



Washington Office of Superintendent of **PUBLIC INSTRUCTION**

WA Assessment System

1. **Purpose:**

The program is to develop and administer a statewide assessment system to the requisite student population in the state of Washington. The *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA), the 2015 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), requires 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 the same three content areas. In the same grades and content areas, students with the most significant cognitive disabilities are also assessed each year.

2. **Description of services provided:**

Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), in conjunction with contractors:

- a. implements activities to develop items/tasks and assessments aligned to the existing learning standards/English language development (ELD) standards
- b. designs and makes ready for student access to 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.

Alternate assessments are provided for students having the most significant cognitive disabilities identified in their Individualized Education Program (IEP).

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

Schools and districts must participate in the state assessment system so that Washington has comprehensive information about student achievement and opportunity gaps.

Beneficiaries in 2021-22 School Year:

Number of School Districts:	All
Number of Schools:	All

Number of Students: All
 Number of Educators: All
 Other: N/A

Number of OSPI staff associated with this funding (FTEs): 24.25

Number of contractors/other staff associated with this funding: 4

FY22 Funding: State Appropriation: \$26,975,000
 Federal Appropriation: \$7,934,000
 Other Fund Sources: \$675,000
 TOTAL (FY22) \$35,584,000

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

Yes, ESEA 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 with the state.

5. State funding history:

Fiscal Year	Amount Funded	Actual Expenditures
2022	\$26,975,000	\$26,965,682
2021	\$26,975,000	\$23,594,652
2020	\$26,975,000	\$19,967,775
2019	\$26,975,000	\$21,083,777
2018	\$30,421,000	\$30,284,205

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

Fiscal Year	Number of Schools
FY22	All
FY21	All
FY20	All
FY19	All

7. Programmatic changes since inception (if any):

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 2006, as a result of the No Child Left Behind, the

state began administering additional assessments in reading and mathematics at grades 3, 5, 6, and 8.

Over the past dozen years the state assessments have undergone various modifications in program implementation, both for state management as well as district and school use. The list of modifications include a shortening of tests, moving to online administration rather than paper & pencil, adopting new learning standards (college & career readiness) and an aligned assessment (Smarter Balanced) that is computer adaptive, inclusion of interim assessments and resources for teachers (originally the Digital Library followed by Tools for Teachers), and quicker return of student score results (less than 3 weeks after testing rather than the start of the next school year). Additionally, High school testing switched to grade 11 beginning in 2015 and reverted back to grade 10 in 2018.

Starting with the spring 2022 test administration, Washington used the Smarter Balanced adjusted test blueprints for math and English language arts testing. These adjusted test blueprints reduce test-taking time by about one-third, while maintaining high reliability for individual student results. Despite being shorter, the item and test experience for students are a proportional representation of the full blueprint used in Spring 2019 and before and relies on an adaptive test delivery algorithm.

Science. In 2004, the state added science in grade 8 and 10 followed by grade 5 beginning in 2005. The science learning standards went through two subsequent adoptions, first in 2009 and most recently the 2013 adoption, the Washington State 2013 K–12 Science Learning Standards (based on Next Generation Science Standards or NGSS). From the 2004 through the 2017 administration, science assessments were delivered in paper & pencil formats at all three grade levels. Science assessments were delivered in paper & pencil formats at all three grade levels from 2004 through 2017 and moved to an online administration at all three grade levels in 2018. Between 2012 and 2017 the high school science assessment measured end-of-course (EOC) knowledge in the content area of Biology but returned to a comprehensive assessment measuring the breadth of the NGSS learning standards in 2018.

Alternate assessment. Consistent with legislation, states are allowed to develop and administer an alternate assessment designed for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. The state adopted a portfolio design and administered it from 2001 through the 2014 administration. Improvements over this period were focused on expanding access for students with limited capacity in engaging with the assessment, more robust standards extensions to aid a wider breadth of student demonstration, modifications to data collection to reduce burdens on teachers while

establishing greater alignment to grade-level learning standards, and adding performance skill points that are evaluated (scored).

In 2015 a new alternate assessment, the Washington Access to Instruction & Measurement (WA-AIM), was implemented that modified the design to better align with the adopted college & career readiness learning standards in grades 3–8 and 10 for ELA and math. 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.)

WA-AIM is designed as a performance-based assessment of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. 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.

8. Evaluations of program/major findings:

There were two administrations of statewide standardized assessments during the 2021-22 school year: once in the fall and once in the spring. This was due to shifting the test window of the 2020-21 typical administration (would have been spring 2021) to fall 2021 stemming from U.S. Department of Education flexibilities resulting from COVID. The spring 2022 test administration was more typical, after the cancellation or delay of testing that were experienced in spring 2020 and 2021. Spring 2022 testing provided a promising first look at pandemic recovery and acceleration. Student performance at the statewide, district, and school levels have been posted to the Washington Report Card website, <https://washingtonstatereportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/>.

In collaboration with Washington's peer states, assessment consortia, supporting service providers, and national and state assessment technical advisory committees, OSPI continues its efforts in evaluating the assessment program for quality and efficiency.

9. Major challenges faced by the program:

Maintaining a high-quality assessment system that is cost-effective continues as the focus of state consideration. The variability and uncertainty of assessments over the past two years has created challenges with administration (cancelled in 2020 and delay to fall in 2021) as well as with having data that are sufficiently consistent for interpreting trends.

One trade off to the shorter assessments (described in #7 above) is that sub-scores (called “claims”), are not available for individual student results. OSPI is seeking alternatives and ways to provide more information about student learning.

10. **Future opportunities:**

Washington will continue to use the Smarter Balanced adjusted blueprint in Spring 2023. The shorter test allows students and teachers more time to focus on instruction as well as socio-emotional and academic supports.

Over the next several years, OSPI will be transitioning from paper-based reporting of individual student scores to an exclusively electronic delivery of individual score reports to districts, which is more cost-effective.

OSPI is also exploring different ways to communicate student performance on state assessments, going beyond binary proficient/not proficient, to include ideas such as student learning and progress over time.

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

ESSB 5693 Section 501(1)(a) \$26,975,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2022, \$26,975,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2023, \$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 development and implementation of the Washington state assessment system.

12. **Other relevant information:**

[Report Card.](#)

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

See [OSPI's grantee list.](#)

14. **Program Contact Information:**

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