End-Of-Course (EOC) Exit Exam and Smarter Balanced High School Testing
Questions and Answers

March 2015

Q: Will student have access to a formula sheet on the EOC exit exams?

A: No. Since the EOC Exit Exams are built from items provided by Smarter Balanced, we are following a parallel process for providing formulas for our state test. The items on the Smarter Balanced test that might require formulas that students would not be expected to know will be embedded or provided in the item. Therefore, a formula sheet will not be provided.

Please see the following link for further information:

Q: Will student be able to use a calculator on the EOC exit exams?

A: Yes. Students can use a calculator for all sessions of the EOC exit exams. This is different than the Smarter Balanced High School test, which does not allow calculators on session 1 of the test. A student can use a graphing calculator with maximum functionality similar to a TI-84.

Q: What other tools can students use on the EOC exit exams?

A: Guidance is being provided to all District Assessment Coordinators (DACs) regarding allowable tools for all mathematics assessment in spring. Please contact your DAC for specific information.

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Q: From where do the testing requirements come?

A: The legislature, in EHB 1450, mandated that OSPI create EOC assessments for the first year (Year 1) and second year (Year 2) of high school mathematics. Further, the Year 1 EOC must test the standards common to Algebra 1 and Integrated Mathematics 1, and the Year 2 EOC must test the standards common to Geometry and Integrated Mathematics 2. The same legislation also mandates use of “the comprehensive mathematics assessment developed with the multistate consortium,” which is the Smarter Balanced High School assessment. The mathematics testing requirements for graduation vary slightly by graduating class.

Q: What tests are available?

A: Per legislation, we are offering Algebra I and Integrated Mathematics I EOC exit exams (Year 1), Geometry and Integrated Mathematics II EOC exit exams (Year 2), and the Smarter Balanced High School assessment.

Q: Who takes each test?

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A: Students in the classes of 2015–2018 take an EOC exit exam at the time they complete the course. Students in the classes of 2015 and beyond take the Smarter Balanced High School assessment when they are in 11th grade.

Q: Why can’t students in the classes of 2019 and beyond take an EOC exit exam?

A: This decision was based on legislation and the subsequent reduction in funding. All of our assessments are developed and administered based on legislation that is supported by funding. As we transition to the Smarter Balanced 11th Grade test, funding is being transferred to support the new test, while only a portion remains for maintaining the mathematics EOC availability for only those students who have a mathematics EOC as a graduation requirement, specifically students in the classes of 2015–2018.

Q: Why can’t students in the classes of 2015–2018 take an EOC exit exam if they have previously passed an EOC?

A: Current legislation only requires a student meet standard on one mathematics EOC for graduation purposes. OSPI discussed and considered the impact on schools, classrooms, and students, as not having the option to test all interested students could create hardships for some students, classrooms, or schools. Unfortunately, additional funds are not available to test students with an EOC mathematics exam in the Classes of 2015–2018 who have already met standard on one EOC, either Year 1 or Year 2.

Q: When will these tests be given?

A: Both the EOC exit exams and the Smarter Balanced High School test will first be given in spring of the 2014–2015 school year.

Current legislation requires the EOC exit exam be administered twice each school year. The EOC will be available once at the end of the first semester (January/February) and once at the end of the school year (May/June). The EOC exit exams will be administered until spring 2018. After that time, only the Smarter Balanced High School test will be administered.

Currently, the Smarter Balanced High School test will be available once per school year, in the spring. Based on current legislation it is likely that, at some point, the test will be administered twice per year in a similar timeline as the EOC exit exam. As we know more information about test administration it will be shared with each District Assessment Coordinator.

Q: What standards are assessed on the EOC exit exams?

A: The mathematics EOC exit exams assess the Washington State K–12 Learning Standards, formerly known as the Common Core State Standards. The specific high school domains, clusters, and standards eligible for each EOC exam is posted in online in the EOC Exit Exam Specifications. Many of these standards are also assessed on the Smarter Balanced High School test. More information about the Smarter Balanced High School test is online in the Preliminary Test Blueprints and Item/Task Specifications for Mathematics High School.

Q: How were the EOC exam specifications determined?
A: Because the standards are not organized according to courses, OSPI had to identify the standards that fell into each of the four courses identified in the legislation. We followed a technically advised process to produce a list of domains, clusters, and standards from the Washington State K–12 Learning Standards appropriate for each Year 1 and Year 2 course. We sought input and expertise from national experts and Washington state educators and used the Common Core State Standards and resources from the Smarter Balanced and PARCC assessment consortia and several other sources.

OSPI first sought guidance and recommendations from assessment experts on our National Technical Advisory Committee on a process to follow. Based on this guidance, OSPI staff developed an initial list of domains, clusters, and standards for Year 1 and Year 2 courses. Mathematics educators, through the OSPI moodle, had the opportunity to provide feedback on this initial list. Based on this feedback, OSPI generated an updated list with relative weightings by cluster. OSPI convened and facilitated groups of educators, made up of both “traditional” and “integrated” educators, to review lists for both Year 1 and Year 2 to provide additional recommendations on the standards and weightings. This finalized list was approved by the Assistant Superintendents for Teaching and Learning and Assessment and Student Information and by the Deputy Superintendent for K–12 Education.

Q: Where can I find EOC exit exam information?

A: Information related to the EOC exit exams is online at http://www.k12.wa.us/Mathematics/default.aspx. Follow the link for EOC Exit Exams.

Q: Why don’t the EOC specifications and test map match the Smarter Balanced High School specifications and test map?

A: The Smarter Balanced High School test is designed to assess three or more years of high school mathematics, including content traditionally taught in an Algebra 2 or Integrated Mathematics III course. Student performance will be used to determine if students have the mathematical skills to be successful in a career or credit-bearing college course. Student performance on this test will also be reported to the U.S. Department of Education for purposes of determining adequate yearly progress.

The EOC exams are each designed to assess content from a single course. Student performance will be used to determine is students have the mathematical skills from that course. Student performance on these EOCs will be reported to the district, school, and community for local decision-making purposes. Graduation requirements for students in the classes of 2015–2018 will also be based on student performance on the EOCs.

Even though these two tests have different purposes, the EOC exit exams measure progress toward the student achieving the goals described of the Smarter Balanced High School test.

Q: Why don’t the EOCs specifications and test map match resources such as the PARCC Content Focus by Course, Engage NY, Appendix A of the Common Core, the textbook my district adopted, etc.?

A: Many different resources were consulted to generate the initial list of domains, clusters, and standards presented to Washington educators. However, since none of those resources were designed to meet our legislative requirements, they could not be used “as is” for our Washington
State exams. And while we based the initial list on these resources, we relied heavily on the experience and knowledge of Washington State educators to develop specifications and test maps that honored the focus, coherence, and rigor of the standards while meeting current state legislation.

There are multiple resources designed to provide guidance on teaching the standards and attending to the shifts in the standards. The EOC specifications and test map provide insight into the standards that are eligible to be assessed for a particular course. Educators should thoughtfully consider the content, standards, progression of learning, and focus that needs to be attended to in any course, not just what is laid out in a particular resource.

Q: We’ve used the PARCC Content Focus by Course to organize our high school course content. How do the EOC specifications and test map differ from the PARCC documents?

A: There is much in common between the EOC specifications and test map and these PARCC documents. There are, though, several subtle and some not so subtle differences between the PARCC Content Focus by Course documents and the EOC specifications and test map. Because of the legislated requirement to assess standards common to both Year 1 courses (Algebra 1 and integrated Mathematics I) and both Year 2 courses (Geometry and Integrated Mathematics II), the PARCC Content Focus by Course did not provide sufficient content in common to appropriately develop both Year 1 and Year 2 EOC exams. Therefore, we are no longer recommending that the PARCC Content Focus by Course documents be used as they do not align with either the legislative mandate, the EOC exit exams, or the Smarter Balanced High School test.

We know that many districts, schools, and educators have used the PARCC Content Focus by Course to organize the Washington State K–12 Learning Standards for mathematics into courses. The work that has been done is not wasted; in fact, those who have done this work are likely much better positioned to make this final step to align with the EOC exit exams. Districts, schools, and educators who have done alignment work can build on that work to align coursework to the EOC exit exams. To facilitate the transition to aligning with the EOC test specifications, OSPI created a document that highlights the shifts from the PARCC resources to the EOC test specifications. We encourage educators to use this resource to take the final step to more fully align with the EOC exit exam.

Q: The EOC test specifications only include two years of content from the standards. What guidance exists or is being developed for organizing all of the standards into three or more years?

A: The Washington K–12 Learning Standards for high school mathematics includes content that is typically taught in courses beyond the first or second year courses of Algebra 1 and Geometry or Integrated Mathematics I and II. Because the legislation only requires that tests be developed for Year 1 and year 2, local districts have the flexibility to determine the best organization for those standards not assessed on a Year 1 or Year 2 course. One approach could be to include all the standards not assessed in Year 1 and Year 2 courses in a third year mathematics course. Standards with the (+) symbol should also be considered. The decision is a local decision and can be done in any number of ways. We encourage local decision makers to use multiple resources, including the test specifications for the Smarter Balanced High School test, in determining the organization that best suits their needs.

Q: The EOC test specifications mentions “Claims.” What is this Claim information?
A: The Smarter Balanced assessment consortium organized the grades 3–8 and 11 tests by claims, based on the standards and mathematical practices. A claim is simply a statement of critical mathematical learning outcomes for students. To support the transition to the Smarter Balanced tests, the EOC exit exams are organized using the same claim structure. Students will receive results on how well they demonstrate concepts and procedures, problem solving and modeling, and communicating reasoning. The EOC test specifications show the relative emphasis of each claim on the EOC, as determined by the process described above.

More information on the claims can be found online in the Smarter Balanced Mathematics Content Specifications.

Q: What exactly is tested within each standard?

A: The EOC exit exam specifications give guidance about what domains, clusters, and standards are assessed on each EOC. Items will also assess the mathematical practices, as described in the claim organization of the exam. The combination of the mathematics content and mathematical practices

Restrictions specific to certain standards are provided in a table within each document. As the test specifications are a working draft of the exams, further information to help inform instruction and local assessment will be added to clarify the exam.

Q: Why are standards with a (+) symbol included on the EOC exit exam? I thought those were only supposed to be taught after Algebra 2/Integrated Mathematics III?

A: Since the standards are organized by conceptual category, not course, there is no guidance or mandate from the standards about which standards should be taught in a specific course or after those courses, including Algebra 2 and Integrated Mathematics III. OSPI took what guidance is presented in the standards about the standards with a (+) symbol and considered very carefully whether to include them on an EOC. The decision was heavily influenced by the following guidance in the standards document:

“All standards without a (+) symbol should be in the common mathematics curriculum for all college and career ready students. Standards with a (+) symbol may also appear in courses intended for all students.”

Washington State K–12 Learning Standards

Based on this guidance, and with input and approval from Washington educators, two standards with the (+) symbol were included on Year 2 exams.

Q: Will the exams be on paper, or online, or will schools get to choose?

A: The EOC exit exams will only ever be available on paper. The Smarter Balanced High School assessment in the 2014–2015 school year will be available both online and on paper. Districts can choose either format for their students, but using a paper form will require the district to pay a fee for those assessments. Paper availability of the Smarter Balanced High School assessment is subject to change in the 2015–2016 school year and beyond.

Q: How well do students have to do on the exam to pass?
A: The performance needed to meet standard on the test has not been determined as students have not yet taken the exams. OSPI will follow an approved process based on guidance from the State Board and National Technical Advisory committee, and the State Board will set a cut score by August 2015.

As you have specific questions about the EOC exit exams and/or the Smarter Balanced High School test, please email them to mathematics@k12.wa.us. We will update this document periodically to address those questions. Thank you.