

Health & Physical Education Assessments

Frequently Asked Questions

Can physical education be waived at the high school level?

Students may be excused from physical education (but not health) (RCW 28A.230.050). Students who are excused from physical education must "demonstrate competency/mastery in the knowledge portion of physical education in a district approved competency assessment that is aligned to Physical Education K–12 learning standards, in accordance with written district policy" (WAC 180-51-068). Legislation passed in 2019 (House Bill 1599) provided flexibility for districts to waive up to two of the 24 state-required credits for individual students "based on a student's circumstances, provided that none of the waived credits are identified as mandatory core credits by the state board of education." Physical education credits are mandatory core credits. (Separately, the 0.5 credits of health are mandatory, as well.) Therefore, even if a student is excused from physical education course(s), the 1.5 physical education credits earned through demonstration of competency/mastery per written district policy must appear on the student's transcript, coded in CEDARS with the appropriate designation to indicate how the credits were earned e.g., "L" for Local Competency Test, "N" for National Competency Test, etc.

What does the law state regarding health and physical education assessments at the state level?

RCW 28A.230.095 includes two provisions. The first addresses all three subject areas: Social studies, the arts, and health and physical education. The second makes special reference to civics. (Please note the underlined text below regarding the modified civics elementary reporting requirement.)

The fully amended law now states:

(1) By the end of the 2008–09 school year, school districts shall have in place in elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools assessments or other strategies chosen by the district to assure that students have an opportunity to learn the essential academic learning requirements in social studies, the arts, and health and physical education. Social studies includes history, geography, civics, economics, and social studies skills. Beginning with the 2008–09 school year, school districts shall annually submit an implementation verification report to the office of the superintendent of public instruction. The office of the superintendent of public instruction may not require school districts to use a classroom-based assessment in social studies, the arts, and health and physical education to meet the requirements of this section and shall clearly communicate to districts their option to use other strategies chosen by the district.

(2) Beginning with the 2008–09 school year, school districts shall require students in the seventh or eighth grade, and the eleventh or twelfth grade to each complete at least one classroom-



based assessment in civics. Beginning with the 2010–11 school year, school districts shall require students in the fourth or fifth grade to complete at least one classroom-based assessment in civics. The civics assessment may be selected from a list of classroom-based assessments approved by the office of the superintendent of public instruction. Beginning with the 2008-09 school year, school districts shall annually submit implementation verification reports to the office of the superintendent of public instruction documenting the use of the classroom-based assessments in civics.

(3) Verification reports shall require school districts to report only the information necessary to comply with this section.

Required Reporting

OSPI has developed an online reporting form to assist districts with the required submission of the implementation verification report. Districts are required to report whether or not “assessments or other strategies” have been administered in social studies (including assessments in civics), the arts, and health and physical education. OSPI recommends that each district designate a staff member to be responsible for ensuring that the assessment and reporting requirements in RCW 28A.230.095 are met. Reporting can occur throughout the school year as “assessments or other strategies” are administered.

OSPI has also developed teacher worksheets to facilitate the collection of the data for this report. The worksheets are available on the assessment websites for social studies, the arts, and health and physical education. These forms have been useful in collecting the necessary data as well as for providing professional development opportunities focused on student progress and achievement.

Recommendations

As stated above, OSPI urges districts to use the state-developed assessments to meet the requirements of RCW 28A.230.095. These large-scale statewide assessments have been successfully piloted for validity and reliability. Further, OSPI recommends that if local assessments and/or other strategies are used, that they be reviewed for quality at the local level.

Guidance for meeting the implementation requirement is provided in the schedule below.

- Elementary (K–5 or K–6)
At least one assessment in health AND at least one assessment in fitness by the end of 5th grade. There are seven assessments available at the elementary level.
- Middle School (6–8 or 6–9)
At least one assessment in health AND at least one assessment in fitness by the end of 8th grade. There are eight assessments available at the middle school level.

- High School (9–12)
At least one assessment in health AND at least one assessment in fitness by the end of high school. There are seven assessments available at the high school level.

What are OSPI-Developed Assessments?

The Health and Physical Education assessments are multi-stepped tasks or projects aligned to specific state standards which target skills and knowledge necessary for a physically active and healthy lifestyle. Completing an assessment at a proficient level requires students to demonstrate that they have met specific grade level expectations by applying their understanding of health and/or fitness knowledge, concepts, and skills to a specific context that is meant to be relevant to the lives of these students.

Assessments are designed to ensure that students employ critical thinking skills and engage in their own individual analysis of health and/or fitness.

There are 22 assessments; seven are targeted for elementary school, eight for middle school, and seven for high school. OSPI is currently working to align some of the assessments to our current K–12 Learning Standards, and in some cases, rewrite the assessments completely. OSPI is planning to release many of these assessments in the Fall of 2020.

The key component of any assessment is the rubric page which spells out how a student can reach proficiency. The scoring notes section explains the rationale for scoring and the glossary has been prepared to provide consistency for each assessment.

Assessments can be used at any time of the year although they are typically used as a culminating or summative assessment of learning that has occurred during a course unit.

Why are assessments being used?

- **Validity:** Given the broad, conceptual nature of the Health and Physical Education standards, the assessments are a valid way to assess the learning of these standards and to help students gain the knowledge and skills authentic to engaged, informed physically active and healthy lifestyle.
- **Coherence:** District health and physical education programs will have a greater coherence if assessments are included in each of the health and physical education course units. The common rubrics ensure that students will be asked to meet rigorous expectations as they move from elementary school to middle school to high school as well as from district to district.
- **Balance:** The assessments are designed to ensure accountability to the state's standards while still maintaining a local district's control over specific content in health and physical education.
- **Research:** There is a great deal of research that indicates that having students engage regularly in rigorous, authentic, performance-based assessments, such as the

assessments, increases their academic achievement in health and physical education. (e.g. the research from Cathy Taylor)

- Integration: The Health and Physical Education assessments are another way teachers can target important reading and writing standards in their instruction.
- Accountability: The assessments and the reporting on the use of these assessments are one way the state is asking districts to ensure that all students have opportunities to meet the standards in health and physical education skills.

At what grade levels should assessments be used?

It is encouraged to adapt the assessments at grades 5, 8, and high school as they are aligned to the grade level expectations. However, it may be best to administer a health assessment in 7th grade health class because that is where learning is taking place and where the student will be most proficient. For practicality, some school districts choose to administer a health assessment in 4th grade and a fitness assessment in 5th grade; health assessment in 7th grade and fitness assessment in 8th grade; and health assessment in 9th grade and fitness assessment in 10th grade.

Should every teacher within a district do the same assessment if they teach the same course or at the same grade level?

OSPI believes it is a good idea for districts to adopt a plan in which all teachers teaching the same course or working with students at the same grade level would do the same assessment. This commonality would facilitate planning within the school district.

Moreover, the flexibility of the assessments still allows each teacher to tailor any one of these assessments to the interests and needs of her/his students or community. However, it is not required that teachers choose the same assessment.

Who is responsible for scoring the assessments?

Each teacher will usually serve as the primary scorer of their student's assessment responses. Therefore, it is important that teachers responsible for health and physical education teaching receive formal scoring training. In addition to this training, districts can assure that scores are more reliable if a percentage of assessment responses are scored by at least two scorers who can compare notes and resolve differences by reviewing exemplar papers. When two teachers score one assessment, this will increase reliability – however, this would be at the district's discretion rather than being a state requirement.

When teachers score their student's responses, both the student and teacher receive immediate feedback on what has been learned.

What is considered a "passing" score?

Rubrics are provided in the scoring packet that indicates score points from zero to four. Students who earn a score of "3" or "4" are considered meeting minimum state standards (proficient). A score of "2" or less is considered not meeting minimum state standards.

In the scoring notes of the revised assessments, there is a minimum state standard for each assessment. For example, the passing score for New Student Orientation is twelve or more points which will indicate that the student has met minimum state standard. This is based on four 4-point rubrics found in New Student Orientation.

15–16=4; 12–14=3 meets standard ("proficient") 8–11=2; 1–7=1

What happens if a student fails an assessment?

Since RCW 28A.230.095 only addresses district-level accountability, there are no consequences from the state if a student does not meet proficiency on an assessment. However, we anticipate that most teachers will assign some sort of grade or credit to the work done for the assessment. Failing an assessment would indicate a student has not met the standards for health and physical education. How that factors into a student's grade will be the decision of the classroom teacher or school district.

Who is accountable for reporting results and what is the manner of reporting?

The results will be reported through our survey tool to OSPI. Your school district will need to determine who is responsible for reporting. Send results to designated school district contact. The designated school district contact will submit the data to OSPI. School districts are required to report to OSPI.

Since some assessments are classroom projects, can the students work in groups?

No, the overarching guideline for teachers administering an assessment is to ensure that each final response to an assessment is an "individual student effort." These assessments are to be used to find out what each individual knows and is able to do; therefore, significant aspects of the performance must be done by students working independently of other students.

How much teacher/coaching feedback is allowed as students are completing assessment responses?

Given that assessment responses should reflect a student's own work, there needs to be a clear distinction between providing needed clarification as opposed to inappropriate assistance which could lead to an invalid representation of what a student can independently accomplish.

How can the teacher accommodate the assessment for all students?

While the flexibility of the assessment already enables accommodations to be made without any formal guidelines, OSPI does have some recommendations on how to help all students reach proficiency on the assessments. First, all students are eligible for certain accommodations. For example, students may have as much time as they need to complete the task. In addition, students with limited writing skills may type their responses, and students with limited English-language skills may have the prompts read aloud to them. Such assistance should not include suggested responses. All students who remain productively engaged in the task should be allowed to finish their work. In some cases, a few students may require considerably more time to complete the task than most students; therefore, you may wish to move these students to a new location to finish. In other cases, the teacher's knowledge of some students' work habits or special needs may suggest that students who work very slowly should be tested separately or grouped with similar students for the test.

Second, students should have access to any accommodations outlined in their individualized education programs (IEPs).

Third, OSPI hopes to be able to provide models for differentiating instruction and assessment in these academic areas in the future.

Finally, WAC 392.172A.03090 provides additional guidelines related to assessment procedures for students in special education.

What should a district do if students are enrolled in courses through Running Start or online health or fitness education?

It should be noted that the requirements related to assessments are not a "graduation requirement" – the state is not requiring individual students to pass an assessment in order to graduate. However, districts have always been required to ensure that all students have an opportunity to meet the standards in each of the required academic areas. If a student is participating in Running Start or an online health or fitness education course, it is presumed that the district is still ensuring that the courses taken allow them to meet the required state standards.

As stated in the previous question, credit equivalency means not taking the physical education class, but replacing it with out-of-class physical education.

To earn credit equivalency, the student shall

- Provide written documentation that verifies knowledge and application of the core concepts and principles of physical education knowledge and skills.
- Meet the Washington State K–12 Learning Standards in physical education.
- Meet minimum standards in physical and cognitive assessments.

Credit equivalency needs to be an adopted board policy and procedure and at the same rigor as students demonstrate in their classroom. The fitness portion of the requirement shall be met by course work in fitness education. The content of fitness courses shall be determined locally pursuant to WAC 180-51-025.

How can the results of the assessments be used to help improve teaching and learning?

Assessments can inform instruction to improve teaching and learning. Questions might include: What did the teacher learn from the student responses? How can this be used to improve future classroom instruction? The information that is acquired through classroom assessment should be actively used to improve future instruction and assessment.

Can I use a Fitness Performance Assessment (mile, push-up, sit-up, etc.) in place of an OSPI-Developed Fitness Assessment?

In short, no. The assessment is measuring cognitive knowledge. The mile is showing the student the time it takes to run the mile. What has the student learned? In this case, the student has learned the time that it took for them to run the mile (8 minutes and 43 seconds). The assessment is application of the information – taking it to the next level. Did the student really “get” the knowledge and can they apply the information?