



Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE

UPDATE: Washington Comprehensive Assessment Program (WCAP)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report summarizes state standardized assessments for the 2022–23 school year. It also includes a summary of the State Board of Education (SBE) activities concerning the state assessment system and actions of the Board anticipated for school year 2023–24, as required by the [Revised Code of Washington \(RCW\) 28A.300.041](#).

The state assessments are one way of assessing the depth of each student’s knowledge and abilities in English language arts (ELA), mathematics, and science, and are one of many indicators of student learning. Overall, the Spring 2023 assessment data indicate accelerated pandemic learning recovery in mathematics in nearly all grades assessed, as well as in English language arts at the elementary level. The 2023 data also show opportunity gaps for some student populations. Identifying these opportunity gaps help influence policy priorities and investments in targeted resources to support student learning.

The 2023 assessment data are summarized in Figures 1 and 2 below. Additional statewide student results are posted on the [Washington State Report Card](#) each year by September 10 in accordance with [RCW 28A.655.090](#).

2022–23 TEST SCORES

On September 8, 2023, OSPI released data from the spring 2023 state assessments, as announced in [Students are Accelerating in Math Recovery, According to State Test Scores](#).

The Smarter Balanced Assessment and the alternate assessment, Washington Access to Instruction and Measurement, are offered each spring to students in grades 3–8 and 10. The tests are one way of assessing the depth of each student’s knowledge and abilities in ELA and math. Overall, the data indicate accelerated learning recovery in math in nearly all grades assessed, as well in ELA at the elementary level.

"Each and every student is learning year over year! Smarter Balanced Assessments are not pass/fail tests. The tests are designed to measure college readiness without needing remedial learning."
 – Superintendent Chris Reykdal

For both math and ELA, the 2023 data show opportunity gaps for students with disabilities; multilingual/English learners; students experiencing homelessness; students identified as low-income; and students who identify as American Indian/Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander, Hispanic/Latino, and Black/African American.

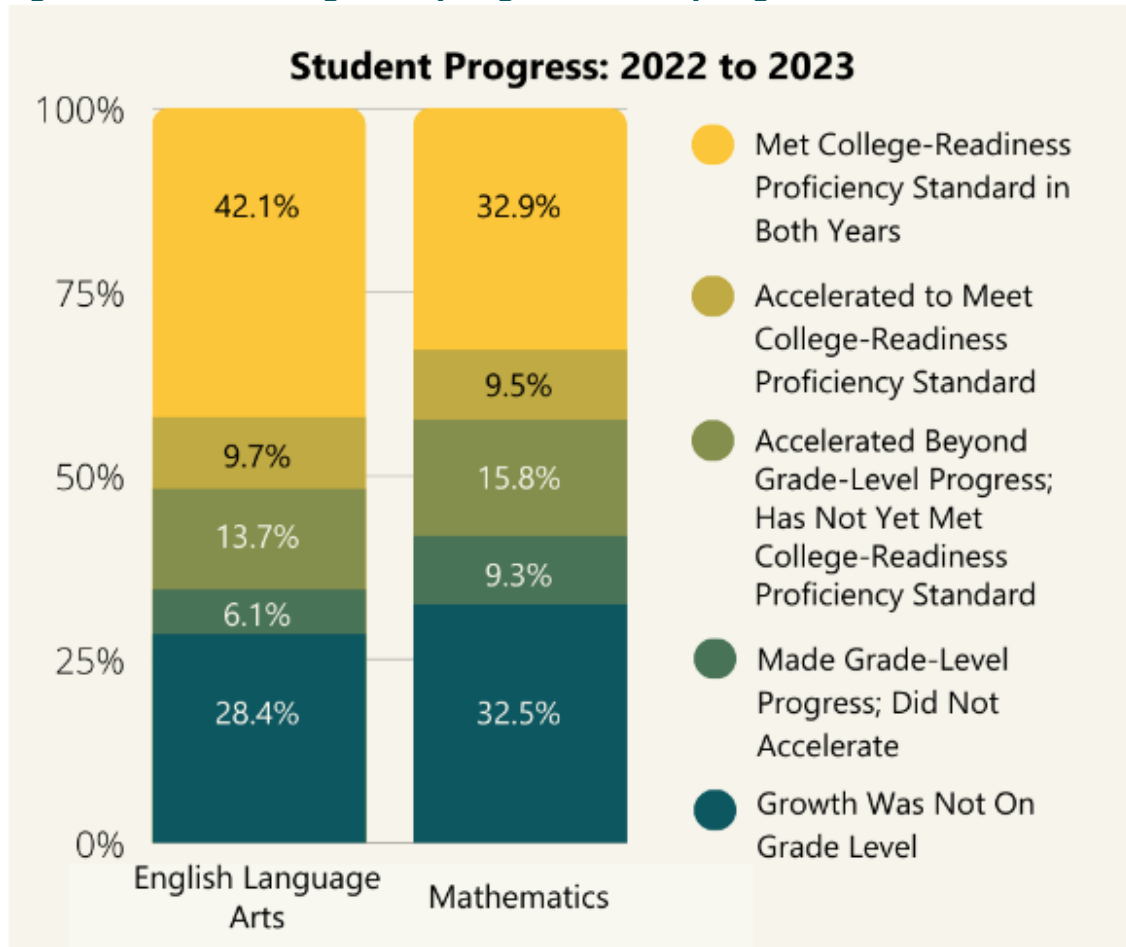
Figure 1: State Level Participation and Results

Test Administration	Test Subject	Met Standard	Participated
Smarter Balanced Assessment	ELA	50.7%	95.8%
Smarter Balanced Assessment	Math	39.1%	95.4%
Washington Comprehensive Assessment of Science	Science	42.9%	88.0%
Washington Access to Instruction & Measurement	ELA Alternate	35.4%	99.8%
Washington Access to Instruction & Measurement	Math Alternate	42.3%	99.7%
Washington Access to Instruction & Measurement	Science Alternate	24.0%	99.9%
Combined	ELA	50.5%	95.9%
Combined	Math	39.2%	95.4%
Combined	Science	42.7%	88.1%

Source: Report Card Assessment Data, 8/24/2023

As one way of assessing student learning recovery, OSPI monitors student growth and learning acceleration. While test scores are not yet back to what they were pre-pandemic, scores in 2022 and 2023 are evidence of recovery and acceleration efforts. Figure 2 indicates student progress from the 2022 to 2023 assessments.

Figure 2: Student Progress: Spring 2022 and Spring 2023



Note: Data on students who made progress on state assessments from 2022 to 2023 are available at the state level only.

It should be noted that the Smarter Balanced Assessment aims to measure student ability in one year compared to students at that grade level from previous years. The assessment is not designed to measure a single student’s ability and readiness over time.

STATEWIDE STUDENT ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (WaKIDS)

WaKIDS is a three-part transition process that helps to ensure a successful start to the K–12 experience and connect the key adult in a child’s life. The three components are:

- **Family Connection**, which occurs through a Family Connection Meeting, is a one-on-one meeting with a child’s family/guardians to welcome them to the K–12 system.
- **Early Learning Collaboration** aims to foster relationships with early learning providers to transition children to kindergarten. This practice can create a sense of continuity for children to promote a shared understanding of kindergarten readiness, and ultimately provide a smooth transition for children and families.
- **Whole-child Assessment** is an authentic whole-child observational assessment, meaning that teachers observe children during everyday activities (transitions, instruction, learning centers, etc.)

In 2022–23, teachers conducted WaKIDS Whole-child Assessment in fall 2022 to assess skills, abilities, and development of incoming kindergarten students. The mostly in-person assessment reported observations for 75,738 kindergarten students. Most classes have returned to in-person instruction and assessment; however, the Alternate Learning Experience (ALE) programs, which are mostly offered online, still conducted virtual assessments. The 2022–23 school year was the first year ALE programs that offer full-day kindergarten had access to WaKIDS.

Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBA) System

Washington is a member of the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC). Washington students and educators have access to a comprehensive suite of English language arts (ELA) and mathematics 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 Smarter Balanced–provided Tools for Teachers is a repository for instructional resources used to support the interim assessments. Tools for Teachers features 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 learning toward the standards and performance on the SBA and interim assessments.

Smarter Balanced also provided a platform within Tools for Teachers to further support educator use of interim tests and interim items. This platform is called the Interim Assessment Item Portal (IAIP). The IAIP provided a way for educators to search for specific interims or interim questions by

test or learning standard, create paper version of interims including customizing those paper versions with questions from across different interims, and view scoring resources. Tools for Teachers and the IAIP were available to educators during the entire 2022–23 school year.

Interim Assessments

The Smarter Balanced–provided interim assessments are optional assessments local educators can use 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 school year 2022–23, interim assessments were available from mid-October through the end of the school year. Interim assessments were available to administer to students both in person and remotely. Approximately 38,000 ICAs were taken and approximately 477,000 IABs and Focused IABs were taken by students during the school year. For students who completed interim assessments, schools could access 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 summative assessments are typically given toward the end of the school year, have four levels of performance, and consist of two online parts: a computer adaptive test (CAT) and a performance task. Results for spring 2023 are available on the [Washington State Report Card](#).

The SBA spring 2023 test window was March 6 to June 9, 2023, and was communicated on the OSPI Timelines & Calendar webpage. The SBA is designed as an untimed test; students are allowed as much time as needed. The test design used in spring 2023 was the adjusted blueprint developed by Smarter Balanced. The adjusted blueprint includes about 50% fewer CAT items and the same number of performance tasks (one) as the full form. As a result, the estimated testing times for most students were calculated as half the full form CAT times. There were both machine-scored and human-reader scored questions. Approximately 563,000 students were tested in SBA ELA and approximately 564,000 in SBA mathematics. Both ELA and Mathematics saw participation rates over 95%.

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 given toward the end of the school year, are comprised of item clusters and standalone questions, and have four levels of performance.

The WCAS spring 2023 test window was April 10 to June 2, 2023. The spring 2023 test continues to use the full-length design. Approximately 214,000 students took the spring 2023 WCAS. WCAS participation rate was over 88%.

Washington Access to Instruction and Measurement (WA-AIM)

WA-AIM is the alternate assessment of ELA, mathematics, and science and is designed for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. As with SBA and WCAS, WA-AIM has four levels of performance. It is designed with performance tasks (testlets). 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 late January and closes in early May. While the administration window is a set timeframe, the item and form content used in the assessment is available throughout the school for instructional purposes.

The spring 2023 WA-AIM administration was opened on January 30 and closed May 5, 2023. Approximately 5,000 students took the spring 2023 WA-AIM. Figure 3 shows participation for the spring 2023 assessment by grade. In 2022–23 the Fall 2022 Retake administration was opened September 26 and closed November 22, 2022. Fewer than 15 students took the fall 2022 WA-AIM. Fall 2022 per grade participation is available upon request.

Figure 3: Spring 2023 Number of Students with Valid Test Scores by Grade

Grade	Number of Students Tested in Spring 2023
3	812
4	747
5	775
6	639
7	609
8	637
10	709
11	634

Source: Spring 2023 WA-AIM Technical Report, October 2023

WIDA ACCESS

WIDA is the annual assessment for multilingual/English learners to provide information on whether students are making progress toward proficiency, as well as to establish eligibility to transition from English language development (ELD) services. The state also administers a screener to potential multilingual students within ten days of registering in a Washington school, as required by [RCW 28A.180.090](#), to determine initial eligibility for ELD services. WIDA tests four domains of language (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) with six levels of performance in each domain.

WIDA administration opened on January 30 and closed on March 24, 2023. Approximately 142,000

of the expected multilingual/English learners participated in the assessment. Approximately 6% met standard and exited program services. Students without test scores, or with incomplete test scores, will continue with program services until they receive scores from their next annual assessment.

WIDA Alternate ACCESS

Similar to the content assessments, WIDA Alternate ACCESS 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 the WIDA ACCESS assessment. Approximately 2,400 students participated in WIDA Alternate ACCESS in spring 2023.

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. These data are used for accountability and to monitor overall student achievement.

COST SUMMARY

The state’s contracted approximate cost per student to administer Smarter Balanced and WCAS for the 2022–23 school year was \$28 and \$13, respectively. These costs were lower than the previous year. Approximately 20% of the 2023 assessment costs, inclusive of operating expenses, were funded by the state’s federal assessment formula grant with the remaining balance funded by state appropriated funds.

OSPI acknowledges some testing costs associated with the 2022–23 school year are split across both the 2023 and 2024 fiscal years to account for the reporting activities which take place after the close of the 2023 fiscal year. Figure 4 below provides the anticipated and actual costs to administer, score, and report each of the Spring 2023 tests. Variations between anticipated and actual costs are primarily attributed to having virtual advisory meetings, fewer advisory meetings, and smaller numbers of students tested.

Figure 4: Spring 2023 Cost Summary

Assessment	Anticipated Costs	Actual Costs
WaKIDS	\$1,183,719	\$ 1,114,293
SBA	\$16,399,822	\$16,353,497
WCAS	\$3,269,942	\$3,022,709
WA-AIM	\$1,670,033	\$1,663,234
WIDA ACCESS & WIDA Alt ACCESS	\$4,878,660	\$4,802,684
Other Assessment Expenses	\$49,237	\$54,050
Total	\$27,451,412	\$27,010,467

OTHER 2022–23 ASSESSMENT RELATED ACTIVITIES

As part of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), OSPI is required to develop and implement a formal monitoring plan that provides the agency feedback on district and school assessment administration procedures. OSPI uses this process as an opportunity to connect with districts, review current district processes, identify strengths, address possible weaknesses, and develop improved materials to support state test administration.

During the 2022–23 testing window, the OSPI assessment team monitored security protocols and the appropriate and accurate management of student accommodations in 20 school districts.

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

Introduction

This section of the report summarizes the activities of the State Board of Education (SBE) concerning the state assessment system in 2022. [RCW 28A.300.042](#) states that annually, “the superintendent and state board shall jointly report to the legislature regarding the assessment system.”

Statute directs SBE to provide consultation to 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\(4\)\(b\)\(i\)](#)). Furthermore, SBE sets scores for graduation on certain assessment graduation pathway options such as the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) ([RCW 28A.655.250](#)), and scores for students to earn credit on the General Education Development (GED) high school equivalency test and world language and American Sign Language proficiency tests ([RCW 28A.320.192](#)).

Major areas of Board work that involve the assessment system includes graduation requirements—particularly graduation pathway options—as well as the system of accountability and school recognition.

Activities of the Board in 2023

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

- Rulemaking to implement House Bill 1308, SBE request legislation establishing a performance-based graduation pathway option. The performance-based option will involve non-standardized assessment of student’s post-secondary readiness in English language arts and math.
- Review of graduation requirements, including graduation pathway options that rely on state tests, as well as college entrance tests and dual credit tests, for alignment with the state Profile of a Graduate.
- Ongoing review of the state accountability and school recognition processes.
- Ongoing support for expanding Washington’s capacity to offer mastery-based learning and mastery-based crediting opportunities, including the Mastery-based Collaborative grant program.
- The [2022 WCAP legislative report](#) lists tests used for graduation and summarizes changes to the tests and scores over time. There were no changes to scores in 2023.

CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

The Washington Comprehensive Assessment Program provides information on students' learning and growth as they move through the public education system.

Spring 2023 testing occurred as scheduled beginning on January 30, 2023, for our alternate and English Language Proficiency assessments, March 6 for the Smarter Balanced Assessments, and April 10 for WCAS. Overall, Washington students demonstrated an accelerated pandemic learning recovery in mathematics in nearly all grades assessed, as well as in English language arts at the elementary level. Testing concluded at the end of the 2022–23 school year with a combined participation rate of over 95% in ELA and mathematics and over 88% in science.

The state's obligated costs for test administration for the 2022–23 school year were approximately \$380,000 less than anticipated.

Anticipated Activities for OSPI in 2024 and beyond

- The current assessment vendor contracts will end following the 2023–24 school year. OSPI released a Request for Proposal (RFP) on September 19, 2023, for the purpose of identifying vendor services to provide ELA, mathematics, and science test administration beginning with the 2024–25 school year.
- OSPI plans to continue monitoring school districts during the 2023–24 test windows. Specific dates have not been finalized.
- OSPI is committed to equal access to testing for all Washington students and continues to explore how to best meet their needs. The exploration of adopting an American Sign Language policy to assist in the 2024 administration of WIDA is one example.
- OSPI will revisit the WIDA ACCESS exit criteria and screener eligibility criteria in the future, along with test results and other data, to ensure appropriate identification.
- WIDA is in the process of updating the Alternate ACCESS. The new test was field tested in 2023 and will be operational in 2024. OSPI plans to establish exit criteria for the Alternate ACCESS after standards are set by the consortium.
- OSPI plans to explore analyses and assessment options for reporting on individual student progress, rather than the current assessment design aimed at cohort progress.
- Districts currently receive electronic student score reports and, upon request, paper versions to be shared with families. OSPI is transitioning towards 100% online reporting when feasible, saving on printing and shipping costs.

Anticipated Activities of the Board in 2024

In support of the performance-based graduation pathway, as well as mastery-based learning and crediting, the Board will work in consultation with OSPI to establish performance-based graduation achievement level standards, rubrics, and tools.

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