



**Los Angeles County
Office of Education**
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TO: Educational Programs

FROM: Compliance Support Services

**Topic: Compliance Information Bulletin Number 28
Assessor Qualifications**

Questions: Can a paraeducator administer a standardized assessment?
Can a teacher not trained in assessment administer a standardized assessment?

Answer: No, and the requirements are very specific in the California Education Code. When a case goes to a due process hearing the attorney(s) will invariably ask the assessor the qualifications and training for administering a particular test. A person not trained in assessments would severely question validity and reliability of the test and the results. I am attaching a copy of the California Education Code Section 56320 and the Woodcock-Johnson III Test of Achievement Examiner Qualifications.

Please share this bulletin with your educational staff.

CALIFORNIA EDUCATION CODE - SECTION 56320

Assessment / Testing Requirements. Before any action is taken with respect to the initial placement of an individual with exceptional needs in special education instruction, an individual assessment of the pupil's educational needs **shall be conducted, by qualified persons**, in accordance with requirements including, but not limited to, all the following:

(a) Testing and assessment materials and procedures used for the purposes of assessment and placement of individuals with exceptional needs are selected and administered so as not to be racially, culturally, or sexually discriminatory.

(b) Tests and other assessment materials meet all the following requirements:

(1) Are provided and administered in the pupil's primary language or other mode of communication, unless the assessment plan indicates reasons why this provision and administration are not clearly feasible.

(2) Have been validated for the specific purpose for which they are used.

(3) Are administered by **trained personnel** in conformance with the instructions provided by the producer of the tests and other assessment materials, except that individually administered tests of intellectual or emotional functioning shall be administered by a credentialed school psychologist.

(c) Tests and other assessment materials include those tailored to assess specific areas of educational need and not merely those which are designed to provide a single general intelligence quotient.

(d) Tests are selected and administered to best ensure that when a test administered to a pupil with impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills produces test results that accurately reflect the pupil's aptitude, achievement level, or any other factors the test purports to measure and not the pupil's impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills unless those skills are the factors the test purports to measure.

(e) Pursuant to subsection (f) of Section 300.532 of Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulations, no single procedure is used as the sole criterion for determining whether a pupil is an individual with exceptional needs and for determining an appropriate educational program for the pupil.

(f) The pupil is assessed in all areas related to the suspected disability including, if appropriate, health and development, vision, including low vision, hearing, motor abilities, language function, general intelligence, academic performance, communicative status, self-help, orientation and mobility skills, career and vocational abilities and interests, and social and emotional status. A developmental history is obtained, when appropriate. For pupils with residual vision, a low vision assessment shall be provided in accordance with guidelines established pursuant to Section 56136. In assessing each pupil under this article, the assessment shall be conducted in accordance with subsection (h) of Section 300.532 of Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulations.

(g) The assessment of a pupil, including the assessment of a pupil with a suspected low incidence disability, shall be **conducted by persons knowledgeable** of that disability. Special attention shall be given to the unique educational needs, including, but not limited to, skills and the need for specialized services, materials, and equipment consistent with guidelines established pursuant to Section 56136.

(h) As part of an initial assessment, if appropriate, and as part of any reassessment under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.) and this part, the group that includes members of the individualized education program team, and other qualified professionals, as appropriate, shall follow the procedures specified in subsection (a) of Section 300.533 of Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulations. The group may conduct its review without a meeting.

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Woodcock-Johnson III Test of Achievement Examiner Qualifications

The examiner qualifications for the *WJ III*® ACH have been informed by the joint Standards for **Educational** and Psychological Testing¹. Listed below are three applicable standards from this publication. This section includes a discussion of these standards as applied to the *WJ III* ACH.

Any person administering the *WJ III* ACH needs thorough knowledge of the exact administration and scoring procedures and an understanding of the importance of adhering to these standardized procedures. To become proficient in administering the *WJ III* ACH, examiners will need to study the administration and scoring procedures carefully and follow the procedures precisely. The Examiner's Manual provides guidelines for examiner training and includes specific instructions for administering and scoring each of the tests.

Competent interpretation of the *WJ III* ACH requires a higher degree of knowledge and experience than is required for administering and scoring the tests. Graduate-level training in educational assessment and a background in diagnostic decision-making are *recommended*. Only trained and knowledgeable professionals who are sensitive to the conditions that may compromise, or even invalidate, standardized test results should make interpretations and decisions. The level of formal education recommended to interpret the *WJ III* ACH is typically documented by successful completion of an applicable graduate-level program of study that includes, at a minimum, a practicum-type course covering administration and interpretation of tests of academic achievement. In addition, many qualified examiners possess state, provincial, or professional certification, registration, or licensure in a field or profession that includes, as part of its formal training and code of ethics, the responsibility for rendering educational assessment and interpretation services.

Because professional titles, roles, and responsibilities vary among states (or provinces), or even from one school district to another, it is impossible to equate competency to professional titles. Consequently, the joint professional standards suggest that it is the responsibility of each school district to be informed by this statement of examiner qualifications and subsequently determine who, under its aegis, is qualified to administer and interpret the *WJ III* ACH.

• **Standard 11.3**

Responsibility for test use should be assumed by or delegated only to those individuals who have the training, professional credentials, and experience necessary to handle this responsibility. Any special qualifications for test administration or interpretation specified in the test manual should be met. (p. 114)

• **Standard 13.10**

Those responsible for educational testing programs should ensure that the individuals who administer and score the test(s) are proficient in the appropriate test administration procedures and scoring procedures and that they understand the importance of adhering to the directions provided by the test developer. (p. 147)

• **Standard 13.13**

Those responsible for educational testing programs should ensure that the individuals who interpret the test results to make decisions within the school context are qualified to do so or are assisted by and consult with persons who are so qualified. (p. 148)

¹ American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association, & National Council on Measurement in Education. (1999). *Standards for educational and psychological testing*. Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association.