



State Testing 2015

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Washington has state learning standards across a wide variety of subjects. The state administers tests every year in English language arts (ELA), math and science to make sure students' learning is on track and for state and federal accountability requirements.

Because Washington's state learning standards in ELA and math now align with the Common Core State Standards, the tests students take this year in those subjects will be different. These new Smarter Balanced tests are next-generation assessments that accurately measure student progress toward college- and career-readiness by the end of high school.

What does this mean for your child?

• 3rd through 8th grade

The state will *no longer administer* the Measurements of Student Progress (MSP) in math and reading, nor writing for 4th and 7th graders. Instead, students will take Smarter Balanced tests in ELA and math.

The science MSP *will continue* for 5th and 8th graders.

• 9th through 12th grade

All 11th graders will take the Smarter Balanced exams in ELA and math to satisfy federal law.

To be eligible to graduate from high school, state law requires students to pass exit exams or state-approved alternatives. Please see www.WAtesting.com for specific requirements by class and to learn more about the state's testing system.

Depending upon their expected year of graduation, students will take a combination of the following tests:

♦ High School Proficiency Exams

HSPEs are 10th-grade comprehensive exams that measure the basic proficiency of high school students in reading and writing. HSPEs will only be administered this year to 11th and 12th graders who have not yet passed, but would like to use those tests to satisfy graduation requirements.

♦ End-of-course exams

EOCs measure the knowledge of students in algebra 1/integrated math 1, geometry/integrated math 2 and biology when they complete each course.

♦ ELA exit exams and math EOC exit exams

These new tests are based on the Common Core State Standards. The ELA exit exam is administered to 10th graders. Students take a math EOC exit exam in algebra 1/integrated math 1 or geometry/integrated math 2 when they complete the course.

♦ Smarter Balanced Tests

Starting this year, 11th graders will take Smarter Balanced tests in ELA and math. Passing the Smarter Balanced tests will be required for the Class of 2019 and beyond.

State Testing Windows and Reporting Timeline

ONLINE TESTING

Mar 9– June 15: Smarter Balanced window for grades 3–8 (except grade 3 ELA)

Mar 9– Apr 23: Smarter Balanced window for grade 3 ELA

Apr 6– June 15: Smarter Balanced window for grade 11

Apr 20– June 5: MSP Science window for grades 5 and 8

PAPER/PENCIL TESTING

Jan 2– Feb 7: EOC exam retake testing window

Feb 2– Mar 13: WELPA testing window for grades K–12

Mar 18-20: Writing & Reading HSPEs

Mar 9– May 20: Smarter Balanced window for grades 3–8 (except grade 3 ELA)

Mar 9– Apr 15: Smarter Balanced window for grade 3 ELA

Apr 20– May 19: MSP Science window for grades 5 and 8

May 12-13 or 19-20: ELA exit exam for grade 10

Last 3 weeks of school (by May 30): Smarter Balanced window for grade 11

Last 3 weeks of school: EOC exam window for Math and Biology

May 30– Jun 22: August HSPE registration window

Aug 12-14: August HSPE window

SCORE REPORTS SENT TO DISTRICTS

Mid-May: Smarter Balanced grade 3 ELA

June: Smarter Balanced (online version); HSPE; ELA exit exam; WELPA

July: Smarter Balanced (paper/pencil version)

Sept: MSP Science; EOCs

State Testing: Questions & Answers

Why are we required to do state testing?

Because of state and federal laws. Our state assessment system was implemented in response to the state's Education Reform Law of 1993. Our state tests also fulfill the requirements of the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. NCLB requires annual assessments in English language arts (ELA) and math for students in grades 3–8 and once in high school. Students also must be tested annually in science in three grade levels. Washington does this by testing students in grades 5 and 8 and once in high school. All English language learners in K–12 must be tested annually to measure growth in English knowledge and skills.

Why is the state changing the tests this year?

Washington state tests align with the state learning standards. This year, the state standards were updated in both English language arts (ELA) and math. That means the tests also needed to be updated to reflect these new, higher standards.

What if my child is an English language learner?

Students in grades K–12 who are English language learners take the Washington English Language Proficiency Assessment (WELPA). The WELPA measures growth in oral and written English. Because knowing and using English well is necessary for success in school, it is important that students who need additional help learning English get it.

What if my child receives special education services?

A student receiving special education services may be eligible for additional alternatives related to the testing requirements. Please see "Special Education and State Testing" at www.k12.wa.us/Resources.

When do families receive state test results?

- **Smarter Balanced:** July
- **Science MSP and EOC:** September
- **WELPA:** June

If you do not receive a score report, please contact your school district office.

What's the difference between EOC exams and EOC exit exams?

"EOC" stands for "End-of-Course." Students take EOC exams within the last three weeks of school. Math EOC exams are available in algebra 1 or geometry, or the integrated math equivalents. The science EOC exam is available in biology.

Math EOC exams are based on the state's math standards through the 2013–14 school year. EOC *exit* exams are similar to EOC exams, but they are based on the state's new math standards starting in the 2014–15 school year. Students taking a math EOC for the first time this year will take an EOC exit exam.

How do I register my child for exam retakes?

Registration for the August HSPE usually begins around June 1. You can register for summer testing at www.k12.wa.us/testregistration or by calling (866) 400-9275. Retakes for EOC exams are in January/February each year. Registration for an EOC retake should be confirmed with your child's school district.

What tests are online?

The state offers the Smarter Balanced tests online in grades 3–8 and 11 and the science MSP in grades 5 and 8.

Does my child need to pass a state test to graduate from high school?

Yes. Each graduating class has different requirements. Please ask your school counselor and visit www.WAtesting.com for specific requirements by class.

What types of questions appear on state tests?

Be sure to check out the Smarter Balanced Practice tests at sbac.portal.airast.org/practice-test.

If you have questions or concerns about your child's learning, please contact your child's teacher or school counselor.

Keep State Testing in Perspective

Students and parents can feel pressured by state testing, but the test should not be the center of attention. Schools use multiple ways to measure student learning.

Encourage your child to do his/her best. If your child's score report shows help is needed in certain areas, that is not a bad thing. Schools know how to target help.

Think about your child's test day routine. Unless you sense your child needs a different routine during testing (e.g., more sleep or more physical activity), follow whatever routine already helps him/her be successful in school.

Talk with your child about the testing experience. For test security reasons, students may not discuss the content of the state tests, but it's OK for them to talk about the tests in general. If your child says he or she struggled with any parts of the test, talk to your child's teacher to find out if he or she has the same issues in the classroom.

How Do I ...

View my child's test?

Parents may request to see their child's test(s), starting Sept. 7, 2015. Tests are sent to the student's school district for review.

www.k12.wa.us/assessment/StudentRecordRequest.aspx

Appeal my child's score?

Only scores from the high school exams used to meet graduation requirements may be appealed.

www.k12.wa.us/assessment/Appeals.aspx