

CECIL CROUCH: Good afternoon everybody. My name is Cecil Crouch and I am a consultant with PaTTAN Harrisburg. Lynda Lupp was to present this section, but at the last minute something came up and she was unable to present this section, so she asked me to cover for her.

My parents had a great sense of humor and thought it would be a real hoot to name their first-born son Cecil and just send him out into the world and see what happened. So, if you call me Lynda I will not be offended at all. It is a step up for me.

I hope everybody is enjoying the conference so far. Thank you for going green. A lot really goes into the preparation for something this big, so we are hoping that everybody is getting something beneficial out of this conference. If you have any questions, if you could write them down on any kind of piece of paper, along with your email address, and give them to me at the end, that way if I don't answer it through the course of this one hour together, I or Lynda Lupp can email you the answer to whatever question you might have. That would be great.

There has been a lot going on with assessment over the past so many years. BSE and the Bureau of Assessment and Accountability as well as PaTTAN and some external folks have been working together collaboratively to develop the ASIST document, the document that is assigning students with IEP's to state tests, as well as determining the PSSA-M eligibility requirements, revising the IEP and developing the standards aligned IEP materials. So this has all been a collaborative process with the different bureaus working together.

I would like to find out who you are. How many of you, by a show of hands, are parents? Great. Thank you. Special education administrators? Building or district level administrators, not necessarily in special education? Teachers? And any counselors or school psychs? Very good. Okay. Thank you.

Now we are going to sub our rules though when we are talking about the assessment options that are available. We all play a very critical role in making sure that our students with disabilities are assigned to the appropriate assessments.

There are three major things that we are going to discuss during this hour together. One: We are going to talk about the state and national regulations that drive our current work related to assessments. Then we are going to discuss the assessment options for students with disabilities in Pennsylvania. Then we are going to go over changes that are forthcoming to the IEP.

We revised the assessment section of the IEP prior to this school year because during this current school year we had a new option for state testing, which was the PSSA modified in the area of mathematics only. So we had to revise section four of the IEP for this current school year. Next year the PSSA modified, or PSSA-M, is going to be available not only in the area of mathematics, but also in reading and science, so therefore we had to revise the IEP again so that folks could mark down the appropriate assessments for their kids. So I will be talking a little bit more about the revisions to the IEP later on in the presentation.

First, we are going to go over some overarching information.

Students with disabilities are assured access to assessments through several

acts of legislation. Federally we have IDEA and we have No Child Left Behind. At the state level we have Chapter 14 as well as Chapter 4. These acts of legislation require that students with disabilities receive accommodations on state tests and local assessments, and that students with disabilities are assessed in the same manner, and at the same frequency, as students without disabilities.

Now because the reform of healthcare has been so easy and without opposition, the President has decided to go into the reform of education. So I am sure many of you are aware that No Child Left Behind is being reauthorized. It is important to know that IDEA is being reauthorized as well. Now what that means is that when the statute becomes final, we will have a big statewide rollout of that information from the statute which will follow with, or be concurrent with, new special education forms that meet those new federal requirements. And then a couple of years after that we will get the regulations published, and then that same process will occur. There will be a statewide rollout and then the forms will be revised to meet those federal requirements.

If you haven't yet read the blueprint document for No Child Left Behind, which is really called the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the link is on this slide. It is really a quick read, and it is a very beneficial read.

Both of these major laws, IDEA and ESEA, are in the early stages of reauthorization. If you have read the Blueprint for Reform document, you have seen that it is basically just an outline of what the administration wants to accomplish with the reauthorization. We really don't have a whole lot of details as far as what these things mean for implementation yet, but I will kind of point out some of the things that are in that Blueprint.

IDEA is not even that far. There is no Blueprint document for IDEA yet. Currently discussions are being held to find out what they do want to accomplish with the reauthorization once it is final.

Okay, the national perspective that Dr. Lupp put in here is derived from conversations about No Child Left Behind as well as IDEA. It is pretty clear in the documentation that more emphasis is going to be continued to be put on achievement growth for students with disabilities, not just achievement, but achievement growth. There are also discussions about the most appropriate ways to aggregate the data from alternate assessments into the overall system. Like I said, we don't have details for what that means yet, but that is some of the things that are being discussed in that document. But overall, the emphasis seems to be, so far, on looking at growth over time.

The Blueprint for Reform document also talks about ensuring that all students who graduate, or who are on track to graduate ready for college and a career by the year 2020. So "Career and college ready by 2020" is kind of the new catch phrase that you see throughout the document. What we don't know is what that means with our current targets, because we have our current No Child Left Behind targets to get us to 100% proficiency by 2014. We don't know what role that is going to play into the reauthorization, which is talking about college and career ready by 2020.

The current discussions talk about eliminating outdated assessment systems. We don't know exactly what that means yet either, but it could include more of an emphasis on technology for assessment rather than paper and pencil. It could also be

inclusive of focusing more on growth over time rather than a one-time high stakes assessment to get a still snapshot of a student, so looking at more growth rather a one-time assessment to get that snapshot of where he or she is at. But again, they are only in the planning stages right now, so we really don't have any details.

Here are some things that are being talked about for inclusion in the reauthorization. We already mentioned college and career ready by 2020 which includes ensuring the standards that we have as a state of working towards that capacity, to ensure that students are going to be college and career ready by the time they graduate. Pennsylvania is currently analyzing common core standards for the purpose of determining what the next steps will be.

The blueprint also talks about the collection of key information regarding teaching and learning conditions, which would be ongoing, and used to improve conditions to ensure that growth is occurring. There is also the issue of a commitment of funding to reward and facilitate the work of schools that are making the most progress and in the document, if you read it, you will see they are talking about financially rewarding schools who are making the most progress, as well as allowing flexibility in the use of that funding. So maybe an issue of reducing the red tape involved in accepting the federal funds for those highest achieving schools.

There is also talk about focusing effort on schools that are making no progress, and they specifically say a focus on schools that are at the lowest five percent of growth and achievement within each state. So those would be what they call the challenge schools, those lowest five percent of schools. Then they have different categories of challenged schools, so there is the lowest five percent, and then there is a five percent that falls just above that lowest five percent which would also require some attention, but maybe not as much as those lowest five percent. We will have to wait and see exactly how all of this is going to play out.

Now you can see the five different assessment options in Pennsylvania. We have had the PSSA without accommodations, the PSSA with accommodations, and the PASA for quite a while now. Now this school year, our current school year, is the first year that the PSSA modified for mathematics was an option, and that is available either with or without accommodation. Next school year, 2010-2011, will bring also the options of science and reading for the PSSA modified, or PSSA-M, for eligible students with IEP's.

This is the assessment calendar for next school year, 2010-2011. It was posted relatively recently and you can find this on the PDE website. You would look under programs, PSSA, and then testing calendar.

Now we are going to talk a little bit about information related to the PSSA-modified. But are there any questions so far based on what we have covered?

This excerpt is taken from the regulations on alternate assessments based on modified academic achievement standards. You will notice that the emphasis on the slide here is on grade level content. The clear and explicit language reemphasizes the need to hold all students to high standards that are grade level appropriate. The cap of two percent for the modified assessment, the PSSA-M, was put into place specifically for this purpose, because along with the research that the federal government did to find out about what percentage a modified assessment based on modified achievement

standards, about what percentage of students this would be appropriate for, they also wanted to ensure that there wasn't a flooding of students with disabilities into a separate assessment system. So the cap of two percent I guess is a way, in addition to the research, to help ensure that that doesn't happen. So with that cap of two percent there really needs to be very purposeful discussion regarding the appropriateness of the assessment on an individual student level.

The AAMAS stands for Alternate Assessment based on Modified Achievement Standards. It's the hottest new abbreviation out there. AAMAS. Alternate Assessment based on Modified Achievement Standards. Dr. Zaportchec (sp) committed to developing a modified assessment, which we now have as the PSSA-M for mathematics this year. It is worth noting that not all states have pursued a modified assessment. Of all the states, because it was optional, only nine pursued that option into their state assessment system. And of the nine states, only one, Texas, has received full approval from the federal government on the development and administration of its assessment. The only reason for that is because Texas started before anyone else, so they are a couple of years ahead of the game.

We have some information on the PSSA-M. This information on the GSEG Grant, basically it means that the federal government provided a grant to states to help develop an alternate assessment based on modified achievement standards, and to determine its target population. Information related to the GSEG grant can be found on the PaTTAN website. If you go the PaTTAN website, which is www.pattan.net, on the right hand side of the home page, you will see a little section that says "Bureau of Special Education" and right underneath it there is a little link for "assessment." If you go to that "BSE assessment" link you can find all the information related to the state GSEG grant and information related to the PSSA modified.

Now, as a result of the research from the GSEG grant, the Bureau of Special Education and the Bureau of Assessment and Accountability came up with eligibility criteria for participation in the PSSA modified. This slide gives us the four criteria to determine if a student with an IEP is eligible to take the PSSA-M. First the student may not be eligible for the PASA in order to be eligible for the PSSA modified. Second, the student has to have a standards aligned IEP that denotes the student is receiving standards aligned grade level instruction. That does not mean across the board on every single standard, but you do have to denote that a student is receiving grade level standards aligned instruction. The student's needs are such that even if significant growth occurs the student is still unlikely to achieve grade level proficiency in the current IEP year, so we are looking at the students with IEP's who are working on grade level standards, working toward grade level standards, but are significantly behind, and even if significant progress would occur during that IEP year, they are still unlikely to reach proficiency on the PSSA. The student would have an established pattern of significantly low performance on multiple valid measures, despite the use of researched based intensive interventions.

Any additional information on eligibility requirements for the PSSA modified can be read in the ASIST Document, Assigning Students with IEP's to State Tests, which can be found on the link at the bottom of this slide, which is really hard to see, but it is also on the PaTTAN website. You can find it under the assessment side, under the Bureau of Special Education.

There is also a link on the lower left hand side of the home page that says “Standards Aligned IEP’s” and you can find the ASIST document in that link as well.

These are some of the differences for the PSSA modified. I will give you a second to check those over. An additional benefit with the modified assessment is that the students don’t have to record their answers onto a separate sheet; it is all recorded on the same sheet, so the document that the student is given, the assessment the student is given, is where they will read the questions as well as document their answers.

On the next slide we are going to see an original PSSA item, a test item off of the PSSA, and then on the following slide we will see that same item but for the modified assessment, so we will be able to make some comparisons between the standard types of questions on the PSSA as well as the items on the modified assessment.

It is worth noting that PSSA modified sample assessments items can be found on the PDE website. I know that it is sometimes challenging to find things on either the PaTTAN or PDE websites, so I want to kind of give you the step-by-step directions on how to find the sample items for the PSSA modified.

So if you go to the PDE website, on the left side you will see a bunch of different options that you can click. One of them says “elementary and secondary education.” You will click on “elementary and secondary education” and then a drop-down box with several other items will show up underneath elementary and secondary education, and of them you would want to click “pre-K to 12 bureaus,” then some more options will show up. You will want to click on “Bureau of Assessment and Accountability” and then will take you to a page and you would just click on “PSSA resource materials.”

So this is the original item, the original PSSA item. The next slide is going to show the modified assessment item. So take a couple of seconds just to look at this item and get a feel for what it looks like, as well as the choices.

This is the modified item. We can see several similarities and differences here. Some of the differences: One, there is more white space. Two, there are less words, so it is a little bit easier to read this item. A third difference is you can see that there is a clue word that has been highlighted, that was not highlighted in the original question, which is closest. While there are four answer choices for this modified item, which is the same number of choices in the original item, one of the answer choices here, which is \$108, is an outlier. So while we have some, the first 3 are relatively close together, we have one that is an outlier. Another difference is that while the answer choices are listed in the same way essentially, these have dollars signs in front of them and in the original question there were no dollar signs in front of the various amounts.

Some of the similarities are that the first three choices for this item are exactly the same as the first three choices of the original item: 13, 20 and 26. The only difference is on this item it has dollar signs in front of it. This question, while simpler, is still assessing the same competencies, which are finding a percentage of a quantity and estimating, or rounding, depending on how the student goes about solving the problem. So it is still assessing grade level content, but it is doing it in a different way. Also, you will see that in this item it is rounded to \$128 as opposed to \$127 and some change in the original item.

When information on the PSSA modified was rolled out, we didn't know what the performance level descriptors were going to be, because they didn't have to be advanced, proficient, basic and below basic. They could have been anything. So now we do have that information and it is advanced-m, proficient-m, basic-m, and below basic-m. So they kept with the same general idea, but they put an "m" behind it. We don't have cut scores yet for these different designations, and we won't have them until June. When all of the data is collected, that is when they will calculate what the cut scores are going to be for each performance level descriptor.

Remember, the PSSA-M is still assessing grade level content standards. It is a modified assessment, not because it is testing modified standards. It is a modified assessment because it is based on modified achievement standards. So what a student has to do to demonstrate that they are proficient on the PSSA will look much different than what the student has to do to prove that they are proficient on the PSSA-M. That is about all the details I have on that at this current time, but we do know that the cut scores are going to be coming out in June, and the definitions of the performance level descriptors.

Okay, now I want to talk a little bit about the issue of the two percent cap. The two percent cap, you are very familiar with the one percent cap that is applied to the number of students who are able to count as proficient or advanced for the PASA, that cap of one percent. For the PSSA modified we have a cap of two percent of students at a district grade level span that can count as proficient or advanced for that particular grade span. And the grade spans are grades three through five, six through eight, and nine through twelve.

That is just the information we have that the grade spans are those grade levels, but that is not necessarily what you would calculate to find your two percent, because the PSSA-M is not an option for students in third grade. One of the reasons for that is because to be eligible to take the modified assessment they have to have had, not a history, but experience of struggling on the state assessment. I can't remember the exact wording, however that ended up meaning that a third grade PSSA-M was not an option. So fourth grade is the first grade that a student would be eligible to take the modified assessment. So while we are talking about a grade span of three to five, really to determine the two percent cap for that three to five grade span, you would be calculating the number of students assessed in grades four and five.

For the six to eight grade span, we would be calculating all of those students who would be assessed on the state assessment to determine the two percent cap. And then for the nine through twelve grade span, the only assessed grade level is grade eleven, so to determine the two percent cap for the nine to twelve grade span you are really only talking about two percent of your eleventh graders district wide.

If an LEA exceeds the two percent cap, it decides, the LEA decides, which students will be counted as not proficient. Just that language, "not proficient" is also relatively new. It used to be that students who were over the cap were designated as "low below basis" for the purposes of calculating AYP, and the reason for that was because we were using the PPI, the Pennsylvania Performance Index. We are no longer using the PPI. We are using a growth model which means that there is no need to designate students as "low below basis" for the purposes of AYP calculation. They would just be designated as "not proficient."

So students who exceed that two percent cap, the district decides who is designated as “not proficient” for the purposes of AYP calculation. The “proficient or not proficient” that is designated the students, follows with them into each of the subgroups of which they are a member. So if a district, if their two percent for the six to eight grade span is ten students who are able to count as “proficient” or “advanced” on the PSSA modified, say that two percent cap for that grade span is ten students, and fifteen students actually score proficient or advanced on the PSSA modified, the two percent cap is ten, which means that the district has to determine five students of those fifteen who would count as not proficient.

So as the school is deciding who is counted as not proficient, it is important to keep in mind that that designation as not proficient for AYP calculation purposes only, follow the student into all their subgroups. So they would fall into the all student category, which is not a subgroup, but then they would fall into that IEP subgroup, and then any other subgroup that the student may belong to: White, African American, economically disadvantaged; that not proficient goes into each of those subgroups in determining AYP calculations.

The only way that an LEA can exceed the two percent cap is if they didn't meet the one percent cap for the PASA. So if there are five students who are able to take the PASA in the three to five grade span and count as proficient or advanced, maybe only three students of that available five, maybe only three got proficient or advanced, or took the assessment. That means that there would be two extra students, because that one percent cap for the PASA was not met. So those extra two students then could be applied to that same grade span for the PSSA-M. Does that make sense? So if you don't meet your one percent cap for the PASA, those available extra students can then be applied to the PSSA-M.

The reverse is not true. If you don't meet your two percent cap on the PSSA modified, those students cannot be added to your one percent cap for the PASA. It only goes if you didn't fill your one percent cap on the PASA, those students can be applied to the PSSA-M.

And if you have additional questions about the cap, one of the last slides I will show are contact names and numbers of folks you can contact.

There is an example on the slide here for the grade span of six through eight.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (27:30 to 27:39)

CECIL CROUCH: Right, but they have moved to a growth model, so all that the designation has to be is proficient, because proficient or advanced is what we see for different purposes. But for meeting AYP it is either proficient or not proficient, so that is really the lineation line: Are they proficient or not proficient. So they would be determining the AYP based on that information.

One frequently asked question that comes up is about sixth grade, and it is if our sixth grade classes are in elementary buildings, but grades seven and eight are in a middle school or a junior high, how does that calculation occur? The answer is that it doesn't matter what your building configuration is. A grade level span for a district is a grade level span, so whether the sixth grade is in an elementary building, a junior high

or middle school, it doesn't matter. They are still looking at grades six, seven and eight across that district for that grade level span.

There is no limit to the number of students who can participate in the modified assessment, but they have to meet eligibility requirements, and the students have to meet the criteria, the four criteria, that are talked about in that ASIST document. The determination for who takes the PSSA modified is made by an IEP team. I want to state that because it's regulation. It's a regulation that the IEP team decides who takes the modified assessment, if they're eligible. It's not based on an administrator telling the school, "Our cap for grade six, seven and eight is ten, so you're only going to identify ten students to take the modified assessment." That would not be compliant.

But where the administrator does get to make a determination is at the end when the school receives the preliminary AYP file from DRC. It will tell you if you exceeded that two percent cap on any particular grade level span, and then that is when you would go about determining which students count as proficient, and which are going to count as not proficient, if you have exceeded that two percent cap.

Again, that determination is for AYP purposes only. So the school report and the parent report is still going to say exactly how the student scored on the assessment. It is just for AYP purposes a student would be counted as not proficient.

Questions?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: So if you're allowed ten students, and you have twenty selected by the team, and all twenty are proficient, you get credit for ten, and the other ten are not proficient for AYP purposes, correct?

CECIL CROUCH: Yes.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Then when you do the selection, the final thing I want to try to think through, if I have people who are not proficient, I _____ more than _____, I can _____ (30:27 to 30:37)

CECIL CROUCH: Whatever student is not proficient, it follows with them into each of their subjects.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: So, I'm just thinking this through. If you have many subgroups, and you _____, you want to build those up. _____ come underneath an ethnic, economic or special Ed, that is probably not a good choice _____. (30:46 to 30:58)

CECIL CROUCH: I can't comment on that one at all. Security.

Okay, next I want to get into the IEP update, because the IEP has been changed, it's just not been made public yet. Next year we have the PSSA modified for reading, math, as well as science. So we had to update the IEP based on those options.

In early May, so coming up here pretty soon, a communication is going to be shared with the entire field on the revised IEP section, which is only section four. The only thing that was changed is section four, which is the assessment section.

There is also going to be a video clip of information on this new section that will be posted on the web so that you can watch the information being shared.

I want to show you what it looks like.

You can see it has a little bit of a different look, but I want to point out what some of the differences are. At the top, you will see the directions, and we are hoping that it's pretty clear and pretty user friendly on how to navigate through this section. But you have the general directions initially, which are essentially telling you if you have a student who is of a grade level to take the PSSA, you are going to select which assessment has been determined appropriate for that individual student by content area.

So for reading, there is a student taking the PSSA with accommodations, the PSSA without accommodations, the PSSA-M with accommodations, or the PSSA-M without accommodations. So you will see those four options for reading, math and science, and you just check the option that applies to that individual child.

Another thing I want to point out is, and I am actually kind of excited about this, you will see at the front here where it says, "allowable accommodations may be found in the PSSA accommodations guidelines." That has been on the IEP, however the link that was on the document was a link to the PaTTAN website. This is a direct link right to the document, so you don't have to search for anything. It will take you directly to that document. The same applies to the criteria for PSSA modified eligibility and PASA eligibility. The link that's on the document will take you directly to that document. You don't have to search for it.

So the first option, as it is right now, is that the student is not assessed. This means that the student is not in grades three through eight or eleven. Then we first have reading here. And it is telling us that the PSSA is assessed at grades three through eight and eleven, and the PSSA-M is administered in grades four through eight and eleven, because remember third grade is not an option for the modified. So there are those four different options: PSSA with accommodations, PSSA without, PSSA-M with accommodations, or PSSA-M without accommodations. You are just checking the appropriate option.

Then those same exact four categories apply for math because then you are going to pick which assessment option applies. The same applies for science because science will be available for the modified assessment next year. For writing we just have the PSSA without or with accommodations. And if the student is taking the PASA then there is only one option because all content areas of reading, math and science are all assessed on the PASA.

The reason for this new configuration is because the PSSA-M is content specific. It is a content specific determination. So a student could be eligible to take the PSSA modified in math, but then take the regular PSSA for reading and science. Okay? It's a determination that's made by content area. The PASA is not in the same category. You either take the PASA and are assessed via the PASA in reading, science and math, or you're not. So it's a one stop shop, that you're not choosing content areas that you're going to use with the PASA. You either take it or you don't.

Any questions about the revised IEP?

The other issue that came up, and if any of you are familiar with the PSSA modified and the ASIST Document, you will know that one of the qualifications for this year, for the PSSA modified in math, was that the student had to have a standards aligned IEP and the student had to have at least one measurable annual goal in the area of mathematics to qualify to take the PSSA modified for mathematics. Next year it's not just math. Reading and science will also be available. And for reading it worked out fine because the same will apply. You will need a standards aligned IEP and you will need at least one measurable annual goal in the area of reading. Science was a little bit different, because we don't write measurable annual goals for science or social studies. A student doesn't have a specific learning disability in science. A student has a disability that manifests itself in reading and mathematics and in other areas, but not necessarily specifically in science. So there couldn't be the eligibility criteria that a student had to have a measurable annual goal in science, because that is just counterintuitive to what we do.

So the qualification is going to be if a student has taken the PSSA modified in either reading or math, then that student would be eligible, pending an IEP team decision, to take the PSSA modified in science. Okay? So we still have the same qualifications for the modified for reading and math, and if the student has qualified and has taken the PSSA modified in either reading or math, then the IEP team decides if it's appropriate for that student to take it in science as well.

Okay, now we are going to talk a little bit about the PASA. The PASA is the Pennsylvania Alternate System of Assessment, and it has been around for almost ten years now. This slide briefly outlines the evolution of the assessment by content area over the years. Initially reading and math were only at grades three, five, eight and eleven; now it's three through eight and eleven. Science continues to be at grades four, eight and eleven.

As Pennsylvania builds out the standards aligned system, BSE is working to position students with significant cognitive disabilities within the system, within the standards aligned system. Pennsylvania has tentative inclusive practices and presumed competence for all of its learners, and IDEA and Chapter 14 both recognize that progress of all students be measured in relation to the general education curriculum, and address additional needs such as communication skills, daily living skills, and social skills. They have been very cognizant that it is an "and." A student needs to be measured in relation to the general education curriculum AND address any additional needs such as communication, daily living, social skills, and whatever other needs the student might have.

In ten years since the inception of the alternate assessment based on alternative achievement standards, educators have begun to see situations of learning that they didn't necessarily think was going to happen. I taught life skills, and I can absolutely attest to the fact that as I was working towards these higher-level skills my students made additional progress, so that is always kept in the forefront of everything that is done here.

Along with this though, the Bureau of Special Education, in coordination with the Bureau of Teaching and Learning, will begin the expansion of the standards alignment system as it relates to our students with significant cognitive disabilities.

Pennsylvania is partnering with the National Alternate Assessment Center, or NAAC, at the University of Kentucky. That group will facilitate the work in Pennsylvania. And as a result, the things that are on the slide are happening. Pennsylvania plans for a large rollout of this portion of the standards aligned system in the fall of 2010, so stay tuned.

In August at the Low Incidents Conference, BSE will begin to demonstrate the foundational parts of this system, so if you attend the Low Incidents Conference you will be seeing some of this information as it's coming out.

There are also a couple of slides for things that you can do. Currently BSE is involved in three research studies conducted through federal awards and grants. Many times schools or LEA's are needed as pilots or field tests for these different things. The MAAPS grant, which stands for Modified Academic Assessment and Participation Screening, is going to be recruiting special education and general education teachers of eighth grade students with IEP's to use an online tool to determine the students opportunity to learn grade level content. The intent of this research is to develop a screening tool which would help IEP teams make reliable and valid decisions about who is most appropriate to participate in the PSSA modified. So they are looking at developing a screening tool to help determine who is the most appropriate, who is the modified assessment most appropriate for.

PA is also one of the participants in a PARA study, which stands for Partnership for Accessible Reading Assessment. This study is looking at making large-scale reading assessments more accessible. We are currently in the recruitment phase for this study that will be conducted in May at the fourth and eighth grade levels for students who have learning disabilities, mental retardation, who are receiving speech and language support, and students with hearing impairment.

PA is also waiting to hear whether we will be a research participant in the National Research and Development Center Grant that will be awarded later this month. This grant will total about eleven million dollars. The purpose of this grant is to assess the academic progress of students with disabilities, and to improve curricular coverage and instructional support that enhances student outcomes. Growth will be a specific focus of this particular study as well.

So any questions or interest in any of those research studies, please contact Lynda Lupp.

These are some things that occur annually. These have to occur every year, and assistance is always very much welcomed for any of these activities.

These are your major contacts. If you have any questions related to the PSSA modified, or assessments in general, Lynda Lupp has been working with the modified assessment and as part of the GSEG grant, and Diane Somasta (sp), who has been working with her, is from the Bureau of Assessment and Accountability. So these folks are able to answer just about any question you might have, or if you would like to participate in any of these studies.

Here is some additional contact information for PSSA-M, DRC and PASA. And then I have a whole bunch of other stuff.

Any questions about any of the assessments? Yes sir?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: The question that is asked many times by our teachers is that why do we test _____ the school year _____ for the PSSA or the PSSA-M. I understand that our _____, the _____, that issues the multiple choice questions _____ open ended questions. Are we looking into finding a vendor that can extend that time, _____ more instruction time, before we have to take _____. (43:57 to 44:26)

CECIL CROUCH: I can't answer that question, but according to that Blueprint for Reform for the Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, it is looking like we are going to be moving into a different direction, and not just a onetime snapshot of student assessment, but more of an ongoing student growth. So I can't answer that question, but down the road it may not even be an issue, so we'll have to wait and see what rolls out.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: _____ (44:57 to 45:50)

CECIL CROUCH: I don't know, but one of the things that the Blueprint talks about is the aggregation of alternate assessment data into the overall assessment system, so I don't have anything.

Okay, anything else? Yes sir.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: _____ (46:07 to the end—46:52)

CECIL CROUCH: Ok and I think we're about out of time.