

**TO: State Superintendent Elizabeth Burmaster**

**FROM: Wisconsin ASCD**



**RE: Wisconsin ASCD Response to Recommendations from the American Diploma Project and the Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills**

Wisconsin ASCD supports the *Recommendations for Successful Implementation of Revised Model Academic Standards* from the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills and the American Diploma Project reviews.

**Wisconsin ASCD provides the following additional recommendations:**

*WASCD's Response to Recommendations #1-3*

**Power Standards**

**The Wisconsin ASCD position on power standards remains the same since 2002:**

Power standards must be developed from Wisconsin's *Model Academic Standards* in order to identify a manageable number of priority standards at each grade level.

Power standards are purposefully selected and aligned within and across the core areas so that educators can focus on the most critical targets for student learning-- those which are essential for students to understand deeply. Power standards emphasize the "big ideas" and higher order thinking. They clearly define what students should understand deeply as they pass from grade to grade.

As the professionals who have worked most closely with Wisconsin's *Model Academic Standards* in school districts since their inception, Wisconsin ASCD recommends the following simplified sequence:

1. Define and develop a common concept of power standards.
2. Identify grade level power standards.  
*Grade level bands lack clarity and cause confusion.*
3. Achieve vertical alignment of power standards between grade levels.  
*If power standards are well defined, expectations and performance standards should be developed locally. Experience has demonstrated that benchmarks and performance indicators provided by the DPI are confusing and misused. They are interpreted literally and therefore result in a narrowing of focus rather than the intended deep understanding.*
4. Only after these steps have been achieved and reviewed by professionals in the field, can the state test issues be addressed.



#### *WASCD's Response to Recommendations #4-5*

#### **Getting the Test Right**

**The Wisconsin ASCD position supporting instructionally sensitive tests remains the same since 2002:**

When power standards are clearly described, the knowledge and skills students need in order to demonstrate competence will be evident.

1. Test items need to be reviewed in light of the power standards to increase depth and focus.  
*Include test items that are specifically aligned to grade level power standards-- depth vs. breadth.*
2. Since writing is the best evidence of thinking and is a key indicator of achievement, use an instructionally sensitive writing test that is reviewed locally by Wisconsin teachers. Administer the writing assessment in grades 3, 5, 7 and 9. *A writing assessment will provide closer alignment of grade level power standards to local writing instruction and assessments. Also the suggested schedule will alleviate the testing burden in grades 4, 8 and 10.*
3. Review successful instructionally sensitive assessment systems in other states and countries. *(e.g. Nebraska, Wyoming, Finland).*

State testing should be part of a broader, balanced assessment system that includes locally developed assessments. The tests and the broader system of multiple measures should provide guidance towards the improvement of student learning within a school district.

1. A state assessment system should provide timely and meaningful feedback to students, teachers, administrators and parents.  
*Work to compact the time required for student information to become available for analysis.*
2. To obtain instructionally sensitive information from state test results, the state data system must provide increased ability to search and analyze multiple variables.
3. The option to input local data into the state data system would greatly enhance comparability and alignment between state and local assessment results.

#### *WASCD Supports Recommendation #6*

#### *WASCD's Response to Recommendation #7*

**Professional Development is essential.**

Wisconsin ASCD recommends that DPI:

1. Attains expertise from national consultants, professional education organizations (ASCD, NSDC, NCTM, IRA, NCTE, etc.), in-state professionals, and other states that are using grade level power standards.
2. Ensures that teachers and administrators understand the purpose, intent and alignment of grade level power standards to improve instruction, as well as understand the appropriate use of the state test data.
3. Helps train educators in a variety of effective instructional support mechanisms to continuously improve performance of underperforming subgroups.



*WASCD's Response to Recommendation #8*  
**Portal of Resources: Don't reinvent the wheel.**  
*Another collection of resources is redundant.*

What is needed?

1. A juried review of current sites aligned to the new grade level power standards.
2. Identification of global, national and local experts consistent with the standards, instruction and technology related to the Wisconsin Student Assessment System.

*WASCD Supports Recommendation #9*

**Conclusion**

The Wisconsin Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development supports the efforts of the Department of Public Instruction to formulate recommendations based upon the work done in the Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills and the American Diploma Project reviews. Wisconsin ASCD applauds the forward thinking of the participants involved in the reviews.

As these recommendations are refined, Wisconsin ASCD offers both procedural recommendations and considerations based upon lessons learned in standards work across the state. Wisconsin ASCD stands willing to provide additional resource recommendations. We offer our continued collaboration and expertise in partnering with the Department of Public Instruction in the further development and implementation of these recommendations.

Joan Naomi Steiner, WASCD President



210 Green Bay Road • Thiensville, WI 53092  
Phone: (262) 242-3771 • Fax: (262) 242-1862  
Email: [office@wascd.org](mailto:office@wascd.org)

---