

Assessment & Accountability Workgroup Meeting
July 31, 2012

Workgroup Discussion Notes on GRAD Tests

Use of acronyms to describe testing is a problem with the Grad tests because:

- Don't know what they mean
- Misinterpreted
- No evidence they fulfill goals
- No meaning
- Creates situation of those in the know and those not

Creates situation of those in the know and those not is a problem because:

- Standards and testing are a communications opportunity
- Lots of "BS"
- Misunderstanding occurs when standards and tests are continually changed
- Time lag is a problem
- Multiple, conflicting purposes of testing – system accountability, student achievement
- Creates a power imbalance between those who understand the acronyms
- Disconnect

Multiple purposes of testing are a problem because:

- Difficulty creating reliability and validity in a test
- Misapplication of data
- Difficult to achieve consensus on test purpose(s)
- If test has multiple purposes, can teacher prepare students adequately?
- Shouldn't "teach to the test" need to teach to the standards?
- Assumption is (high-stakes test) this is way to motivate a 10th grader or 11th grader
- Is one instrument equally suited for all purposes for which used?

The GRAD test has outlived its usefulness because:

- It's 20 years old and put into place before other accountability tools were in place
- Different testing instruments used in postsecondary and K-12 (GRAD tests, postsecondary entrance tests)
- Students may be penalized for issues with the system
- Only one purpose is left – to get a high school diploma

The alignment to standards is a benefit of GRAD tests because:

- We know whether student has mastered content determined to be necessary
- Embedded in MCA minimizes testing time/administration
- Improves equity of instruction
- Provides opportunities to address deficiencies prior to graduation

Knowing whether students mastered necessary content is a benefit because:

- College and career readiness
- Can provide services for students who didn't master the skills
- Postsecondary success
- We know if students have learned what was taught
- Helps students and parents know where they are relative to grade level expectations
- Lends value to a diploma
- Provides value to an employer because they know what a diploma means

Providing services for students who didn't master the skills is a benefit because:

- It helps them achieve required skills
- If done right, saves time and dollars in postsecondary
- Ensures we're meeting commitment we set for the education system
- Helps them focus their learning on required skills
- Provides rationale for system as to resource allocation
- Helps identify and inform instruction
- More people prepared for global economy
- Closes the achievement gap