

WREB

A National Dental/Dental Hygiene Testing Agency

www.wreb.org

Winter 2006

The President's Corner

by Dr. Paul Sims, 2006 WREB President

In early January 2006 I was elected president of WREB and had planned to start the year on a positive note, putting the political struggles of the past eighteen months behind me. Last week two events occurred that changed my intent and the contents of this newsletter.

I received word from a source in Minnesota that their Dental Board had met recently and decided to immediately not recognize the results of the SRTA exam, and as of January 1, 2007 not recognize and accept the results of the WREB exam for initial licensure. I have asked but not received a reply from the Minnesota Dental Board answering the question, "WHY". Hopefully in the near future an answer will be forthcoming.

This is the fourth state in as many months from the Midwest that has stopped recognizing the WREB exam for licensure. An unsettling pattern has emerged. Since October the states of Illinois, Wisconsin, and Nebraska have also announced they will no longer recognize the results of the WREB examination as satisfactory for licensure immediately or in the near future.

The WREB examinations have not changed. They were satisfactory to these agencies for the past several years and have not been altered. What has changed? It would seem ugly politics is once again creeping or roaring into the processes whereby we certify dentists and hygienists to be able to practice in our states. I am awaiting a response from all these states to tell me WHY they have taken this course of action.

The WREB Dental and Dental Hygiene examinations have recently been evaluated by Dr. Tom Haladyna. He is an independent testing specialist who has consulted with the WREB twice before, as well as the ADA. Our examinations have been found to be valid and reliable for evaluation of candidates for dental and dental hygiene licensure. To my

knowledge the newly created ADEX examination has not been subjected to the same level of scrutiny.

The second thing I saw last week was an AADE editorial that stated their Executive Council would not urge states to mutually recognize each other's examinations. The AADE seems to have changed their previous course that urged states and testing agencies to use the newly formed ADEX exam. They currently state they will not make recommendations about mutual recognition of examinations. This is quite a change. There are still some affiliations the AADE has with the ADEX exam that are troubling.

The current political processes that are going on now between regional and state examinations threaten to undo the work that has been accomplished over the past several years. The movement of dentists and hygienists from state to state will be diminished if the current processes continue. The states that need dentists and hygienists to provide care for the underserved will lose out.

While the dental profession still desires the development of a single national exam, the political and philosophical differences that exist within the examining community indicate that this is not likely to happen in the near future. A necessary step to allow the freedom of movement for dentists and dental hygienists is for states to recognize the results of all valid and reliable examinations for clinical licensure. I also urge state dental boards to stop the process of arbitrarily deciding to recognize the results of selective examinations.



To Be or Not To Be

(Compensatory That Is)

by Del Hammond, WREB Testing Specialist

Compensatory Test Scoring: The pass / fail decision is based upon test scores that are the sums of the scores of the subsections of a test. The percentage scores of some sections can be below the average percentage score required for the overall test if scores in other sections are high enough to bring the total score up to or above the required minimum. The high section scores compensate for the low section scores.

Conjunctive Test Scoring: The pass / fail decision is based upon achieving a score that is at or above a required minimum in each section of a test. A passing score in each section must be achieved in conjunction with achieving a passing score in each of the other sections.

Which method is best? Based upon discussions with testing specialists Drs. J. Littlefield and J. Norcini, the ideal situation would be to have a conjunctive determination based upon a test with an unlimited number of observations of performance in each section. Since this is not possible, each section should contain enough repeated performance tasks to provide adequate reliability for the pass / fail decision. An example of the basic idea behind this is that if a test taker is observed to be successful 18 times in 20 attempts to accomplish a procedure, you would have better knowledge about the test taker's ability than if you had observed only two attempts: possibly one of the successes and one failure.



continued on page 3

Educator Forums

Part of “going national” is providing opportunities for new groups of people to get acquainted with WREB and how our exams are conducted. In 2006, the dental department held three forums to update faculty on exam changes. This was a very good opportunity for those educators who may be new to WREB to get the “inside scoop” on the examinations. It also provided useful assistance for those conducting mock boards or who had questions about WREB from their students to which they had no answers!

Faculty brought their questions as representatives reviewed each section of the exam (operative, periodontal treatment, endodontics). There was a special presentation of the new CSW Periodontal and Prosthodontics Computer Simulation.

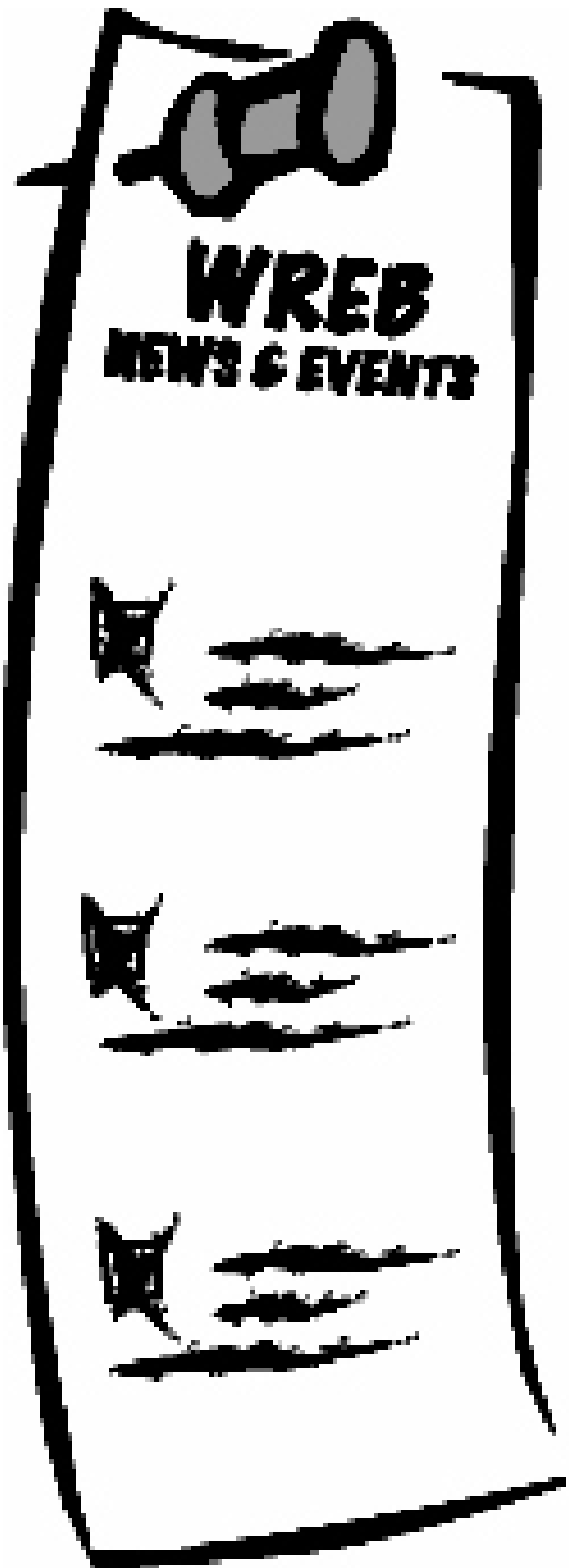
The events occurred at the University of the Pacific, Temple University, and Baylor College of Dentistry.

WREB On the Road

There are always lots of provocative stories out and about concerning any organization that serves the public. WREB is no different. Because of this reality, WREB now has several speakers available to make presentations to state boards, state dental associations, or other groups that wish to become familiar with the WREB exam. If anyone is interested in inviting WREB to make a presentation, please call the WREB office. We have presented in a variety of venues and have found this instrumental in dispelling some of the misunderstandings about WREB that have been circulated. One state board hosted us recently because they had heard so many conflicting things about the WREB exam and wanted to find out the truth. Following our presentation, the participants told us they were thrilled to have all their questions answered and the conflicting information sorted out. Another state had decided to accept WREB results and then heard some untruths about WREB and changed their minds. Fortunately, they also wanted to hear from us. Following our presentation, they decided once again to accept WREB results. We welcome the opportunity to present our exam and the reasons why WREB should be accepted for licensure exam results.

WREB Liaison Committee

WREB is pleased to announce the formation of a Liaison Committee, composed of the following national organizations: American Dental Association, American Dental Education Association, American Dental Hygienists’ Association, American Association of Dental Administrators, and the American Student Dental Association. Representatives from these organizations will convene in Phoenix on February 25 for their first meeting. Annual meetings will provide an opportunity for the national organizations to share their thoughts regarding licensure exams, as well as allowing WREB to share the intricacies of exam development with them. An avenue for two-way communication will allow more open dialogue among the organizations. WREB looks forward to the input from the various groups with an interest in licensure examinations. Recommendations from this committee will be forwarded to the Exam Review Committees and Board of Directors for consideration. WREB believes that it is only through this kind of constructive, collaborative dialogue with key parties of interest that the licensure examinations will maintain their integrity and continue to protect the public.



Beyond WREB... *by Paul Stubbs, DDS, Texas*

My invitation to "present myself" as the new Secretary/Treasurer of WREB offers somewhat of a challenge. Challenge, simply because in the ten years of examining with Dental Hygiene and/or Dental Exams, I suspect I have met most everyone and shared with you my life's "passages". However, a quick review might help all of you understand my passions and my focus.

My years of public education and undergraduate college were in Abilene, Texas, where, fortunately, the most significant person of my life invited me to a Jr. High hayride. Through high school and college (Jena was in Austin at the University of Texas), our lives developed into only one certain resolution. It was no great surprise to either family that Jena and I married in 1961, during my first year of graduate school. The two-year Masters program (at Wayne State University Medical School in Detroit) in Physiology led us to Philadelphia, in pharmaceutical research with (then) Smith, Kline & French. Our time back East was shortened by an invitation to join the faculty of my college alma mater in the Biology/Physiology Department, and we returned to Texas. Having entered college as a premed/dental major, I realized after two years of academics that dentistry was my calling. Acceptance to Baylor Dental College took us to Dallas, and the birth of our second child, Leah (David gave us our initiation to parenthood in Philadelphia). Graduation in 1970 and the move to Austin to set up my practice kept us busy, and the arrival of Emily completed our immediate family.

Leadership roles have seemed to open for me and I have welcomed them. The experiences as President of Austin District Dental Society, The Texas Dental Association and various other dental and civic associations have allowed me to develop my charge to complement the efforts of strong organizations such as WREB. Yes, I have a serious side, although with idols like Spiderman, Batman, and Indiana Jones, one is not surprised to see a picture of me and my

dental partner in the reception room. I am dressed as a mime and our "motto", a quote from Oscar Wilde, reads, "Life is too important to be taken seriously."

I love being with my family, which includes my two granddaughters. Our lives are full with work, music, theatre, opera, and as you recall from the May 2005 newsletter: cycling. In the busy retail season, I am

often found at Beyond the Mailbox (my wife and daughter's mail packing/gift store in Austin) wrapping purchases in the back room. One day in late December, I was up front in my wife's Georgetown store, gift wrapping and was acutely aware of a customer fixing her eyes on me, in disbelief that

- a) I was able to gift wrap a purchase with expertise, and
- b) wrap with great speed (Jack of all trades?).

The mission trips to Haiti, Nicaragua, Mexico, and Texas, version of "Mission of Mercy," have given me immense satisfaction to provide dental care to those less fortunate and to fulfill my passion for service.

I am honored to be elected to serve WREB as one of its leaders. I look forward to working with the examiners as we continue to keep WREB an excellent exam and organization.



To Be or Not To Be *continued from page 1*

Clinical dental examinations usually contain sections that require considerable time and a patient requirement for each procedure. To have many of these procedures repeated during the testing would not be possible. Consequently the reliability for sections is often undesirably low. To increase the number of scores by scoring subcomponents of the procedures does not increase reliability unless the subcomponents are similar to each other or are repeated. The concept of reliability is based upon scoring repeated tasks or of scoring tasks that require similar knowledge and skills (unidimensional is the testing term for this similarity). If some sections of the test are similar in the skills that are required or if there is a correlation between section scores

obtained by test takers, those sections might be scored together in a compensatory manner. The reason for combining is to increase the number of scored performances and hence, the reliability of the score upon which the pass / fail decision is made.

Without increasing the duration of the testing, both scoring systems require compromise. The compensatory score does not require the candidate to perform at the desired standard in each section but often the reliability is good. The conjunctive scoring often results in less than desirable reliability but does not combine sections that do not appear to be logically similar and does not pass test takers who fail to achieve required standards in all sections. Opponents of compensatory

scoring in dental clinical tests are concerned that candidates for licensure would not show the ability to perform all procedures required in the profession. They neglect to mention that, even on a conjunctive examination, all dental skills are not evaluated. Dental clinical tests sample from the domain of dental skills. Many of the patient procedures required in dentistry are never evaluated on patients during clinical testing.

WREB uses a hybrid of the two systems. A compensatory score is used with a section minimum requirement that is a lower percent for the sections than the overall percentage required by the compensatory score. This keeps a candidate from passing unless a level of competency has been demonstrated.

WREB Welcomes New Assistant Director

November 7th began the tenure of WREB's Assistant Director, Beth Cole. Beth came to us after having spent fifteen years in hospital administration. She has worked in a variety of settings ranging from an 80-bed community hospital to a 720-bed academic medical center. She holds a Bachelors degree in Health Care Administration and a Masters degree in Business Administration. In addition, she holds an Associates degree in Culinary Arts. At one time, she owned her own business, a cooking school for hobbyist cooks. A Connecticut native, Beth and her husband, James Cole, D.O. live in Scottsdale.

When asked what attracted her to WREB, Beth indicated that the position drew on her administrative experience and also brought her into a new area of health care. She also appreciates the smaller size of WREB after having worked in very large medical institutions. Being able to make a decision quickly rather than wading through levels of bureaucracy is refreshing.

"Planning and preparing for the growth that lies ahead is both

an opportunity and a challenge that I look forward to meeting," Beth stated.

When not adding her expertise to the WREB staff, Beth and her husband stay busy cooking (and therefore, eating), and traveling. Three of their six grandchildren live in the area which means lots of family activities pepper the schedule.

WREB is fortunate to welcome Beth to the staff and we wish her the best as she helps us move into our expanding future.



WREB Expansion

As examinations increase, so does the need for added space. We will be adding personnel, so the need for more office space has become critical. With more exams to pack, we need more storage and packing space. And with more and more phone calls, the phone system is in desperate need of an upgrade.

One of Beth Cole's (see article above) first responsibilities was to determine if we needed to move to a completely new office complex or if there was a way to stay where we are and enhance our space. As her investigation progressed, it appeared the wisest move was *not* to move but to expand where we are. Fortunately, there was space available adjacent to our offices. So, with about twenty minutes of noise, the wall was broken through and the remodel of our office space has begun.

We expect to be rearranged and reorganized by the end of February. Anyone who has worked with contractors knows that is only a goal, but we think it's fairly realistic. Here are a couple of pictures of the space in progress. (By the way, our office address and phone number will remain the same.)



Calendar Update

Dental Educators' Forum	February 4	San Francisco
Dental Educators' Forum	February 10	Philadelphia
Dental Educators' Forum	February 11	Dallas
AADE Mid-Year Meeting	March 19-20	Chicago
Executive Committee	June 23-24	Phoenix
Dental ERC Meeting	July 19	Keystone, Colorado
Dental Hygiene ERC Meeting	July 19	Keystone, Colorado
Board of Directors	July 20	Keystone, Colorado
Western Conference	July 21-22	Keystone, Colorado
AADE Annual Meeting	October 14-15	Las Vegas

Dental Hygiene Announces Leadership Positions Filled

WREB is pleased to announce that the position of Chair of the Dental Hygiene Examination Review Committee will be assumed by Kelly Reich, RDH of Boise, Idaho. Kelly is a long-time examiner for WREB, both in dental hygiene and restorative and serves currently as the restorative subcommittee chair. Her position as restorative chair will be taken over by Faye Kirkendall, RDH of Woodinville, Washington. As Chair, Kelly has oversight of the three portions of the dental hygiene exam which includes local anesthesia and restorative as well as the dental hygiene exam itself. She chairs the DH-ERC and is considered an off-site member of the WREB staff.

Barbara Dixon, RDH of Salt Lake City, Utah has become WREB's first Vice-President, a designation having a more clear meaning than the previous title of Director of Dental Hygiene. This position is elected at the DH-ERC meeting and is for a term of two years. Barbara's role is one of advocacy and additional counsel to the hygiene ERC. She and Kelly will attend AADE and other meetings as appropriate.

We value these two women very highly and want to take this opportunity to thank them for their high quality contributions to WREB and their consistent graciousness in working so very diligently for us.



Kelly Reich, RDH



Barbara Dixon, RDH

Dental Examination Calendar Grows for 2006

Many schools have responded to the idea of the "curriculum integrated format" examination because it allows "multiple opportunities for retakes prior to graduation". WREB surveyed the schools offering the WREB dental examination and found that the majority of these schools did not feel that it was necessary to provide multiple examinations at each school to provide sufficient opportunities to pass the WREB exam prior to graduation. Based on this information, WREB has scheduled two additional exams in the Spring that

will allow an additional opportunity for retakes prior to graduation. Because exams often fill to capacity early in the year, those wishing to take the examination again in May and June often find all of the sites closed. These additional exam opportunities will allow these individuals to take the examination again without waiting until the Fall.

WREB has also added additional exams to accommodate the increased demand for the WREB dental exam now that California is accepting WREB results for dental licensure.

Below is a list of the dental exams WREB has added to the 2006 schedule.

University of Minnesota (Mpls.)	March 30 - April 2
UCLA	May 26-29
Arizona (Mesa)	Moved from September to June 8 -11
University of Louisville	June 23-26
USC (Los Angeles)	July 14-17
OHSU (Portland)	September 14-17



Spotlight On...

Daniel Jones, Utah State Board

I have been the Bureau Manager of the Utah Dental/Dental Hygiene Licensing Board since February of 2000. I have been with the Utah Division of Occupational and Professional Licensing since April of 1996. I have a Bachelor of Science Degree from Weber State University and a Masters Degree from Utah State University.

Most rewarding aspect of my role:

When a licensee successfully completes his/her probation. They find new respect for the profession and themselves. They return to the dental community and contribute.

How has being a member of WREB helped your state?

The dentists and dental hygienists that successfully complete the WREB have proven they are able to safely practice their craft. WREB has created a level playing field for all those taking a clinical examination. The examination is fair to all those who take it, and constantly improving itself. The WREB serves the public safety by striving to be the best possible Dental Clinical examination in the United States.

The trend in education seems to be one of entitlement not qualification. No person should be entitled to any license merely

by graduating from school into a profession. Licenses like credentials should be earned, not given away.

What do I do for fun?

I love the out of doors. I hunt, fish, golf, and sail (when I can). I have been a member of the Single Action Shooting Society (SASS) since 1994. I enjoy shooting and restoring antique and reproduction firearms. I am a student of the old West, Civil War and US history in general.



Associations, other activities in the Dental field:

I am currently the Past President of the American Association of Dental Administrators. My wife, Judy, has worked in the dental field for over 20 years.

My personal Motto:

START FAST, PICK UP IN THE MIDDLE, AND END WITH A FLOURISH.



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