



NATD NEWS

A publication for and by the members.

From the NATD President Steve Henry

NATD MOVES TO JOIN JCTP

Dear NATD Colleagues:

In an NATD executive board teleconference held in March, the board reached a consensus to formally apply to become an organizational member of the Joint Committee on Testing Practices (JCTP).

The member organizations which formed JCTP in 1985 include the American Educational Research Association (AERA), the American Psychological Association (APA), and the National Council on Measurement in Education (NCME). The American Counseling Association (ACA) and the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) joined JCTP in 1987. The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) has since joined JCTP.

According to its bylaws, JCTP provides "a means by which professional organizations and test publishers can work together to improve the use of tests in assessment and appraisal."

JCTP work groups have produced a several influential publications including "The Code of Fair Testing Practices in Education", "Test User Qualifications: A Data-Based Approach to Promoting Good Test Use", and "Responsible Test Use: Case Studies for Assessing Human Behavior", and "The ABC's of School Testing" and an accompanying Leader's Guide. Two more publications are nearing completion including an update to the "Code of Fair Testing Practices in Education", and a work on testing students with disabilities.

By coming an active member of JCTP, NATD can be proactive in promoting good testing practices. NATD members, who work with implementation of testing programs in school districts throughout North America, would add a practical applied grass roots perspective to the committee.

It could take up to a year for

NATD to receive approval to become a member of JCTP. We have filed the necessary paperwork to join JCTP and I will be making a presentation to the group when it meets in New Orleans on the afternoon of April 24. If there is a consensus to admit NATD to the group, each member organization will need to seek approval by its executive board. If approved, NATD will appoint two members to participate in JCTP activities for a two year term. The possibility of NATD joining JCTP was raised by Carol Perlman, an NCME representative to JCTP.

Y2000 Convention

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Information



NATD Annual Meeting April 24, 2000 New Orleans, LA Marriott Hotel, 2nd floor, La Galerie 5 & 6

Breakfast: 7:30 a.m. sponsored by National Computer Services (NCS) in La Galerie 5

General Membership Meeting: 8:30-9:30 a.m. in La Galerie 6

Program: 9:30-11:30 Featuring James Popham on the topic "Maintaining Assessment Integrity in a High Stakes Environment"

RSVP Requested by April 15

Methods for RSVPing:

- Send an EMAIL to shenry@topeka.k12.ks.us
- Call and leave a message at 785-575-6139.
- Complete the card enclosed with this newsletter, add a stamp and drop it in the mail.

Standards-Assessments-Instructional Improvement: The Golden Triangle of American Education

National Association of Test Directors
National Council for Measurement in Education
Symposium 2000
Tuesday, 12:25 Session - C2
Sheraton, Ponchartrain B

American education faces the millennium with what has come to be a tacit national agreement that student performance and educational quality may be improved through the development and imposition of standards and assessments. Most of the states and school districts in the United States have developed standards for student performance and assessment systems in an effort to guide educational reform and gauge success in improving performance. The NATD/NCME Symposium 2000 brings together some of the best and most experienced thinkers on the use of standards and assessments to answer the ques-

Possible Merger of NATD and DRE?

When the NATD executive board met last spring, there was a consensus to explore the possibility of a merger between the DRE and NATD groups. Think about the pros and cons of such a merger and be prepared to contribute to discussion at the upcoming DRE and NATD meetings as well as on the list serves.

IMPORTANT EVENTS

For the latest
information
tune into www.natd.org
NATD's
Home Page
on the Net.

NATD meets annually in conjunction with the National Council on Measurement in Education, the American Educational Research Association, and the Directors of Research and Evaluation. Events of interest begin with the DRE meeting on Sunday, April 23 and run through Friday, April 28.

DRE Meeting

Mary Yakimowski, 2000
Directors of Research and
Evaluation (DRE) President/
Conference Chair:
myak@sbo.hampton.k12.va.us
The meeting will be April 23,
2000 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the
Sheraton Hotel, Pontchartrain E
room.

NATD Breakfast/Business Meeting Sponsored by NCS

Please note that this meeting
which has been on Tuesday in
recent years has been moved to
7:30 a.m. Monday morning
(See details above left.)

Annual NATD Dinner

(Tuesday night by invitation
mailed to NATD members with
RSVP required.)

Sponsors:

CTB/McGraw-Hill
Harcourt Educational Meas.
NCS
Riverside Publishing Co.

NATD Symposium

Tuesday 12:25 p.m. Session - C2,
Sheraton, Ponchartrain B

BOOK REVIEW: CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT: WHAT TEACHERS NEED TO KNOW

REVIEWED BY BARBARA WOOD, HAMPTON (VA) CITY SCHOOLS

As NATD members we often provide professional development to teachers to enhance their knowledge of and interest in assessment. The author of this book review is Barbara Wood, a teacher at Smith Elementary School in Hampton, Virginia. She is a member of Hampton City Schools' Instructional Leader Program, a research-based professional development model that provides training and support to identified classroom teachers who, in turn, support their colleagues within their school. These individuals go beyond the role of the traditional "Building Test Coordinator" who have the responsibility of distributing, collecting and counting test materials. Rather, their focus is on enhancing practices through a better understanding of assessment, analyzing/interpreting results for instructional improvement, and developing/implementing comprehensive school improvement plans with research-based instructional strategies to further heighten performance of our students. This program is strongly supported by Dr. Billy Canada (Superintendent), Dr. Rebecca Lett (Assistant Superintendent) and principals (such as Ms. Jan Corbett, Principal at Smith Elementary). Barbara offers NATD members this book review from her perspective as a classroom teacher serving as an Assessment Instructional Leader.

*Mary E. Yakimowski-Srebnick, Ph.D.
Director of Assessment & Instructional Support*

With the current Zeitgeist of accountability in the field of education comes more emphasis on the classroom teacher and classroom assessment.

When I was in college working on my teaching certification, I took a class on assessment called Tests and Measurement. I found the class to be interesting, but it was one of those classes that I didn't think much about as I began teaching. After all, as a second grade teacher, all of the tests were given, the grades recorded, and then the grades were averaged at the end of each grading period for report cards. Second graders took the ITBS. Teachers were given data showing where individual students were weak, but what you did with that information was up to you. In fact, you might say that what you did with assessment in your classroom was up to you.

Today, the passive unattached attitude towards assessment by the classroom teacher can no longer afford to exist. The classroom teacher of today is realizing that assessment is a vital part of teaching. This is the case even at the earliest grade levels. I, too, have come a long way since those first days of

teaching second grade. Presently I am a classroom teacher who also serves as an Assessment Instructional Leader in my elementary school in Hampton, Virginia. It is within this capacity that I help communicate information about Virginia's Standards of Learning (SOL) Assessment Program to the teachers in our school. I also assist in analyzing and disaggregating test data. I assist with developing and implementing a comprehensive School Improvement Plan (SIP) that establishes goals and objectives along with action plans for implementation of research-based instructional strategies to further enhance the performance of our students.

One of the resources that has been provided to each of the classroom teachers serving as Assessment Instructional Leaders is the second edition of W. James Popham's of *Classroom Assessment: What Teachers Need to Know* (1999). Popham has created a tremendous resource full of information that the classroom teachers of today need to know about assessment, that he fits

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into 15 chapters.

Popham's book covers an array of topics as shown in the chapter titles:

- Why Do Teachers Need to Know About Assessment
- Reliability
- Validity; Absence of Bias
- Deciding What to Assess and How to Assess It
- Selected-Response Tests
- Constructed-Response Tests
- Performance Assessment
- Portfolio Assessment
- Affective Assessment
- Improving Teacher-Developed Assessments
- Instructionally-Oriented Assessments
- Making Sense Out of Standardized Test Scores
- Appropriate and Inappropriate Test-Preparation Practices and Evaluating Teaching and Grading Students.

Early in the reading, Popham sets the stage by explaining the difference between "tests" (what we have a zillion of) and "assessment" (a broader descriptor to include the traditional paper-and-pencil tests, but also including many more types of measurement procedures). His book, while reader friendly, takes the teacher into a deeper understanding of how assessment, when used and formatted properly, lets teachers become more effective decision-makers in the education of their students.

As a classroom teacher, I feel that one of the strengths of this book is that it deals with all types of assessment. Many of the teachers I know are consumed with formatting their test to

"look" like the Virginia SOL. While this has good purpose, if we become so obsessed with the multiple choice format there is the risk that teachers and students will miss the opportunity to assess in a variety of ways. Popham spends several chapters addressing different test formats and looking at other types of assessments. He discusses each format thoroughly giving pros and cons, and he includes instructions on how to construct the best test questions possible. Each chapter also has a new section entitled "Parent Talk" that offers questions a parent might ask and how a teacher may respond. The "Self Check and Ponder Time" items at the end of each chapter are excellent discussion starters for a group of teachers who might wish to use the book in a study group on classroom assessment.

What are some particular highlights of this book? Chapter 11 addresses improving teacher-developed assessments. Within this chapter, Popham provides the classroom teacher with several procedures to improve the assessments they develop. Many teachers have probably not thought about the fact that tests can be edited and improved. Popham shares specific ways to improve tests through the use of judgmentally based improvement and empirical methods. Chapter 12 is new in this second edition. In this chapter Popham focuses on two assessment-based strategies for instructional improvement, one which he feels teachers are familiar with and a second one that he introduces

and gives the most attention to because he feels few teachers understand it. This chapter is about how assessment can help teaching. Also of note is Chapter 14. Despite being placed late in the book, it deals with a topic that is very important for today's classroom teacher: appropriate and inappropriate test-preparation practices. With the arrival of high-stakes testing, we as teachers must deal with how we are handling the stresses that these tests bring to both teachers and students. Popham introduces standards for teachers to keep in mind as they prepare their students for these high-stakes tests. He also cautions about the dangers that exist if we do not heed these standards.

Overall, as a classroom teacher, I have found Popham's book to be a valuable resource. Popham states the theme for his book is that "classroom assessment should help teachers make better educational decisions." To be a good decision-maker one must have the knowledge needed to make the appropriate decision. Popham has fulfilled the intent of this theme through this information-rich resource he has developed for teachers. What this teacher feels most noteworthy is that the author conveys a strong belief in the ability of teachers to continually assess their own knowledge and understanding of what is best for students and to grow and change when that is needed. I recommend this book not only to

classroom teachers, but also to

National Association of Test Directors Membership Application Form



US Department of Revenue Taxpayer ID# 222659646

Name: Dr. Mrs. Ms. Mr. _____

Title: _____

Organization: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____

ZIP: _____

Phone: _____

FAX: _____

E-Mail: _____

Check here if you wish to request that your directory information not be published on our NATD web site. _____

Membership Category: (please check one)

_____ Active Member: Responsible for educational testing programs in settings not primarily for profit.

_____ Emeritus Member: Active NATD member for at least five years and no longer employed on full time basis.

_____ Associate Member: Not directly responsible for testing programs and/or involved in test development primarily for profit.

Annual dues are \$20.00; Please make checks payable to "NATD". Mail your check and completed application to:

Dr. H Guy Glidden, Treasurer-NATD
Wichita Public Schools
201 N. Water Street
Wichita, KS 67202 USA
VOICE: (316) 973-4686

Member Address

U.S. POSTAGE



Call for Reviewers

With this issue we are beginning a practice of including measurement related book reviews in our newsletters which will also be archived on our web site. Reviewers will receive a free book as compensation for their efforts.

We have the following books available now:

Jaeger, R. M. (1998) **Analyzing, Disaggregating, Reporting, and Interpreting Student's Achievement Test Results: A Guide to Practice for Title I and Beyond.** Washington, D.C.: CCSO

Thurlow, M. L., Elliott, J.L., and Ysseldyke, J.E. (1997) **Testing Students With Disabilities : Practical Strategies for Complying**

with District and State Requirements. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press. Contact Steve Henry (shenry@topeka.k12.ks.us; 785-575-6139) if you are interested in reviewing one of these books.

NATD Testing Survey

Included with the mailing of this newsletter you will find a survey developed by Joe O'Reilly for gathering information from our members concerning district testing programs. Thanks to a number of NATD members who reviewed drafts of the survey. All members are encouraged to complete the survey so we can all be better informed about testing trends at the district level.

While members are encouraged to fill out the survey as completely as

possible, Joe has indicated that the first two pages are the most critical. Perhaps you could turn in the first two pages quickly and take a bit more time for the rest.

NATD Web Site Plans

At last year's NATD meeting, members spent some time brainstorming enhancements that could be made to our www.natd.org web site. Our web team has been researching what it would take to add a number of enhancements to the site and the Executive Board recently authorized expenditures to put them in place. Enhancements planned for next few months include partitioning some parts of the site as "members only", on-line databases and survey capability, indexing and site search capabilities, and a spiffier new look.