

It's All About Choices by Nance Wabsbaw

WREB has conscientiously and patiently built itself into a top-tier examining agency over the last two-plus decades. WREB does not want the upheaval in the testing community to undo the quality of this work or to limit the fruits of this labor only to the western United States. So WREB recently began announcing to its various constituencies its intention to be a national testing agency.

This news has been received with thanks and a certain sense of relief around the country. WREB test results are already accepted in 32 states but the goal is to increase that acceptance, which at the same time results in greater mobility for dentists and dental hygienists.

The upheaval in the last months produced by a realignment of some testing agencies attempting to become

one national exam led to much corporate soul-searching by WREB. After a lot of thought and discussion, WREB decided that in order to maintain the quality of our exams, we need to remain who we are and expand our reach to the rest of the country so that whatever else happens on the national scene, one tried and true national exam will be in place for the good of those needing its service to become licensed as dentists and hygienists.

WREB believes that by providing ourselves as a viable choice for those needing to take a licensing exam, we are maintaining and, in fact, improving the quality of testing to reflect our ultimate goal: to ensure that we continue to play our role in protecting the public through the process of testing for professional competency before licensure.

In order to highlight our new thrust,
WREB has chosen to downplay our regional beginnings by adjusting our name.
Our new name is simply...

WREB/ A National Dental and Dental Hygiene Testing Agency



WREB/A National Dental and Dental Hygiene Testing Agency

9201 North 25th Avenue, #185
Phoenix, AZ 85021



www.wreb.org

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Wisdom from a Dean

*by Dr. Melanie Peterson,
Associate Dean for Clinics and Postdoctoral Education,
University of Louisville School of Dentistry, Kentucky*



When you entered dental school, you signed on for membership in the dental profession and for challenging years of didactic as well as clinical trials and tribulations. And now you are in the midst of an extremely busy year meeting the competencies needed to graduate and move forth into the next phase of your dental career as a safe beginner, and hopefully a lifelong learner. It is a given that dental school curricula are intense and that you have done very little dentistry in comparison to what you will face in the real world. Each state is mandated to ensure that dentists seeking licensure in that state are "minimally competent" to provide quality care to the public as a safe beginner. Dental schools strive to prepare you accordingly so that you are equipped to protect the public and provide quality services within the standard of care.

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WREB Gets Evaluated

by Del Hammond, WREB Testing Specialist

How Does A Licensing Testing Program Get Evaluated?

Some states like California have written *Examination Validation Policy* guides that direct state agencies to provide periodic evaluation of all licensing examinations that are used by the state. Most states do not require WREB to have state or external reviews, but the American Association of Dental Examiners (AADE) *Guidance for Clinical Licensure Examinations in Dentistry* recommends periodic reviews by evaluators who are independent (not regularly employed by the organization being evaluated). WREB is like any other profession - we would like to provide evidence that we are



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WREB Holds Forum to Discuss Clinical Examinations for Licensure

As controversy and confusion whirl around the dental examining field, licensing examiners, representatives from 20 dental schools throughout the country, as well as representatives from the American Dental Education Association, met on July 22nd near Portland, Oregon. The Forum, sponsored by WREB, was held during the Western Conference of Dental School Deans and Examiners.

WREB has announced plans to shed its regional status and become a national testing agency. The educators and examiners who attended the Western Conference praised the opportunity to meet and discuss their common goals and current issues, while also recognizing the unique roles and responsibilities of each group.

The main issues addressed in discussion concerned the traditional exam format: treatment out-of-sequence, multiple-stage testing during the academic year and the problems that presents, the proper location of re-testing for students, and the excitement produced by the development of computerized prosthodontic and periodontal exams. The educators encouraged examiners to explore additional uses of technology (such as the computerized exams) as one way to reduce the need for use of patients in the exam process.

Both educators and examiners

agreed upon a common goal: quality dental care for the public. This common goal is a basis for continued cooperation between educators and examiners. Dr. Stephen Young, Dean of the Dental School at the University of Oklahoma, Oklahoma City, summed up the tone of the discussion: "Faculty and examiners working together will provide a better assessment than either group could produce alone."

Educators expressed their support for having two national exams rather than one, allowing state boards and schools a choice in exam selection. As the examining communities around the country shift into new and untested alliances, WREB will maintain the high quality of its current exam while continuing to make exam enhancements utilizing the expertise of deans and educators and all other parties of interest. Dr. Lorin Peterson, President of the WREB Board of Directors, reinforced the importance of having two national exams: "I think all states should accept both WREB and ADEX test results. Candidates would have mobility, schools would have a choice of which exam they utilize, and the competition between two exams would make each exam better."

This Forum was such a success that WREB plans to include future Forums as an annual feature of the Western Conference.

On Having Patients by Nance Wabsbaw

One of the loudest voices in the dental community these days is the voice demanding that patients not be used in board exams. The arguments on the various sides of this issue are readily available for review and discussion. For purposes of your immediate career, however, patients remain part of the board equation and therefore require serious consideration as you prepare for your examination.

This consideration goes beyond the careful assessment of your patient to

determine his or her qualifications to be a board patient. There are ethical issues to consider as well.

The most stressful part of the board exam indeed may be finding a patient and a backup patient who not only agree to participate but meet the criteria. The first ethical issue here is that the persons agreeing to be patients are agreeing freely, not through coercion. To round out the meaning of this agreement, it should have all the earmarks of informed consent; i.e., the patient should

be told of the advantages of his or her participation, which is often most importantly the opportunity to have needed dental work completed. The patient should also be told of the potential risks and the candidate's inability to deliver a full complement of dental services within the constraints of the examination environment. The time commitment and expected behaviors of the patient should be fully explained. The candidate should make sure to provide conscientious follow-up information for his patient(s) as much as

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Two Ways to Apply for a WREB Exam; The Choice is Yours

There are two ways to apply for a WREB exam: Via e-mail or by post. There are similarities between the two methods, and each has its own convenience. The chart below gives you an idea of the process and may help you decide which works best for you.

Online Application

- WREB Policy and Procedures and application forms are available on our web site, www.wreb.org
- Online application forms include General Information form, Policy Agreement and Certification Form for Graduating Seniors.
- Payment method: You can pay online using VISA or MasterCard; or you may send a money order or cashier's check with your completed paperwork. No personal checks are accepted.
- Materials to send: Two recent 2x2 identical passport photos, the completed General Information form and the signed Policy Agreement.
- You do not have to have your Certification signed by your Dean to submit your application. You have until two weeks prior to the first day of the exam to submit your signed Certification.
- We urge you to apply early for the exam. Each exam has limited space available and exams do fill.
- Read the WREB Policies and Procedures and all application materials.
- After we receive your application in our office, we will send the Candidate's Guide and other exam materials. Your exam schedule typically goes out about a month prior to the start of the exam. If we have not received your Certification for Graduating Seniors, your schedule will be held until it is in our office.

Mail-in Application

- WREB Policy and Procedures and application forms are available from our office by writing dentalinfo@wreb.org; faxing your request, (602) 371-8131; or calling (602) 944-3315.
- Mail-in application forms include General Information form, Policy Agreement and Certification for Graduating Seniors.
- Payment method: Credit cards are not accepted with the mail-in application. You may pay by money order or cashier's check. No personal checks are accepted.
- Materials to send: Two recent 2x2 identical passport photos, the completed General Information form and the signed Policy Agreement.
- You do not have to have your Certification for Graduating Seniors signed by your Dean to submit your application. You have until two weeks prior to the first day of the exam to submit your signed Certification.
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Whichever way you decide to apply for an exam, we are always happy to hear from you. You can write us 24 hours a day at dentalinfo@wreb.org, or call between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. MST. When you mail your materials, please send them to: WREB, 9201 N. 25th Ave., Suite 185, Phoenix, AZ 85021.

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It can be stressful in the last year of dental school as you work toward National Boards II, life after dental school, graduation and licensure examinations. Dental schools want their seniors to perform well on National Boards and graduate on time, and you are juggling multiple agendas, all of which need to be satisfied in order to practice dentistry or continue your education in a residency program.

The best advice I can offer is that you be prepared and remain focused and calm. It is important to avail yourselves of faculty expertise and feedback so that you will be prepared for licensure exams. Occasionally students want to take a licensure exam at the first possible opportunity without truly assess-

ing their readiness. If you are truly realistic about assessing your skills, and if faculty are in agreement with your assessment, this is the first indicator of readiness. Anything else is cheating both yourself and the public. I cannot emphasize enough the importance of reading the candidate guide in its entirety and being comfortable with the exam content, expectations and paperwork. Candidates can get unnecessarily hung up by not familiarizing themselves with the manual. Pay particular attention to patient selection. A suboptimal indication can be the difference between success and failure. If you are taking an exam at a location unfamiliar to you, take precautions to see that you are familiar with that setting and have what you need. Never travel to

another site in the last minute hopes that you can appear at the eleventh hour and get your patients through another dental school, private practitioner, etc.

This is an exciting time in your career, and one that can be successfully negotiated with organization and planning--attributes that will serve you well as you leave the confines of dental school. Licensure examination agencies understand that you have much at stake as you prepare for taking a licensure exam. It has been my experience that WREB is sensitive to this fact and takes steps to put you at ease so that you will be successful. Remain confident and know that if you are prepared and have negotiated the rigors of dental school your chances of success will be maximized.

WREB Gets Evaluated continued from page 1

doing a wonderful job. So, how does WREB go about getting evaluated? Well, what we did was to commission validity studies for the Dental and Dental Hygiene Examinations. In a validity study, the evaluator gathers evidence that supports or detracts from the appropriateness of using WREB examination results to help determine candidates' qualification for licensure. If the evidence is overwhelming in support of using the examination scores, WREB can tell the states, who accept the examinations for licensing, that using WREB results is valid.

WREB was pleased to obtain the services of Dr. Tom Haladyna to perform the evaluations. He is one of the most qualified specialists for certification and licensure testing. And, he resides in Phoenix, home of the WREB central office. He has been a professor of educational psychology at Arizona State University at the Phoenix west campus since 1989 and was previously the Director of Health Programs at the American College Testing (ACT) programs in Iowa City, Iowa. He has been a consultant for 13 certification/licensure programs. His clients include the American Dental Association and he has also provided guidance for school testing programs. He is the author of numerous books and journal articles in the field of testing.

Dr. Haladyna reviewed the minutes of examination development subcommittee meetings, Examination Review Committee meetings, and Board of Director meetings. He also reviewed candidate guides and procedures for examination score validation, examiner scoring and training, and evaluated standardization of examination administration. He analyzed examination scoring results to evaluate reliability, examiner consistency and dimensionality. He evaluated content-related validity evidence, scoring criteria, the development of passing standards, the reporting of scores, and annual technical reports.

After all the dust had settled, the results of his reviews were very positive. The following are his summary comments in the Dental Evaluation section called "Summative Evaluation:"

"The argument, claim for validity, and evidence presented in this document, in WREB's technical reports, and other documents, strongly support the validity of using test scores for making pass/fail decisions that affect licensing of dentists in WREB's participating states. WREB is commended

for developing an excellent examination program that has many strengths in terms of the categories of validity evidence presented here and no apparent weaknesses.

The greatest strength is the overall commitment to excellence that permeates all aspects of the program. This includes the Board of Directors, the Examination Review Committee, the staff who plans and administers the program and the participation of states, dental schools, and other constituencies that support such testing programs, such as the American Association of Dental Examiners, and the guidelines they recently published with WREB's help and support.

The content committees appear to operate smoothly and effectively. They promote growth and improvement in a very active way, and their minutes and recommendations give ample evidence of this commitment for improvement.

The evidence presented in this document and other evidence that is in WREB's archive is very strongly in support of WREB's participating states using these test scores for making pass/fail decisions for licensure in dentistry."

In the Acknowledgments section of the Dental report, Dr. Haladyna also states, "WREB's board is commended for undertaking this evaluation. Although, psychometricians and other testing specialists highly recommend independent reviews of testing programs, test sponsors often do not invite an outsider to look in and evaluate the examination program. Hopefully, the results of this project will help WREB continue to provide excellent testing services to candidates for dental licensure." For those of you who are obsessed with numbers, the overall reliability that Dr. Haladyna stated in his report for the WREB dental examination was .916. He called this result "very high."

The results of these evaluations confirm that WREB's efforts for constant improvement are worthwhile. It is hard to imagine how WREB could receive a more positive review from a more credible evaluator. The results provide WREB with motivation to continue improvement in order to provide the best testing possible.

Dental 2006 Examination Schedule

These are the dates we have at press time. Continue to watch our web site (www.wreb.org) for possible revisions.

Exam Location	Exam Date	Application Deadline	Fee
New York University • New York, NY	March 9 - 12	January 24	\$1550
Virginia Commonwealth University • Richmond, VA	March 16 - 19	January 31	\$1650
Loma Linda University • Loma Linda, CA	March 17 - 21	January 31	\$1500
University of Colorado • Denver, CO	March 23 - 26	February 7	\$1600
University of Kentucky • Lexington, KY	March 23 - 26	February 7	\$1475
Temple University • Philadelphia, PA	March 30 - April 2	February 14	\$1675
University of Louisville • Louisville, KY	March 31 - April 3	February 14	\$1500
Indiana University • Indianapolis, IN	April 7 - 10	February 21	\$1510
Nova Southeastern University • Ft. Lauderdale, FL	April 7 - 10	February 21	\$1535
University of Southern California • Los Angeles, CA	April 20 - 23	March 7	\$1725
Baylor College of Dentistry • Dallas, TX	April 21 - 24	March 7	\$1480
University of Nevada • Las Vegas, NV	April 27 - 30	March 14	\$1480
University of Texas • San Antonio, TX	May 5 - 8	March 21	\$1480
University of Oklahoma • Oklahoma City, OK	May 5 - 8	March 21	\$1600
Case Western Reserve University • Cleveland, OH	May 10 - 13	March 28	\$1500
University of Texas • Houston, TX	May 11 - 14	March 28	\$1475
University of the Pacific • San Francisco, CA	May 19 - 22	April 4	\$1588
University of California • San Francisco, CA	June 2 - 5	April 18	\$1635
University of the Pacific • San Francisco, CA	June 2 - 5	April 18	\$1588
University of Washington • Seattle, WA	June 14 - 17	May 2	\$1510
Oregon Health & Science University • Portland, OR	June 16 - 19	May 2	\$1500
University of Texas • Houston, TX	September 7 - 10	July 25	\$1475
AZ School of Dentistry & Oral Health • Mesa, AZ	September 14 - 17	August 1	\$1475
University of Southern California • Los Angeles, CA	December 14 - 17	October 31	\$1725

On Having Patients *continued from page 2*

he should provide conscientious treatment during the examination process.

In sum, the ethical considerations are three:

- Ensure the patient is freely willing and fully informed.
- To paraphrase the Hippocratic oath, "First, do no harm."
- Do your very best during the exam and after to promote this person's oral health.

With these ethical considerations as backdrop, you now have the task of screening and choosing your board patients. Here is a suggested procedure as you undertake patient selection:

Study the exam patient criteria. Know the criteria thoroughly and if you are unclear about part of it, get answers from WREB.

Be sure to select more than one patient. Have a backup patient available in

case your patient fails to show up or is not accepted by the examiners.

In light of the ethical considerations above, *choose patients you feel comfortable treating.* Your best bet may be to use a patient you have already been treating; one with whom you have a relationship. There is no excuse for choosing a patient simply because they may be the "easiest" for you. There is also no excuse in choosing a challenging patient for which you are not yet prepared.

Select patients yourself. Don't rely on someone else's interpretation of the criteria. They will not be taking the exam. Even the best intentioned professional may not interpret the criteria correctly and put your success in jeopardy.

Communicate fully with your patients. These patients are not only doing themselves a favor but they are doing you one

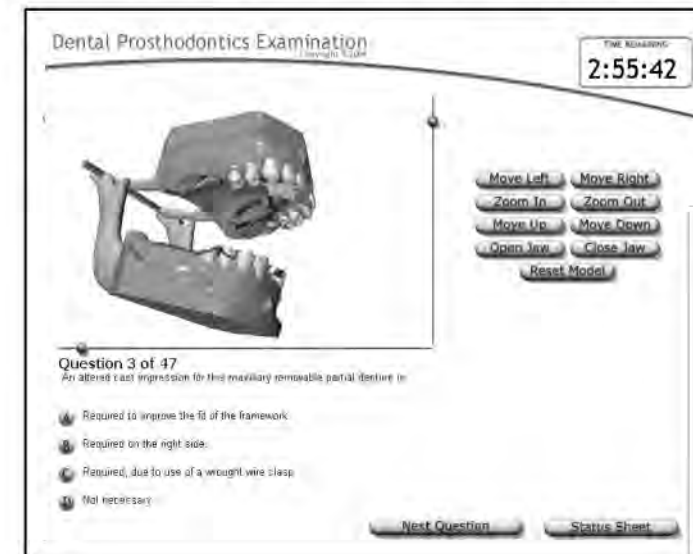
as well. They need and deserve to know all the details of the exam and their involvement. They should be provided at least one way to contact you should they need further information or advice before *and* after the exam. You should provide them with a ride to the exam site or at the very least, clear directions and accurate times. When you receive your candidate number, that is an important piece of information for the patients in locating you on exam day.

Once you are licensed and practicing, patients will be seeking you out; for the board, however, you are the seeker. The way you treat your board patients will say a lot about how you will treat patients in your practice. Even though this board exam is "all about you" it never ceases to be first and foremost about the patients you treat. After all, that is why you are entering the field in the first place.

CSW Computer Simulations Takes Dental Testing to a New Level of Computer Technology

Ann Hayward, WREB Dental Department / CSW Staff

Through the combined efforts of CRDTS, SRTA and WREB and with the expertise of Zoomorphix Systems, the 2006 exam season will launch two new computer simulation exams. For the WREB dental exam, candidates will complete the Prosthodontic and Periodontal Assessment/Diagnosis exams outside the structure of the clinical exam. The two computer simulation exams will be administered across the country through PearsonVue Testing Centers. Candidates will be able to set an appointment for the exams at a convenient time for their schedule from 45 days before their clinical exam and up to 3 days after.



Talk about collaboration; a total of 30 CSW doctors, educators and admin. staff from 12 different states, Zoomorphix-Australia and PearsonVue USA are working together on all of the nuances of computer integration to help make the 2006 exam season a success.



The News isn't New in 2006 Operative

Ann Hayward, WREB Dental Department

Whenever the Operative Committee meets, the same question comes up. How do we get rid of the myth of the "ideal" lesion? Again for 2006, the Committee is working to be the "Myth Busters of the Ideal". The 2005 Candidate Guide states that patient acceptance criteria is designed to standardize the examination - not as an obstacle to patient procurement ... The patients expected by WREB are patients you have been routinely treating in your school dental clinic.

Procedures and criteria are all written by doctors and educators who understand (and love) the fun and frustration of dentistry. There is no question that conservation of tooth structure is of paramount importance. But, the WREB scoring criteria allows our examiners to evaluate each preparation based on the nature of the lesion to be restored. Statistics show that the size or position of the lesion on the tooth renders no advantage or disadvantage to the candidate's score. Excellent scores may be attained when deep or extensive restorations are warranted. And, if that perfect little lesion later becomes the unexpected more involved lesion, WREB has a modification procedure for you to use as your tool to communicate to the examiners your ability to manage the new problem at hand.

Being well prepared and patient procurement are definitely important to a successful exam. The patients you need may be close at hand. Look again at the patients (great familiar faces) you know and have been working with throughout the year. There is more to the exam and patient management than just the "ideal" lesion. Use the patients you know and trust and who know and trust you.