

State Testing 2012

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Every spring, the state tests all students in grades 3-8 and 10 to make sure their learning is on track. The results from this testing are important to us all.



Students in grades 3-8 participate in the **Measurements of Student Progress (MSP)**. Those in high school take the **High School Proficiency Exam (HSPE)**. In addition, the state began end-of-course exams in algebra 1 and geometry last year and will debut a biology EOC in spring 2012.

The MSP is also offered online in reading, math and science (grades 5 and 8). Beginning in spring 2012, students in grades 3-8 can take reading and math via computer.

Our state tests were named to convey their specific goals.

The MSP *measures student progress*. While the MSP results are important, state testing should never be the sole measure of a student's academic skills and knowledge. A student's entire performance should always be considered.

The HSPE ensures that high school students are *proficient*, or have the basic skills necessary to move on to the next steps in their life. The high school tests are aligned to graduation requirements.

Students through the **class of 2012** must pass the reading and writing state exams, a state-approved alternative or an assessment for students in special education AND pass the state math exam or earn two math credits after 10th grade.

Students in the classes of **2013** and **2014** must pass reading, writing and math to be eligible to graduate. Students in the class of **2015** and beyond must pass reading, writing, math and science.

If you have questions or concerns about your child's learning, please contact your child's teacher or school counselor. To learn more about the state's testing system, please visit www.WAtesting.com.

Who Gets Tested and When?

The federal No Child Left Behind Act requires yearly testing of students in grades 3-8 and 10 in reading and math, and in three grades in science (grades 5, 8 and 10 in Washington). Our state also tests students in writing (grades 4, 7 and 10). Our state has also moved to online testing.

Grade	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th
Reading	✓ ■	✓ ■	✓ ■	✓ ■	✓ ■	✓ ■	NT	✓		
Math	✓ ■	✓ ■	✓ ■	✓ ■	✓ ■	✓ ■	✓	✓		
Writing		✓			✓		NT	✓		
Science			✓ ■			✓ ■	✓	✓		

■ Offered online in spring 2012

NT Subject not tested (9th graders only take end-of-course exams in math and science, if they are in those specific courses)

Updated July 2011

2012 State Testing and Reporting Timeline

MARCH	
13-14:	Writing HSPE
15:	Reading HSPE
JAN/FEB	
Late-Mid:	Math EOC Retakes
APRIL	
27:	MSP testing window for grades 3-8 begins
MAY	
May 18	MSP ends (paper)
June 4:	MSP ends (online)
End of Year	EOC math & biology exams (last 3 weeks of school)
JUNE	
1:	Registration begins for August HSPE
By 10:	HSPE Score Reports sent home for grades 10-12
By 17:	Release of statewide HSPE results
AUGUST	
14-16:	August HSPE testing
Late:	MSP/HSPE results released for all students
SEPT.	
Mid:	All MSP/HSPE reports sent home (all grades)

What Does a MSP/HSPE Score Mean?

Students receive a score for each MSP/HSPE test taken. Scores are based on how an individual student performed. Scores fall into one of four levels (with Level 3 and above as passing):

- Level **4** **Exceeds State Standards:** Represents advanced mastery of a subject's skills and knowledge.
- Level **3** **Meets State Standards:** Represents mastery of a subject's skills and knowledge.
- Level **2** **Below State Standard:** Represents some mastery of a subject's skills and knowledge.
- Level **1** **Well-Below State Standard:** Represents little to no mastery of a subject's skills and knowledge.

State Testing: Frequently Asked Questions

Why are we required to do state testing?

Because of state and federal law. 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 reading and math for students in grades 3-8 and high school. Students also must be tested annually in science in three grade levels. Washington does this by testing students in grades 5, 8 and 10.

When do families receive results for high school state testing?

Early June. Students will receive HSPE scores in reading and writing in June 2012. Math and science end-of-course exam scores will not be available until August 2012. See below for more information on the new end-of-course math exams.

When do families receive results for grades 3-8 (MSP) testing?

Early to mid September. Student score reports are delivered to school districts in late August. School districts are then responsible for mailing the score reports to families. If you do not receive a score report, please contact your school or district office.

What are the end-of-course exams and when are they given?

The end-of-course, or EOC, math exams are available in algebra I and geometry, and the science EOC is available in biology. Any student taking algebra I, geometry or biology from 7th grade and up, will take the appropriate EOC. The EOCs are to be given within the last three weeks of school. Students in the class of 2015 and beyond must pass both math EOCs in order to graduate.

The MSP and HSPE were shorter, but were they easier?

No. Just like 2010, the spring 2011 MSP and HSPE results did not show a large score improvement. The tests continue to be valid and reliable measures of student performance. Just because a test is shorter doesn't mean it is easier.

Online State Testing

Washington is not the first state to make the move to online testing, but it is among the leaders. The state's goal is for the majority of elementary and middle school grades in reading, math and science to be tested via computers in all school districts by 2014.

In spring 2012, the MSP will be given online in grades 3-8, with third graders being offered the opportunity for the first time. Last year, fourth and fifth graders began testing online in reading and math. Feasibility studies are being conducted for online testing in high school and fourth- and seventh-grade writing.

How do I register my child for the summer HSPE and when?

August test registration 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 will be in January/February each year.

What tests are online?

In spring 2012, the state will offer the reading and math MSP online in grades 3-8 and the science MSP in grades 5 and 8.

Does my son or daughter still need to pass a state test to graduate from high school?

Yes. Each class has different requirements. Please ask your school counselor.

What types of questions appear on state tests?

The MSP and HSPE tests include multiple-choice and short-answer questions. Four-point essay questions have been eliminated on reading, math and science tests. This change allows students to show they are able to solve the problems, while not being scored on their writing ability on the math, reading and science tests.

Keep State Testing in Perspective

Students and parents can feel pressured by state testing, but the test should not be the center of attention. Core skills and knowledge matter most.

- 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 a 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. Some students find it helpful to talk about the tests. If your child says s/he struggled with any parts of the test, talk to your child's teacher to find out if s/he has the same issues in the classroom.

How Do I ...

View my child's test?

Parents can request to review their child's test booklet(s), starting Sept. 6, 2011. The test booklets are sent to the student's respective school district for review. Please visit:

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. Scores for the grades 3-8 Measurements of Student Progress may not be appealed. Please visit:

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

