would a data collection procedure on this skill include, taking data on one action, for 5 trials, in 3 different contexts?

Example:

Baseline- Data collected on being asked to sit on a chair in the classroom on 5 trials.

Midline- Data collected on being asked to sit on the bench in the lunchroom on 5 trials.

Ending-Data collected on being asked to sit on a chair in the kitchen on 5 trials.

Or, does data need to be collected on more than one action:

Example:

Baseline collected on being asked to sit on and stand from a chair in the classroom a combined total of 5 trials, etc.

**A:** Either of these scenarios would be aligned to the extension.

**Q40: We define "trials" as multiple opportunities to demonstrate mastery on the same skill (point to leg 5 times when asked 5 times, "Where is your leg?"). Given this, we are assuming that an accuracy data sheet could include 5 repeated trials of the same action or item. Does this align with the expectations around collecting accuracy data that includes trials?**

**A:** Yes, this would be appropriate in most cases. Where it would not be appropriate is repeating the same multiple choice item 5 times, or having the same paragraph repeated 5 times, giving the student 5 opportunities to identify the same main idea, etc. I have used the terms 'items', 'trials', 'opportunities' rather generically to cover the range of tasks that may be assessed as broadly as needed. It is difficult to define this for every type of task and associated evidence. Teachers will need to ask themselves if the evidence they are providing is really demonstrating the student's performance of the selected extension. This is the question the scorers will ask of the evidence. Over the course of the next couple of months, I hope to be able to provide more examples of aligned and not-so-aligned evidence.

**Q41: If the extension does not align to a current IEP goal can a data sheet/graph showing the 3 data points still be submitted as evidence of progress toward the extension?**

**A:** Certainly. While the intent is to select extensions that do relate to something the student is already working on, to make the assessment more instructionally relevant, there is no requirement that the selected extensions are part of the student's IEP.

## Scoring

### Q42: What score is meeting standard?

**A:** WAAS-Portfolio cut scores for 2010-11 were as follows (new cut scores will be set in the summer of 2012, and will be applied to the WAAS-Portfolios submitted in 2011-12):

Last Year's WAAS-Portfolio Cut Scores in Each Category

Grade/Subject	Approaches Standard Cut (level 2)	Meets Standard Cut (level 3)	Exceeds Standard Cut (level 4)
3-4 Reading	3	6	9
3-4 Mathematics	3	6	9
4 Writing	3	6	9
5-6 Reading	4	7	10
5-6 Mathematics	3	6	9
5 Science	4	7	10
7-8 Reading	4	7	10
7-8 Mathematics	3	6	10
7 Writing	4	7	10
8 Science	4	7	10
HS Reading*	6	12	20
HS Mathematics*	6	12	20
HS Writing*	6	12	20
HS Science*	8	14	20

\*All High School WAAS-Portfolios are individually scored by two separate scorers, therefore the final scores are doubled.

## Operational procedures

**Q43: When I will need to indicate which of our students is taking the WAAS-Portfolio for this school year? We have had trouble at times with our CEDARS uploads, so I am trying to be proactive about making sure I have data in advance of the deadlines.**

**A:** The 2011-12 WAAS-Portfolio pre-ID process will be Dec 9th - January 10th. District Assessment Coordinators will be reminded in the Washington Assessment Weekly (WAW) when that window opens.

**Q44: Can we submit 'gently used' notebooks for WAAS-Portfolio evidence?**

**A:** Based on the information in the WAAS-Portfolio Teacher Guide (pg. 51) assessments should be assembled in 1-1.5" 3-ring binders with a front pocket to hold scoring documents. Recycling gently used binders is a great way to conserve resources. When repurposing binders, please

make sure to remove any old labels or stickers from the binders so that they can be tracked effectively during the submission and scoring processes.

**Q45: Is there a one day pick up to submit portfolios like in the past? Do you know the date for the pick up?**

**A:** Yes, there will be a single day for picking up WAAS-Portfolios from school districts. It is slated for Wed, March 28.

**Q46: We hold onto all portfolios and send for scoring at the same time, correct? Even if the student meets their goal on the second data point and it is confirmed a week or so later?**

**A:** Yes.

#### **Other**

**Q47: Are science goals required on the IEP of a student participating in the Portfolio??**

**A:** Science content goals are not required in the IEP for a student participating in the Portfolio.

To ask additional questions, or comment on these answers, please contact OSPI through the [WAAS@k12.wa.us](mailto:WAAS@k12.wa.us) email account. To escalate issues, please contact Robin Munson at [robin.munson@k12.wa.us](mailto:robin.munson@k12.wa.us).