



Washington Office of Superintendent of **PUBLIC INSTRUCTION**

Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (WaKIDS)

1. **Purpose:**

The purpose of the Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills is to 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.

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 2020-21 School Year:

Number of School Districts:	294
Number of Schools:	1,200
Number of Students:	68,447
Number of Educators:	4,443

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.

5. **State funding history:**

Fiscal Year	Amount Funded	Actual Expenditures
FY21	\$2,590,000	\$2,401,770
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
FY21	294	1,200	68,447	4,443	9
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.

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 WaKIDS teacher 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 FY18 and FY19.

In July 2020, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, OSPI moved the required WaKIDS training for teachers to an online learning management system. Teachers had two weeks to complete the training. Multiple sessions were hosted concurrently by three WaKIDS instructors who provided virtual feedback and monitored for completion. Additional resources were developed to support families, teachers, and school administrators with remote WaKIDS implementation. The deadline for the Whole-child Assessment component was extended by two weeks.

8. Evaluations of program/major findings:

Historically, WaKIDS data has consistently shown that children enter kindergarten with a wide span of readiness across all six domains assessed. Gap in readiness persists beyond kindergarten. Analysis of WaKIDS data compared to Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBA) results finds a strong relationship between kindergarten readiness and performances in SBA in 3rd grade. Kindergarten readiness predicts 3rd grade SBA outcomes, even after controlling for student and school-level factors.

An OSPI analysis of 2015-16 WaKIDS and 2018-19 3rd grade SBA data found:

Students who are kindergarten-ready in:	Students who are kindergarten-ready in...
Math are 1.80 times	Math are 1.67 times
Literacy are 1.63 times	Literacy are 1.77 times
Cognitive are 1.38 times	Cognitive are 1.34 times
Socioemotional are 1.16 times	Socioemotional are 1.08 times
All domains are 1.36 times	All domains are 1.38 times
...more likely to meet math standards.	... more likely to meet English Language Arts standards.

Using the same 2015-16 WaKIDS and 2018-19 3rd grade SBA cohort data, OSPI also found that fewer students met 3rd grade SBA standards in English Language Arts and Math than were kindergarten-ready in the same subjects. Historically underserved racial/ethnic groups experienced larger decreases in the proportion of students meeting standards than White/Asian peers.

Assessment findings for fall 2020 were impacted by COVID-19. The number of kindergarten students who participated in WaKIDS was more than 13,000 less than previous years. If unable to assess a child's development due to remote learning circumstances, teachers could choose the value "not observed" for any of the 31 objectives assessed. When a teacher selects "not observed", it results in an incomplete data set. Submissions of "not observed" resulted in nearly one quarter of students having incomplete data. At least 70% of the objective-level data is needed to create aggregate representations of overall kindergarten readiness. For these reasons, OSPI did not post kindergarten readiness results for 2020 on the State Report Card.

The student level data for fall 2020 is still valid but the rate of non-participation in and the systemic nature of the non-participation mean that the comparisons across schools or districts or over time at the state level is not possible. Thus, fall 2020 WaKIDS data was primarily used for local, formative assessment practices.

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

The growth of Transitional Kindergarten (TK) has impacted WaKIDS. Because TK programs may begin by end of January, TK teachers may be hired after the traditional summer/fall WaKIDS training period. Additional trainings have been added to accommodate this.

Eventually, TK will also impact the cost of administering the WaKIDS assessment, which is based on a per-student fee. TK would have increased the number of students assessed in 2020-2021, but this was offset by overall low kindergarten enrollment due to COVID-19. As more school districts begin to offer TK, the cost of teacher training and student assessment may increase beyond the current projections.

Another challenge faced by the program is the current licensing agreement with the assessment vendor, Teaching Strategies, limits the access districts have to prior student data. The assessment tool used in WaKIDS is also used by the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP), Washington's state-funded preschool. 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 district-funded preschool programs, for instance developmental preschool programs serving students with disabilities, they must purchase access under the DCYF license. The two licenses do not interface with one another. ECEAP data for preschool students moving to kindergarten must be manually transferred from the DCYF to the OSPI license each year. The transfer does not extend any 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 22.

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 the last three years, 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 Educational Service Districts. This continues to provide 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.

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 FY 21, EOGOAC appointed and convened a subcommittee to gather feedback about WaKIDS from relevant stakeholders. EOGOAC will provide their recommendations to OSPI and the Education Committees of the Legislature as part of their annual reporting process in FY 22. These recommendations will provide an opportunity to explore areas of potential improvement to WaKIDS.

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

ESSB 5092, Sec. 1501(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:**

See 2SSB 5427 (Full-day Kindergarten – Assessment, 2011 Session)
Kindergarten teachers must 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.

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

See [OSPI's Grantee List](#)

14. **Program Contact Information:**

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