



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF LEGISLATION AND CONGRESSIONAL AFFAIRS

September 21, 2011

The Honorable Herbert H Kohl
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Kohl:

I am pleased to inform you that the WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION -- OFF OF EDUC ACCOUNTABILITY DIV FOR STUD AND SCHOOL SUCCES has been selected to receive funding under the GRANTS FOR ENHANCED ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENTS PROGRAM (84.368A). This grant will be in the amount of \$10,486,195.00 for the first budget period (09/30/2011 through 09/29/2015). It is anticipated that the grant will be for a total of 4 year(s). Accompanying this letter is an explanation of the purpose of the GRANTS FOR ENHANCED ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENTS PROGRAM and a brief description of the activities that will be funded under the grant to the WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION -- OFF OF EDUC ACCOUNTABILITY DIV FOR STUD AND SCHOOL SUCCES.

The contact at the WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION -- OFF OF EDUC ACCOUNTABILITY DIV FOR STUD AND SCHOOL SUCCES is:

PHILIP OLSEN
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The grantee will be notified officially of their selection by the Department in the next few days. In the meantime, you should feel free to share this information with the grantee and others as you see fit.

I hope you find this information useful. If the Office of Legislation and Congressional Affairs can provide any further information in this regard or assistance in any other matter, please do not hesitate to contact me or my staff at (202) 401-1028.

Sincerely,

Gabriella Gomez
Assistant Secretary,
Office of Legislation and Congressional Affairs

Reference Grant Award Number: #S368A110001
WISCONSIN

Purpose of the Program GRANTS FOR ENHANCED ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENTS

Competitive grants available to State Educational Agencies (SEAs) to help them enhance the quality of assessments and accountability systems

Assessment Services Supporting ELs through Technology Systems (ASSETS)

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

Project Abstract

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, in collaboration with the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) Consortium, proposes to develop a next-generation comprehensive and balanced assessment system for English learners (ELs). This project, known as *Assessment Services Supporting ELs through Technology Systems (ASSETS)*, will leverage the considerable experience of WIDA and its collaborating partners and consortium state educational agencies (SEAs) to create an innovative technology-based assessment system that is (a) anchored in WIDA’s established English language proficiency (ELP) standards that are aligned with the Common Core State Standards; (b) informed by rigorous ongoing research; and (c) supported by comprehensive professional development and outreach, all of which will be developed within the framework of a multistate consortium.

As the management partner of the ASSETS project, WIDA, housed within the Wisconsin Center for Education Research at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, will build on its successful foundation, following well-established approaches that include (a) a *consortium* approach in which representatives from consortium SEAs have an active voice in the design and direction of the project; (b) a *system* approach in which standards, assessments, professional development, and research are well aligned; and (c) a “*can do*” approach that equips educators to tap into what students can do to develop language, access grade-level content, and reach college and career readiness. In collaboration with SEAs and the project’s development and research partners—the Center for Applied Linguistics, UCLA, WestEd, Data Recognition Corporation, and MetriTech, Inc.—and with the advisement of nationally recognized leaders in the field, WIDA will undertake the following activities for ASSETS:

- *Establish a consortium structure* that gives representatives of the respective SEAs a voice in the design, implementation, governance, and policymaking of the ASSETS assessment system;

- *Develop, pilot, field-test, and finalize ELP assessments* (see below) that use technology to allow for more authentic language assessment tasks and compatibility with content-driven assessment systems;
- *Create a technology-based training program* for test scorers;
- *Create professional development and outreach materials*;
- *Conduct evaluation* of the assessments and professional development; and
- *Plan for scale-up and sustainability* of the assessment system beyond the grant period.

The new assessments will include (a) *a summative test* that will cover the language domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing and the five WIDA ELP standards; (b) *an on-demand diagnostic (screening) test* to be used to determine eligibility for EL services and program placement within those services; (c) *classroom benchmark assessments* that will be organized by language domain and standard at five grade-level clusters and that will incorporate innovative item types and response spaces; and (d) *formative assessment resources* that will include language learning progressions corresponding to college and career readiness standards for incorporation into instructional assessment for ELs.

The ASSETS project represents a critical first step in creating a next-generation EL assessment system. This system will maintain and enhance a large-scale summative assessment in a technology environment, but more critically, it will introduce on-demand, targeted, standards-based benchmark assessments to the classroom that, together with formative assessment processes and resources, can have a powerful and immediate impact on language teaching and learning. WIDA fully expects that with direction from consortium members, the assessments, professional development, and research created and conducted under this grant will continue to improve and expand, offering educators more resources to serve the needs of their students and to guide program development and educational policy.

As of May 27, 2011, the following states have signed memoranda of understanding for this project: Alabama, Delaware, District of Columbia, Idaho, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Missouri, Montana, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.