



Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE

UPDATE: Washington Comprehensive Assessment Program

2021

Authorizing Legislation: RCW 28A.300.041

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report summarizes state standardized assessments for the 2020–21 school year. Given the pandemic, [the U.S. Department of Education \(ED\) granted some flexibility for some statewide assessments during that year](#), but for other assessments, expectations were the same as in a typical year. Given the premium placed on in-person learning in spring 2021 at a time when many schools were ramping up in-person instruction, OSPI elected to use the flexibility allowed by ED and defer the test window for several tests to the fall. Although Washington administered some tests in fall 2021, the fall tests are considered part of the 2020–21 testing year. The impacts on testing varied:

- Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (WaKIDS) was conducted remotely in fall 2020.
- Smarter Balanced English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics assessments for students in grades 3–8 and 10 were delayed to the beginning of the 2021–22 school year, rather than during the typical spring timeframe.
- Washington Comprehensive Assessment for Science (WCAS) for students grades 5, 8, and 11 was delayed to the beginning of the 2021–22 school year, rather than during the typical spring timeframe.
- The Washington Access to Instruction and Measurement (WA-AIM), the alternate assessment for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, was also delayed until fall 2021, although some students tested in the spring because testing was underway at the time of the decision to defer to the fall. Approximately 70% of expected students completed testing in the spring.
- English Language Proficiency Assessments for the 21st Century (ELPA21) test for students receiving English language development services was available and 69% of eligible students were tested.
- WIDA Alternate ACCESS for students with significant cognitive disabilities who qualify for English language development services was available and approximately 1,300 students participated.

Overall assessment costs were lower for fiscal year 2021, due to the decision in mid-March to defer most testing to fall 2021. Costs include preparation for test administration that had occurred prior to the test deferral decision. Some assessment costs for the delayed fall 2021 test will be paid from fiscal year 2022 appropriations. Therefore, the 2022 legislative report will include fall 2021 administration information.

This report also includes a summary of the State Board of Education (SBE) activities concerning the state assessment system in 2021 and actions of the Board anticipated for 2022 as required by Revised Code of Washington ([RCW 28A.300.041](#)).

Due to deferring test administrations to fall and the timing of different assessments, information in this report does not contain test results. The fall 2021 assessment data are posted on [Report Card](#).

STATEWIDE STUDENT ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (WaKIDS)

OSPI has continued implementation of WaKIDS, a kindergarten transition process that includes measurement of the skills, knowledge, and characteristics of incoming kindergartners.

WaKIDS is a kindergarten transition process intended to:

- Welcome families into the Washington K–12 system as partners in their child’s education
- Give kindergarten teachers information about the development of children in their classroom to help them teach every child. The assessment provides information about each child’s social/emotional, cognitive, language/literacy, mathematical, and physical development
- Align practices of early learning professionals and kindergarten teachers to support smooth transitions for children
- Offer a statewide snapshot of where children in Washington are in their development at the start of kindergarten, to help inform state-level decisions about policy and investments

In the 2020–21 school year, during the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers conducted WaKIDS remotely and reported their observations for 68,447 kindergarten students. Because of the pandemic, the WaKIDS assessment deadline was extended from October 31, 2020, to November 13, 2020.

Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBA) System

Washington is a member of the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC), and Washington students and educators have access to a comprehensive suite of standards-aligned assessments and tools—including instructional supports, interim assessments, and summative assessments—to support effective teaching and maximize learning for each individual student.

Tools For Teachers

The SBAC-provided Tools for Teachers is a repository for instructional resources that can be used to support the interim assessments. Tools for Teachers feature teacher-created lessons and activities to enhance instruction and are not an assessment given to students.

Embedded within these resources are formative assessment strategies that educators can use to gather information about student learnings toward the standards and performance on the SBA and interim assessments.

Tools for Teachers was available to educators during the entire 2020–21 school year.

Interim Assessments and Interim Assessment Item Portal (IAIP)

The SBAC-provided interim assessments are optional assessments local educators can use throughout the year to provide actionable data about student knowledge and abilities to help teachers target instruction to meet students' individual learning needs. There are three types of interims: Interim Comprehensive Assessments (ICAs), Interim Assessment Blocks (IABs), and Focused Interim Assessment Blocks (Focused IABs).

In 2020–21, interim assessments became available in late September and were available until the end of the school year. Interim assessments were available to administer to students both in person and remotely. Approximately 60,000 Interim Assessment Block (IABs) and approximately 12,000 Interim Comprehensive Assessments (ICAs) were taken by students during the school year. For students who completed interim assessments, schools had access to individual results and score reports, student responses to interim questions, and group-level summary reports.

Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBA)

SBA is a summative assessment measuring students' progress toward college and career readiness in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics for grades 3–8 and 10 as described in the [Washington Learning Standards for English Language Arts](#) and the [Mathematics K–12 Learning Standards](#). The tests are typically given toward the end of the school year and consist of two parts: a computer adaptive test and a performance task. They have four levels of performance. ED granted states some flexibility for spring 2021 testing, including extending the test window to the beginning of the 2021–22 school year and having shorter assessments. Washington elected to use both flexibilities.

In 2020–21, the SBA test window had originally been slated from March 1 to June 11, 2021. The launch was delayed while OSPI discussed spring testing options and flexibilities with ED. On April 14, 2021, [Superintendent Reykdal announced the postponement of tests to fall 2021](#). OSPI provided fall testing information via a [bulletin on May 28, 2021](#). Information about the [shortened test design was posted online in September 2021](#). The SBA fall test window for 2021 was September 27 to November 10, 2021 and communicated on the [OSPI Timelines & Calendar webpage](#). Students took tests in fall 2021 that aligned with their grade level during the 2020–21 school year. For example, 5th grade students in fall 2021 took 4th grade ELA and math tests.

Washington Comprehensive Assessment of Science (WCAS)

The Washington Comprehensive Assessment of Science (WCAS) is a summative assessment measuring the level of science proficiency that Washington students have achieved based on the [Washington State K–12 Science Learning Standards](#) in grades 5, 8, and 11. The tests are typically given toward the end of the school year and are composed of item clusters and standalone items and. They have four levels of performance.

As with the SBA, the 2021 WCAS administration was delayed to the start of the 2021–22 school year per the flexibility granted by ED and [Superintendent Reykdal's April 14 announcement](#). The test window was originally slated for April 12 through June 11, 2021 But was deferred until September 27 to November 10, 2021 as communicated on the [OSPI Timelines & Calendar webpage](#). The fall 2021 WCAS was shortened, with information about the [shortened test design posted online in September, 2021](#). Students took tests that aligned with their grade level during the 2020–21 school year. For example, 6th grade students in fall 2021 took the 5th grade WCAS.

Washington Access to Instruction and Measurement (WA-AIM)

WA-AIM is the alternate assessment of ELA, math, and science and is designed for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. WA-AIM has four levels of performance. It is designed to include performance tasks. Given that daily interaction between teacher and student can be impacted by student learning interruptions and other health factors, the test administration window begins in December and closes in early April.

In 2020–21 the WA-AIM administration was slated to close on April 6, 2021 but due to timing of the postponement of state assessments to fall 2021 and because many students and teachers had already begun to engage in the WA-AIM administration process, the decision was made to extend the spring window until June 11, 2021. This would allow a longer opportunity to assess those students already receiving in-person instruction as well as those transitioning back to in-person instruction. Of an approximate 6,000 students expected to test, 4,200 participated in WA-AIM during the spring 2021 window. Students who did not take WA-AIM in the spring also had an opportunity during fall 2021.

English Language Proficiency Assessments for the 21st Century (ELPA21)

The state administers an annual assessment to multilingual English learners to establish eligibility to transition from English language development (ELD) services.

This test also provides information on whether students are making progress toward proficiency.

For 2020–21, ELPA21 was the state’s assessment to determine English proficiency. ELPA21 tests four domains of language (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) with five levels of performance in each domain.

ELPA21 administration opened on March 22 and closed on June 4, 2021. A remote testing option was not available, so the remote learning in some districts limited the number of students they were able to test. Although remote instruction precluded some students from participation in testing, approximately 69% (92,000 out of 133,000) of the expected multilingual English learner population took all or part of the assessment. Only about 1% of those who began testing did not complete the full assessment. For those students with reportable results, schools and districts will use scores to make program service decisions as in previous years. Students without test scores, or with incomplete test scores, will continue with program services until they receive scores from their next annual assessment.

Washington will begin administering the WIDA ACCESS as the annual assessment to determine which students remain eligible to continue receiving ELD services in the 2021–22 school year.

WIDA Alternate ACCESS

Like the content assessments, WIDA Alternate ACCESS for ELLs™ is the complement for measuring English language proficiency for multilingual English learners with the most significant cognitive disabilities. The WIDA Alternate ACCESS administration window mirrored the dates of ELPA21. The number of students tested was approximately 80% of those who tested in 2019, the last complete year of testing. Approximately 1,300 students participated in WIDA Alt ACCESS in spring 2021.

As with previous administrations, results from testing are used to inform the continued instructional support of identified students irrespective of a given performance level.

STATE ASSESSMENT DATA SYSTEM COMPONENTS

Another component supporting the state assessment system is the Comprehensive Education Data and Research System (CEDARS), a longitudinal data warehouse of educational data. Each year OSPI uses CEDARS and accompanying databases to collect data that supports state-required statewide assessment and associated administration. This data is used for accountability and to monitor overall student achievement.

COST SUMMARY

OSPI and associated assessment service providers acknowledged that actual testing costs associated with the 2020–21 school year would be reduced because some tests were not administered in spring 2021. OSPI successfully negotiated reductions across all the affected assessments.

The decision to defer most testing from spring 2021 to fall 2021 occurred after the test window was originally slated to open. Costs related to preparing for the test window were incurred. Some of these preparation costs including scoring recruitment and training, opening the test administration system, and integration of the Smarter Reporting System.

The decision to modify (shorten) the fall 2021 test slightly increased contract costs because a custom reconfiguration of the Smarter Balanced and WCAS blueprints was required.

Table 1 below identifies 2020–2021 anticipated and actual costs by test type along with a brief comment explaining the reductions.

Table 1: 2020–21 Cost Summary

Assessment	Anticipated Costs	Actual Costs	Reduction Comments
WaKIDS	\$1,144,554.00	\$1,122,947.21	Fees are based on the number of students assessed each year. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there were fewer kindergarteners enrolled and assessed.
SBA	\$16,498,454.56	\$10,039,573.78	Smarter Balanced provided a pandemic-related 35% reduction to state membership fees for grades 3–8 and grade 10. Additionally, there were no 11th or 12th grader testers in spring 2021.
WCAS	\$3,702,035.24	\$2,212,008.96	Item development was paused during 2020–21
WA-AIM	\$2,242,814.00	\$2,136,270.00	Yearly fee based on population estimates. Fewer students were tested.
ELPA21	\$3,900,177.00	\$3,380,886.00	Yearly fee based on population estimates. Fewer students were tested.
WIDA Alt ACCESS	\$368,350.00	\$274,550.00	Yearly fee based on population estimates. Fewer students were tested.
Other	\$57,000	\$7,700.00	Miscellaneous cost reductions associated with not administering tests in spring 2021, including no SAT/ACT reimbursements, no interpreter support, or translations.
TOTAL	\$27,914,084.80	\$19,173,935.95	

Given the U.S. Department of Education’s flexibility for the testing window, there will be additional cost applied to the 2021–22 school year because tests were administered in fall 2021 which crosses over into fiscal year 2022.

THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION’S ACTIVITIES AND ROLE IN THE STATE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

This section of the report summarizes the activities of the State Board of Education (SBE or the Board) concerning the state assessment system in 2021 and actions of the Board anticipated for 2022.

Statute directs SBE to provide consultation to the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) in the development and maintenance of the statewide academic assessment system in reading, writing, mathematics, and science (RCW 28A.655.070(3)(a)). The Board also identifies the scores students must achieve to demonstrate meeting standard on statewide assessments, and to demonstrate career and college readiness using the SAT and ACT (RCW 28A.305.130(4)(b)(i)).

Graduation Pathway Options

In 2019, legislation ([House Bill \(HB\) 1599](#)) eliminated the Certificate of Academic Achievement (CAA) beginning with the Class of 2020 and eliminated the Certificate of Individual Achievement (CIA) beginning with the Class of 2022. To earn one of these certificates, students were required to meet a score identified by the SBE on the statewide assessments in ELA and mathematics or earn a score determined to be equivalent by the Board on the SAT or ACT, or meet one of the alternatives for CIA. While the requirement for the CAA and CIA were eliminated in HB 1599, the scores on the related assessments carry forward in the new graduation pathway options as described below.

HB 1599 replaced exit exams with graduation pathway options. Graduation pathway options include most previous alternatives and two new graduation pathways: a military pathway via the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) and a Career and Technical Education (CTE) pathway. The Board was directed by HB 1599 to write rules to implement graduation pathways and set the scores needed to meet the pathway requirement for some of the pathways involving assessments.

Because of these changes, including the introduction of graduation pathway options, the role of SBE in the assessment system is shifting. The Board will continue to provide consultation to OSPI concerning the state assessment system, including identifying the

scores needed to meet standard on state assessments. In addition, the Board will work with OSPI to support assessments associated with graduation pathway options.

TABLE 2: GRADUATION PATHWAY OPTIONS

(More information on Pathways, including the scores needed to meet the pathway options involving assessments may be found on SBE’s [Graduation Pathway Options web page.](#))

Pathway	Course-based	Assessment Score Identified by SBE	Assessment Score in Statute
Dual Credit Courses	✓	n/a	n/a
AP/IB/Cambridge Courses*	✓	n/a	n/a
Transition Course	✓	n/a	n/a
TE Sequence**	✓	n/a	n/a
State Assessment	n/a	✓	n/a
SAT/ACT	n/a	✓	n/a
ASVAB**	n/a	✓	n/a
AP/IB/Cambridge Tests	n/a	n/a	✓

*This refers to Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) courses.

**TE (Technical Education) or CTE (Career and Technical Education) and ASVAB (Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery) are “stand-alone” pathways. In the other pathways, students must meet the standard in both English language arts and math; combinations of pathways may be used.

Table 2 lists the graduation pathway options and shows which are course-based and which are associated with assessments. The SBE is responsible for setting the scores for English language arts and math on three of the pathways. With the implementation of HB 1599, the Board decided to maintain the scores that were previously used for graduation on the statewide assessment (Smarter Balanced) and assessment alternatives (SAT and ACT). For the use of the ASVAB as a graduation pathway option, the Board identified in rule that the score students need to achieve is the lowest score on the AFQT (Armed Forces Qualification Test, a portion of the ASVAB that assesses English and math) necessary for enlistment in a branch of the military. Since the military may change scores at any time, and each branch uses a different minimum score, the Board committed to identifying the score needed and posting it by the beginning of every school year, as well as checking the score and updating the score if needed in the spring. Students may meet the score posted at the time they take the test, or any score posted until they turn 21.

In addition to writing rules on pathways, HB 1599 also directed SBE to collect information on the implementation of pathways, including surveying stakeholders about additional pathways, modifications to existing pathways, and barriers to implementing pathways.

Graduation Pathway Options and the COVID-19 Pandemic

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, many school facilities were physically closed or partly closed, and test administrations were postponed in spring 2021. Completion of graduation pathway options was disrupted for students who have not yet met this graduation requirement. In March 2021, the SBE adopted emergency rules for an emergency graduation requirement waiver program for students graduating in 2021. In July 2021, the SBE adopted permanent rules that extended the emergency waiver program for the 2021–22 school year. The rules also stated that by May 2022, the Board will revisit the need to extend the emergency waiver program to the 2022–23 school year.

The most common way students would meet a graduation pathway option requirement is through the statewide assessment, Smarter Balanced, which students generally take in 10th grade. In spring 2021, students were not able to take the state assessment. In addition, most 11th graders in spring 2021 were unable to take the assessment in either their 10th or 11th grade year. These students may take it as 11th or 12th graders in the 2021–22 school year. The Smarter Balanced assessment will be offered in fall 2021 in a shortened format, for students who would have taken the Smarter Balanced test in the spring 2021. Students will be sitting for another SBA administration in the spring 2022 of a shortened assessment, which is a little longer than the fall 2021 shortened assessment.

ASVAB administration available in schools relies on school facilities being open, so few schools were able to hold ASVAB testing in the 2020–21 school year. Students who plan on joining the military may take the ASVAB through their local Military Entrance Processing Station (MEPS), but this option is only appropriate for students who are seriously planning on the military after high school. Students who are exploring options, including the military, are better served by schools that take advantage of the military's Career Exploration Program (CEP). The program includes in-school administration of the ASVAB, as well as career exploration services. However, CEP is currently designed for in-person testing and services.

The military also offers a Pre-screening, internet-delivered Computer Adaptive Test (PiCAT). The PiCAT test is un-proctored, and by itself cannot meet a graduation pathway option. However, PiCAT results may be verified with an in-person, proctored verification test at a MEPS, leading to an ASVAB AFQT score. The ASVAB score obtained in this manner is used by the military in an identical manner to other ASVAB scores—for entrance into branches of the military and placement into military careers. The use of the PiCAT for obtaining an ASVAB AFQT score to meet a graduation pathway option is appropriate for students who are planning on joining the military following high school.

Table 3: Spring 2021 Administration of Graduation Pathway Option Assessments

Graduation Pathway Option Assessment	Administration in Spring 2021	Comments
State Assessment	The Smarter Balanced assessments were delayed to fall 2021 (OSPI Bulletin No. 037-21)	The WA-AIM test was available for some students to take in 2020–21. Students unable to be tested during the spring 2021 window will be able to test in fall 2021.
SAT/ACT	Individual Testing Centers decided whether to administer the SAT and ACT in 2020–21 and were generally unavailable.	Washington public baccalaureate institutions became permanently SAT and ACT test-optional beginning fall 2021.
ASVAB	Generally unavailable for administration with the Career Exploration Program	PiCAT online test available, with in-person verification at a Military Entrance Processing Station. Scores, once verified, are valid for meeting the pathway requirement.
AP/IB/Cambridge Tests	Converted to remote administration with a modified test.	Scores are valid for meeting the pathway requirement and Institutions of higher education accepting tests and scores.

Activities of the Board in 2021

The main activities of the Board concerning the assessment system included:

- Adoption of emergency rules for an emergency waiver program for students graduating in 2021. The program provides districts with the authority to waive certain graduation requirements for students whose ability to meet graduation requirements was disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, including assessment graduation pathway options.
- Adoption of permanent rules providing for the COVID-19 emergency waiver program to extend through 2021–22; the rules also create a framework for future emergency waiver programs if necessary.
- Modification of the SAT graduation pathway option to remove the essay portion. SAT eliminated the essay portion of the test, so the Board modified the requirements of the SAT graduation requirement option. The essay score was not factored in the previously adopted score to meet the pathway requirement.

The Board Executive Committee and SBE staff also consulted with OSPI staff about the fall 2021 Smarter Balanced assessment that has been modified into a shorter format. OSPI staff recommended, and the SBE Executive Committee and SBE staff concurred, that no change of the score for graduation was necessary for the shorter format assessment, so no formal action was taken by the Board. The Superintendent of Public Instruction sent a letter to the State Board of Education recommending that the graduation scores should be retained and stating the reasons why the scores should be retained. The letter is included as an appendix.

Table 4: SBE’s Work Related to the Assessment System During 2021

Meeting	Activity	Links
January 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update from OSPI on Graduation and Pathways 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OSPI Graduation and Pathways Update Presentation
March 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board discussion on Accountability and Recognition Board adoption of emergency rules for an emergency waiver program Removal of the essay portion of the SAT Graduation Pathway Option 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> March Board Meeting Materials
May 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation from consultant on pathway research Adoption of Emergency Rules for an emergency waiver program Approval of proposed permanent rules for emergency waivers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SBE consultant pathway presentation May Board Meeting Materials
July 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adoption of permanent rules for emergency waiver Discussion of Draft Graduation Pathway Stakeholder Feedback Report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> July Board Meeting Materials
September 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board discussion about Washington’s Graduation Framework, Profile of a Graduate, and Mastery Based Learning The Graduation Pathway Options Year II report was completed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board Meeting Material Graduation Pathway Options Year II Stakeholder Feedback Report
November 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adoption of legislative priorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation on Legislative Requests & Priorities

CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

The Washington Comprehensive Assessment Program is a maturing and stable program providing a picture of whether students across the state are on track to be ready for career or college. The spring 2021 tests were delayed until fall 2021 and included:

- WaKIDS
- SBA
- WCAS
- WA-AIM
- ELPA21
- WIDA Alternate ACCESS

The Smarter Balanced and WCAS tests were shortened to ensure students and teachers would have as much time as possible at the start of school year to establish relationships, routines, and activities. In addition to serving as accountability, the tests were a brief check-in on student learning from school year 2020–21.

No request for waivers is anticipated for the 2021–22 school year. Spring 2022 testing is planned to resume as scheduled beginning as early as January 31, 2022, for our alternate assessments, March 7 for the Smarter Balanced Assessments, and April 11 for WCAS.

Activities of the Board for 2022

In 2021–22, the Board will promote its [Legislative Platform](#), which includes support for mastery-based learning that focuses on closing opportunity gaps and resulting achievement gaps. In addition, the Board will work on the following during 2022, and report to the Legislature in December 2022:

- After the submittal of the Profile of a Graduate from the Mastery-based Learning Work Group, the Board will examine graduation requirements for alignment with the Profile, as directed by [HB 5249](#). The Board will submit a report with recommendations.
- Continue work on the system of school accountability and recognition and submit a report to the Legislature with recommendations for reforms to improve the Education System Health.
- Complete the 3-year study of graduation pathway options, as directed by [HB 1599](#), including recommendations for modifications to pathway options, and additional pathways, if needed.

As part of this work, the Board may recommend changes to assessments and scores as part of modifications of graduation pathway options. Table 5 lists the assessments used in graduation pathway options, and when the scores were identified by the Board and most recently reviewed. All the scores except for the score on the ASVAB were identified at least several years before graduation pathway options became graduation requirements, and for a different purpose.

Table 5: Graduation Score-setting and Review of Scores for Graduation Pathway Option Tests

Assessment	Date of score-setting or review	Comments
State Assessment— ELA	August 2015, reviewed January 2018	The exit exam scores on the state assessments were set based on an “equal impact” on students as previous exit exams (the High School Proficiency Exam in Reading and Writing and End-of-Course exams in math). Reviewed for the change to a 10th grade test in 2018.
State Assessment— Math	August 2015, reviewed January 2018	The exit exam scores on the state assessments were set based on an “equal impact” on students as previous exit exams (the High School Proficiency Exam in Reading and Writing and End-of-Course exams in math). Reviewed for change to 10th grade test in 2018.
State Assessment— WA-AIM ELA	August 2015	The exit exam scores on the state assessments were set based on an “equal impact” on students as previous exit exams (WAAS-Portfolio).
State Assessment— WA-AIM Math	August 2015	The exit exam scores on the state assessments were set based on an “equal impact” on students as previous exit exams (WAAS-Portfolio).
SAT—Reading and Writing	August 2016, Reviewed January 2018	Established based on the State Assessment graduation scores for the Smarter Balanced test. Reviewed in January 2018 because of a change in the SAT reading and writing format.
SAT—Math	August 2016	Established based on the State Assessment graduation scores for the Smarter Balanced test.
ACT—Reading and Writing	August 2016	Established based on the State Assessment graduation scores for the Smarter Balanced test.
ACT—Math	August 2016	Established based on the State Assessment graduation scores for the Smarter Balanced test.
ASVAB	November 2019	Established in rule as the score needed to serve in a branch of the military. SBE posts the minimum score at least annually by September 1.

APPENDIX A: LETTER

Letter to SBE from the Superintendent of Public Instruction

Old Capitol Building
PO Box 47200
Olympia, WA 98504-7200



Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
Chris Reykdal, Superintendent

k12.wa.us

September 24, 2021

Dr. Randy Spaulding, Executive Director
Washington State Board of Education
PO Box 47206
Olympia, WA 98504-7206

Re: Fall 2021 Smarter Balanced scores

Dear Dr. Spaulding:

The Smarter Balanced English language arts (ELA) and mathematics assessments will be administered in fall 2021, serving as the federally required tests for 2020–21. Given that the U.S. Department of Education offered states flexibility to have shorter assessments, the fall 2021 Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBA) will be shorter than it has been in previous years. This will allow students and teachers more time to focus on socio-emotional and academic supports as they return to school in the fall.

The fall 2021 SBA will be a Computer Adaptive Test (CAT) only; there will not be a Performance Task (PT). For the grades six through high school ELA test, short-answer items have been removed so that only machine-scored items (multiple-choice, multiple-select, etc.) are used during fall testing. The CAT is reduced in length by about 50%.

Although the tests are shorter, the fall 2021 SBA will use the Smarter Balanced item bank and the items are a proportional representation of the full blueprint. The algorithm for selecting items from the pool on the CAT is the same. All items used on the assessments are calibrated to the same performance expectations (i.e., Levels 1, 2, 3, 4 and a student's scale score). So, when a student's overall test score is calculated based on which items a student answers correctly during any given test, the process is the same regardless of how many items are used on the test. The information from the items a student answers correctly gets converted to the same reporting (scale score) metric regardless of the length of the test. The difficulty of the test does not change.

Oregon conducted simulations on shorter assessments by using data from 2018–19 tests. In comparing the full-length typical Smarter Balanced assessment with the planned shorter

Dr. Randy Spaulding
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blueprint (which is the one Washington will use for fall 2021), their analyses showed around 94% agreement in proficiency determinations and around 84% agreement in achievement levels. Conditional standard error of measurement of individual student scores increased, but primarily at the tails of the score distribution.

Because the scoring methodology, including computer adaptive technology, allows for scores to be calibrated to the same scale and thresholds, it would be consistent to have the same achievement levels and high school graduation scale score as has been used previously. OSPI's position is that the achievement level scores (Level 1, Level 2, Level 3, and Level 4) as previously adopted by the State Board of Education should be retained. Similarly, the previously adopted Smarter Balanced scores for the graduation cut score should be retained.

- [SBA scores](#) were approved by SBE in January 2015 for grades 3–8 and 11.
- SBA scores for purposes of a [high school exit exam](#) were established in August 2015.
- [SBA grade 10 scores](#) were approved in January 2018.

Again, thank you for contacting OSPI about fall 2021 testing. If you have further questions or comments, please contact me at 360-742-7825 or by email at chris.reykdal@k12.wa.us.

Sincerely,



Chris Reykdal
Superintendent of
Public Instruction

CR/dc

cc: Dr. Deb Came, Assistant Superintendent

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