

Washington Comprehensive Assessment System

1. **Purpose:** The purpose of the program is to develop and administer a statewide assessment system to the requisite student population in the state of Washington. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act and the Every Student Succeeds Act require states to have a set of high-quality student academic assessments to measure the achievement of all students in the state. Currently, annual assessments for accountability purposes include grades 3 through 8 in English language arts/literacy (ELA) and mathematics, grades 5 and 8 in science, and one grade of high school in each of the three content areas. Passage of [Engrossed Substitute House Bill \(ESHB\) 2224](#) in 2017 re-established grade 10 as the accountability year for ELA and math, beginning with the 2017–18 administration. Also, spring 2018 was the first administration of an assessment on the Next Generation Science Standards, for grades 5, 8, and 11.

Washington has assessment-related graduation requirements, requiring high school students to demonstrate achievement of state academic standards. Once an accountability assessment is attempted, students who are unsuccessful in meeting the minimum achievement level may choose to retest in the content area or use alternatives to fulfill the assessment graduation requirements.

2. **Description of services provided:** Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), in conjunction with contractors:
 - (a) implements the needed activities to develop items/tasks and assessments aligned to the existing learning standards;
 - (b) designs and makes ready for student access the required test booklets or online delivery formats;
 - (c) outlines procedures for administration of the tests, including delivery and return of all test materials;
 - (d) facilitates scoring of all student work;
 - (e) manages the processing of data for purposes of performance reporting.

There is also an alternate assessment provided for students having significant cognitive challenges identified in their Individualized Education Program (IEP).

3. **Criteria for receiving services and/or grants:** Schools and district participation in the state assessment system is required so that Washington has comprehensive information about student achievement and opportunity gaps.

Beneficiaries in 2017–18 School Year:

# of School Districts:	295
# of Schools:	2,350
# of Students:	1,113,438
Other:	5 tribal compact schools; 8 charter schools

# of OSPI staff associated with this funding (FTEs):	35.39
# of contractors/other staff associated with this funding:	13

FY18 Funding:	State Appropriation (031):	\$30.4 million
	Federal Appropriation (400):	\$8.5 million
	Other fund sources (JK0):	\$675,000
	TOTAL (FY18)	\$39.6 million

4. Are federal or other funds contingent on state funding? If yes, explain. Yes. Title 1 funds from the federal government are linked to the state implementation of an assessment program; the financial responsibility for the program is a shared expense.
5. State funding history:

Fiscal Year	Amount Funded	Actual Expenditures
FY18	\$30,421,000	\$30,284,205
FY17	\$36,648,000	\$31,135,798
FY16	\$29,137,000	\$25,556,986
FY15	\$39,644,000	\$34,850,825
FY14	\$38,031,000	\$36,876,421
FY13	\$41,614,000	\$38,512,454
FY12	\$40,822,000	\$40,522,632
FY11	\$31,850,000	\$30,079,794
FY10	\$35,804,000	\$31,503,534
FY09	\$20,968,000	\$22,045,656

6. Number of beneficiaries (e.g., schools, students, districts) history:

Fiscal Year	# of Districts	# Students
FY18	295	1,113,438
FY17	295	1,102,579
FY16	295	1,086,000
FY15	295	1,070,756
FY14	295	1,055,517
FY13	295	1,047,390
FY12	295	1,038,503
FY11	295	1,035,535
FY10	295	1,032,806
FY09	295	1,040,750

7. Programmatic changes since inception (if any):
- A. *English language arts and mathematics.* In the years 1997, 1998 and 1999, the state began assessment of the content areas of reading, writing, and mathematics at grade 4, 7, and 10, successively. In 2004, the state added science in grade 8 and 10, and in 2005 added science in grade 5. In 2006, based on the federal mandate in No Child Left Behind, the state began administering additional assessments in reading and mathematics at grades 3, 5, 6, and 8. In 2009 and 2010 the assessments were shortened to lessen the loss of instructional time.

Starting in 2010 administration the State began to introduce online testing starting in the middle schools grades of 6, 7, and 8 and testing in the content areas of reading and mathematics. In successive years the state began online testing in grades 4 and 5 then grade 3 and also introduced science. With the 2015 administration, the state moved to a new assessment instrument in ELA and math (Smarter Balanced), as well as moved more fully to an online delivery format. By 2017, more than 99% of Smarter Balanced math and ELA tests were online.

In 2017–18, the high school test for ELA and mathematics shifted to 10th grade (it had been an 11th grade assessment since 2015 when Smarter Balanced was implemented).

- B. *Science*. In 2013 the state adopted new learning standards for science, the *Washington State 2013 K–12 Science Learning Standards* (based on Next Generation Science Standards or NGSS). New science assessments aligned to the newly adopted learning standards were first administered in spring 2018 to students in grades 5, 8, and 11. Prior to the 2018, the state science assessment was aligned to state learning standards adopted in 2009. The previous version of the science assessments were designed as comprehensive measures in grades 5 and 8, and an End of Course (EOC) Biology measure given at grade 10 in high school.
- C. *Alternate assessment*. Legislation allows for development and administration of an alternate assessment designed for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. The state first administered its version of an alternate assessment, a portfolio design, in 2001 and did so through the 2014 administration. In 2011, the alternate assessment added more breadth to the assessable standards available for student engagement while attempting to add greater depth in the level of complexity of the standards extensions intended for student use in assessing academic skills and knowledge. With the 2013 administration, data collection rules were revised to require greater academic alignment to grade-level learning standards and through added performance skill points that are evaluated (scored). Further adaptations to the alternate assessment have occurred in successive years to acknowledge changes in the general assessment, specifically the expectations in high school.

With the 2015 administration a new alternate assessment was implemented that addressed design changes in the test, as well as integrated ideas of new learning standards in ELA and math. Science was reformatted at the time to match the design, but was linked to the state learning standards adopted in 2009, as these were the standards used on the assessments with the balance of enrolled students. In SY2017–2018, the WA-AIM assessment shifted the science portions (grades 5, 8, and 11) to the *Washington State 2013 K-12 Science Learning Standards*.

The *Washington Access to Instruction & Measurement (WA-AIM)* is designed as a performance-based assessment of students with the most significant cognitive challenges. Each content area is assessed against five learning standards, using pre-engagement exposure to the assessable standards to establish the appropriate level of complexity to use with students. Based on the student's success with the pre-engagement activity, the annual measure will be given later in the year at the original selected access point or the next higher version for the standard. The annual administration becomes the measure of the students' learning for the academic year.

- D. *English language proficiency*. In spring 2016, OSPI began administration of its fourth iteration of an English language proficiency assessment. The 2016 assessment was developed by the English Language Proficiency Assessment for the 21st Century (ELPA21) consortium, an original ten-state collaborative funded by a U.S. Department of Education grant. The ELPA21 assessment is aligned to the English language proficiency standards adopted by the state in 2013.

8. **Evaluations of program/major findings:** In collaboration with Washington’s peer states, supporting service providers, and national and state assessment technical advisory committees, OSPI continually evaluates overall assessment system effectiveness and efficiency. Transitions in state learning standards and which grade levels are assessed have made it challenging over the last several years to do a longitudinal evaluation of student outcomes and implementation efficiency. However, given that the ELA, mathematics, and science learning standards are established and assessment grade levels are expected to be stable, there will be opportunities to evaluate and improve the assessment program at an operational, technical, and reporting level.
9. **Major challenges faced by the program:** Maintaining a high quality assessment system while continuing to be cost-effective is an ongoing challenge. The State’s participation in a multi-state consortium, *Smarter Balanced*, has recognized most of the cost efficiencies associated with scale, while maintaining the tenets of high quality assessments. With science, the state will continue to look toward opportunities to leverage development work across peer states to improve cost efficiencies.

Transitions in learning standards and tested grade levels has meant fluctuating understanding in schools and districts regarding assessments and requirements.

10. **Future opportunities:** As academic learning standards, tested grade levels, and assessment graduation requirements stabilize, OSPI will focus on clear communications and resources for school and district staff. These communications will concentrate on building districts’ understanding of requirements and making information more accessible to educators, students, and families about student achievement. In addition, there may be opportunities to expand instructional and assessment resources to support educators’ work in the classroom.
11. **Statutory and/or Budget language:** [RCW 28A.655.070\(3\)\(a\)](#). In consultation with the State Board of Education, the Superintendent of Public Instruction shall maintain and continue to develop and revise a statewide academic assessment system in the content areas of English language arts, mathematics, and science for use in the elementary, middle, and high school years designed to determine if each student has mastered the essential academic learning requirements identified in subsection (1) of this section. School districts shall administer the assessments under guidelines adopted by the Superintendent of Public Instruction. The academic assessment system may include a variety of assessment methods, including criterion-referenced and performance-based measures.

Budget Proviso: SSB 5883, Sec. 513 (1) \$30,421,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2018, \$26,975,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2019, \$1,350,000 of the education legacy trust account-state appropriation, and \$15,868,000 of the general fund federal appropriation are provided solely for the development and implementation of the Washington state assessment system.

12. **Other relevant information:** [Report Card](#)
13. **List of schools/districts receiving assistance:** See OSPI [website](#).
14. **Program Contact Information:**
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