



Washington Office of Superintendent of **PUBLIC INSTRUCTION**

Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills

1. **Purpose:**

2SSB 5427 (Full-day Kindergarten – Assessment, 2011 Session) states that beginning with the 2011-12 school year on a voluntary basis, schools must identify the skills, knowledge, and characteristics of kindergarten students at the start of the school year in order to support social-emotional, physical, and cognitive growth and development of individual children; support early learning provider and parent involvement; and inform instruction.

Kindergarten teachers shall administer the Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (WaKIDS) at the beginning of the school year to all students enrolled in state-funded full-day kindergarten programs under RCW 28A.150.315, as directed by the Superintendent of Public Instruction, in consultation with the Department of Children, Youth and Families, and report the results to the superintendent. The superintendent shall share the results with the director of the Department of Children, Youth and Families. School districts shall provide an opportunity for parents and guardians to excuse their children from participation in WaKIDS.

A second piece of legislation, ESHB 2586 (2012 Session), requires that WaKIDS replace administration of other assessments being required by school districts or that other assessments only be administered if they seek to obtain information not covered by WaKIDS.

2. **Description of services provided:**

OSPI provides leadership and administration of the WaKIDS kindergarten entry transition process, which includes three components: Family Connection, Whole-child Assessment and Early Learning Collaboration. OSPI coordinates a regional network of Educational Service Districts (ESDs) to provide training and technical assistance to teachers and administrators in schools implementing WaKIDS.

3. **Criteria for receiving services and/or grants:**

WaKIDS is legislatively mandated to be part of state-funded, full-day kindergarten. Schools accepting state funding for full-day kindergarten are required to administer WaKIDS, among other requirements, according to RCW 28A.150.315 and RCW 28A.655.080.

Beneficiaries in 2019-20 School Year:

Number of School Districts: 296
Number of Schools: 1179
Number of Students: 82,319
Number of Educators: 915

Number of OSPI staff associated with this funding (FTEs): 4.5 FTE
Number of contractors/other staff associated with this funding: 2 Contracts

FY20 Funding: State Appropriation: \$2,590,000
Federal Appropriation: \$0
Other fund sources: \$0
TOTAL (FY20) \$2,590,000

4. **Are federal or other funds contingent on state funding?**

No

Yes, please explain.

If state funds are not available, the state will not be eligible...

5. **State funding history:**

Fiscal Year	Amount Funded	Actual Expenditures
FY20	\$2,590,000	\$2,124,292
FY19	\$2,590,000	\$2,184,654
FY18	\$2,984,000	\$2,597,389
FY17	\$2,984,000	\$2,275,994
FY16	\$2,654,000	\$2,228,246
FY15	\$1,400,000	\$1,374,366
FY14	\$2,112,000	\$1,278,917
FY13 (PV*)	\$400,000	\$399,859

6. **Number of beneficiaries (e.g., school districts, schools, students, educators, other) history:**

Fiscal Year	Number of School Districts	Number of Schools	Number of Students	Number of Educators	Number of ESDs
FY20	296	1,179	82,319	4,448	9
FY19	282	1,143	82,196	4,258	9
FY18	293	1,154	80,956	4,216	9
FY 17	266	1,087	77,314	4,372	9
FY 16	257	887	58,656	2,974	9
FY 15	193	623	43,298	2,110	9
FY 14	187	550	38,443	1,800	9
FY 13	102	309	18,766	1,003	9

7. **Programmatic changes since inception (if any):**

WaKIDS was piloted in 2010-2011 and implemented in volunteer schools in 2011-2012. Beginning in 2012-2013, WaKIDS was required in all state-funded full-day kindergarten schools that fell within a designated poverty level, unless the district received a waiver from the Superintendent of Public Instruction. Each succeeding year, WaKIDS was scaled up, based on the poverty levels of the schools. Schools with the highest percentages of students on free and reduced lunch were given access to state-funded, full-day kindergarten first. Full funding was provided to support full-day kindergarten in 2016-17. As of 2017-18, all schools in Washington State were expected to provide state-funded, full-day kindergarten.

In 2014, changes were made to the objectives assessed to be in better alignment with Washington Learning Standards.

During 2016-17, OSPI renegotiated a new five-year contract with Teaching Strategies, the vendor that provides the tool for the whole-child assessment component of WaKIDS.

On July 1, 2017, Teaching Strategies GOLD®, the tool used for the whole-child assessment component of WaKIDS, converted to a new, upgraded platform. As a result, training and other support materials had to be revised to reflect changes to the user interface and expanded progressions of development. Updated materials had to be printed and disseminated to all kindergarten teachers and principals who had been using the tool prior to the upgrade.

In June 2019, the contract with the assessment vendor, Teaching Strategies, was amended to address the increase in students being assessed. The initial contract was based on an estimate of 80,000 kindergarten students. In the fall of 2018, 80,956 students were assessed. The contract was revised to 81,000 students, to allow more

fluctuation from year to year without triggering a contract revision. The amount paid to the vendor is based on the actual number of students assessed.

In July 2019, OSPI piloted a new training model that replaced the previous two-day, in-person training with a “hybrid” training model with one day in-person and one day online. The reason for this change was to reduce the cost of the training model in line with the proviso reduction between FY 18 and FY 19.

8. **Evaluations of program/major findings:**

WaKIDS data is showing that children enter kindergarten with a wide span of readiness across all six domains assessed. 51.5% were kindergarten-ready in all 6 domains assessed. Out of the 6 domains assessed, math was the lowest area of readiness, with only 68.2% of incoming kindergartners demonstrating age-appropriate skills in mathematics. Math has consistently been the lowest area of readiness since WaKIDS began. Asian children were found to be the demographic group with the highest number of students ready in all 6 domains at 63%. On the other hand, American Indian, Hispanic and Native Hawaiian children had the lowest number of students ready in all 6 domains, with 35.4% or lower. Differences in race and ethnicity, as well as eligibility for federal programs, such as English Language Learners, low-income students and students with disabilities, were strongly associated with kindergarteners’ readiness.

Gap in readiness persists beyond kindergarten, as indicated by analysis of WaKIDS data compared to Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBA) results which finds a strong relationship between kindergarten readiness and performances in SBA in 3rd grade. In line with the purpose of WaKIDS, which is to show students’ developmental progress both in kindergarten as well as in later grades, OSPI continues to research and analyze data to inform future research, policy changes and instruction.

9. **Major challenges faced by the program:**

WaKIDS training has been an area of challenge, impacted by both teacher turnover (kindergarten teacher turnover continues to be consistently high across the state, at 21% for FY 20) and the introduction of Transitional Kindergarten (TK). TK may begin at any point between the start of the school year and the end of January, which makes it difficult to predict training needs. Historically, WaKIDS training has occurred between July and September, but this is no longer sufficient for TK teachers hired to start programs in the late fall or winter.

Predicting the number of kindergarten students to be assessed is more challenging with the introduction of TK. Theoretically, TK would have increased the number of students assessed in FY 2020 but the assessment period for TK was suspended

because of COVID-19. The cost of the assessment is based on a per-student assessment fee. As more school districts begin to offer TK, the cost of teacher training and student assessment will increase.

Another challenge faced by the program is the current licensing agreement with Teaching Strategies, the assessment vendor for WaKIDS. The assessment tool used in WaKIDS is also used by the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP). OSPI holds a license for use of the assessment in kindergarten and TK. The Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) holds the license for use of the assessment in ECEAP, as well as for other preschool programs in Washington State.

If a school district chooses to use the Teaching Strategies assessment tool for developmental preschool programs serving students with disabilities they must purchase access under the DCYF license. If a school district wishes to use the assessment tool for a grade other than kindergarten--first, second or third grade--they must purchase access to the assessment from Teaching Strategies directly.

ECEAP data for preschool students moving to kindergarten is transferred from the DCYF license each year, but it is not transferred for other preschool programs that purchased access under the DCYF license, including district-based programs. This means that school administrators and kindergarten teachers may have access to ECEAP data but not data from other district-based preschool programs. OSPI and DCYF would like to resolve this fragmented arrangement during the next contract negotiation with Teaching Strategies in FY 21.

10. **Future opportunities:**

Although WaKIDS is not among the measures of the Washington School Improvement Framework, Washington's Every Student Succeeds Act Consolidated Plan includes numerous references to actions that improve kindergarten-readiness and use of WaKIDS data. For FY 2021, the Office of System and School Improvement (OSSI) has included a focus on increasing understanding and use of WaKIDS data in the System and School Improvement Coordinated Services Agreement with the ESDs. This provides the opportunity to support schools in targeted or comprehensive improvement status in using their WaKIDS data to identify school improvement strategies that are specific to their student populations and early learning needs. OSSI will also analyze the extent to which WaKIDS has been included in school improvements plans.

A proviso was passed during the 2020 Legislative session (Sec. 501 (1)(e)) that directed Education Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee (EOGOAC) to review WaKIDS, including professional development available to

educators and other assessment materials and tools, and make recommendations to OSPI and the Education Committees of the Legislature on opportunities for reducing bias in the observational assessment process and materials; and barriers to implementation.

During the FY 21, EOGOAC will be seeking feedback from relevant stakeholders to help inform their recommendations, which they will provide OSPI and the Education Committees of the Legislature as part of their annual reporting process. The discussions they are facilitating, and their anticipated recommendations are bringing a welcome opportunity to make improvements to WaKIDS implementation.

11. **Statutory and/or budget language:**

ESSB 6168, Sec. 501(4)(a) \$2,590,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2020 and \$2,590,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2021 are provided solely for the Washington kindergarten inventory of developing skills. State funding shall support statewide administration and district implementation of the inventory under RCW 28A.655.080.

12. **Other relevant information:**

N/A

13. **Schools/districts receiving assistance:**

See [OSPI's Grantee List](#)

14. **Program Contact Information:**

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