WA Assessment System

Budget Language

$26,975,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2026, $26,975,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2027, $1,350,000 of the education legacy trust account— state appropriation, and $15,868,000 of the general fund—federal appropriation are provided solely for development and implementation of the Washington state assessment system.

Proviso Purpose

The program is to develop and administer a statewide assessment system to the requisite student population in the state of Washington. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), requires states to have a set of high-quality student academic assessments to measure the achievement of all students in the state. Currently, annual assessments for accountability purposes include:

- English language arts/literacy (ELA) and mathematics in grades 3–8 and one grade in high school
- Science in grades 5, 8, and one grade of high school

Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities are also assessed each year in the same grades and content areas.

Services Provided

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), in conjunction with contractors provide the following services:

- Implements activities to develop items/tasks and assessments aligned to the existing learning standards/English language development (ELD) standards.
- Designs and delivers online assessments and other accommodated formats.
- Outlines procedures for security and administration of the tests, including delivery and return of all test materials.
- Facilitates scoring and reporting of all student work.
- Manages the processing of data for the purposes of performance reporting.

Alternate assessments are provided for students having the most significant cognitive disabilities identified in their Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Criteria for Receiving Services/Grants

Being one of the state's 295 public school districts or eight state-tribal education compact schools.

Beneficiaries in the 2025–26 School Year

Number of School Districts: All

Number of Schools: All

Number of Students: All

Number of Educators: All

Are Federal or Other Funds Contingent on State Funding?

Yes. ESEA Title 1 funds from the federal government are linked to the state implementation of an assessment program; the financial responsibility for the program is a shared expense with the state.

State Funding History

031

Fiscal Year	Amount Funded	Actual Expenditures
2026	$26,975,000	$17,401,512
2025	$26,975,000	$24,965,757
2024	$26,975,000	$20,905,524
2023	$26,975,000	$19,882,354
2022	$26,975,000	$26,965,682

400

Fiscal Year	Amount Funded	Actual Expenditures
2026	$7,934,000	$7,671,721
2025	$7,934,000	$7,247,541
2024	$7,934,000	$7,600,087
2023	$7,934,000	$6,828,333
2022	$7,934,000	$7,584,160

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Fiscal Year	Amount Funded	Actual Expenditures
2026	$675,000	$675,000
2025	$675,000	$530,120
2024	$675,000	$819,747
2023	$675,000	$675,000
2022	$675,000	$0

Number of Beneficiaries Per Fiscal Year (e.g. School Districts, Schools, Students, Educators, Other)

031

Fiscal Year	Number of Beneficiaries
2026	All
2025	All
2024	All
2023	All
2022	All

400

Fiscal Year	Number of Beneficiaries
2026	All
2025	All
2024	All
2023	All
2022	All

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Fiscal Year	Number of Beneficiaries
2026	All
2025	All
2024	All
2023	All
2022	0

Programmatic Changes Since Inception (If Any)

No changes from last year.

Program(s) Evaluation or Major Findings

U.S. Department of Education staff and external peer reviewers carefully evaluated OSPI's submitted evidence and found that the following components of Washington's assessment system have met all statutory and regulatory requirements of the ESEA:

- General assessments in reading/language arts (R/LA) and mathematics in grades 3–8 and highschool (Smarter Balanced).
- Alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards in R/LA andmathematics in grades 3–8 and high school (WA-AIM).

Major Challenges Faced by Program(s)

Maintaining a high-quality and cost-effective assessment system continues to be the focus. It is challenging for a summative assessment to meet the multiple purposes that are demanded of it (system accountability, individual student achievement and growth, informing instruction, and others).

OSPI is seeking additional ways to provide more information about student learning.

Future Opportunities

- As state law requires (RCW 28A.655.070), OSPI develops the state's learning standards and periodically revises them based on the student learning goals in RCW 28A.150.210. OSPI launched the Washington State Learning Standards Review project in 2023. After adopting new or revised state learning standards, an evaluation of alignment to the state assessment will be conducted.
- Districts currently receive electronic student score reports and, upon request, paper versions to be shared with families. OSPI continues to transition towards 100% online reporting, saving on printing and shipping costs.
- As a member of the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, Washington may benefit from an innovation project that will pilot an integrated assessment that meets federal ELA, math, and science testing requirements while reducing testing time and better measuring interdisciplinary learning and real-world problem-solving.

Other Relevant Information

See Washington State Report Card

Schools/Districts Receiving Assistance

Click here to see a list of all OSPI grant recipients in the 2026 Fiscal Year.

Program Contact Information

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