



Washington Office of Superintendent of **PUBLIC INSTRUCTION**

WA Assessment System

1. **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 grades 3 through 8 in English language arts/literacy (ELA) and mathematics, grades 5 and 8 in science, and one grade of high school in the same three content areas. In the same grades and content areas, students with the most significant cognitive disabilities are also assessed each year.

2. **Description of services provided:**

Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), in conjunction with contractors:

- implements activities to develop items/tasks and assessments aligned to the existing learning standards/English language development (ELD) standards
- designs and makes ready for student access to the required online assessments or other accommodated formats
- outlines procedures for administration of the tests, including delivery and return of all test materials
- facilitates scoring of all student work
- manages the processing of data for purposes of performance reporting.

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

3. **Criteria for receiving services and/or grants:**

All public schools and districts must participate in the state assessment system so that Washington has comprehensive information about student achievement and opportunity gaps.

Beneficiaries in the 2022-23 School Year:

Number of School Districts:	All
Number of Schools:	All
Number of Students:	All
Number of Educators:	All
Other:	N/A



Washington Office of Superintendent of **PUBLIC INSTRUCTION**

4. Are federal or other funds contingent on state funding?

☒ Yes, please explain: 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.

5. State funding history:

Fiscal Year	Amount Funded	Actual Expenditures
2023	\$26,975,000	\$19,882,354
2022	\$26,975,000	\$26,965,682
2021	\$26,975,000	\$23,594,652
2020	\$26,975,000	\$19,967,775
2019	\$26,975,000	\$21,083,777

6. Number of beneficiaries (e.g., school districts, schools, students, educators, other) history:

Fiscal Year	Number of Schools
FY23	All
FY22	All
FY21	All
FY20	All

7. Programmatic changes since inception (if any):

1. *English language arts and mathematics*. In the years 1997, 1998, and 1999, Washington began assessment of the content areas of reading, writing, and mathematics in grades 4, 7, and 10 successively. In 2006, as a result of the *No Child Left Behind*, Washington began administering additional assessments in reading and mathematics at grades 3, 5, 6, and 8.
2. Over the past dozen years, state assessments have undergone various modifications in program implementation, both for state management and district and school use. The list of modifications includes:
 - shortening of tests
 - moving to online administration rather than paper & pencil
 - adopting new learning standards (college & career readiness)
 - an aligned assessment (Smarter Balanced) that is computer-adaptive
 - inclusion of interim assessments and resources for teachers (originally the *Digital Library* followed by *Tools for Teachers*)



Washington Office of Superintendent of **PUBLIC INSTRUCTION**

- quicker return of student score results (less than three weeks after testing rather than at the start of the next school year)
 - High school testing switched to grade 11 in 2015 and reverted to grade 10 in 2018
3. Starting with the spring 2022 test administration, Washington used the Smarter Balanced adjusted test blueprints for math and English language arts testing. These adjusted test blueprints reduce test-taking time by about one-third while maintaining high reliability for individual student results. Despite being shorter, the item and test experience for students is proportional to the full blueprint used in Spring 2019 and before, and relies on an adaptive test delivery algorithm.
 4. *Science*. In 2004, the state added science in grades 8 and 10, followed by grade 5 beginning in 2005. The science learning standards underwent two subsequent adoptions, first in 2009 and most recently the 2013 adoption, the *Washington State 2013 K–12 Science Learning Standards* (based on Next Generation Science Standards or NGSS). Science assessments were delivered in paper & pencil formats at all three grade levels from 2004 through 2017 and moved to an online administration at all three grade levels in 2018. Between 2012 and 2017, the high school science assessment measured end-of-course (EOC) knowledge in the content area of Biology but returned to a comprehensive assessment measuring the breadth of the NGSS learning standards in 2018.
 5. *Alternate assessment*. Consistent with legislation, states can develop and administer an alternate assessment designed for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. The state adopted a portfolio design and administered it from 2001 through the 2014 administration. Improvements over this period were focused on expanding access for students with limited capacity in engaging with the assessment, more robust standards extensions to aid a wider breadth of student demonstration, modifications to data collection to reduce burdens on teachers while establishing greater alignment to grade-level learning standards, and adding performance skill points that are evaluated (scored).
 6. In 2015, a new alternate assessment, the *Washington Access to Instruction & Measurement (WA-AIM)*, was implemented that modified the design to better align with the adopted college & career readiness learning standards in grades 3–8 and 10 for ELA and math. In the school year 2017–2018, the WA-AIM assessment shifted the science portions (grades 5, 8, and 11) to the *Washington State 2013 K–12 Science Learning Standards*.)
 7. WA-AIM is designed as a performance-based assessment of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. Each content area is assessed against five learning standards, using pre-engagement exposure to the assessable standards to establish the appropriate level of complexity to use with students. Based on the student's success with the pre-engagement activity, the annual measure will be given later in the year at the original selected access point or the next higher version for the standard. The annual administration becomes the measure of the student's learning for the academic year.



Washington Office of Superintendent of **PUBLIC INSTRUCTION**

8. Program evaluation or evaluation of major findings:

Washington administered a set of high-quality student academic assessments to measure the achievement of all students in the state. Washington continued to use the Smarter Balanced adjusted blueprint in Spring 2023 to reduce testing time.

The spring 2023 test administration indicated accelerated learning recovery in mathematics in nearly all grades assessed and in English language arts at the elementary level. The 2023 data also show opportunity gaps for some student populations. Identifying these opportunity gaps helps influence policy priorities and investments in targeted resources to support student learning.

In collaboration with Washington's peer states, assessment consortia, supporting service providers, and national and state assessment technical advisory committees, OSPI continues evaluating the assessment program for quality and efficiency.

Student performance at the statewide, district, and school levels has been posted to the [Washington State Report Card](#) website.

9. Major challenges faced by the program:

Maintaining a high-quality, cost-effective assessment system continues as the focus of state consideration. 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).

One trade-off to the shorter assessments (described in #7 above) is that sub-scores (called "claims") are not available for individual student results. OSPI is seeking alternatives and ways to provide more information about student learning.

10. 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. For English language arts, mathematics, and science, the project calls for state adoption in 2024 and the first statewide summative assessment of the revised learning standards in 2028. After adopting new or revised state learning standards, the system adjustments will be evaluated to determine its impact on assessments and scores.
- The current assessment vendor contracts will end following the 2023–24 school year. OSPI released a Request for Proposal (RFP) on September 19, 2023, to identify contractor services for ELA, mathematics, and science test administration beginning with the 2024–25 school year.
- As part of the Federal Peer Review process, OSPI plans to continue conducting onsite



Washington Office of Superintendent of **PUBLIC INSTRUCTION**

and/or desk test monitoring during the test windows of the 2023–24 school year. Specific dates have not been finalized.

- OSPI plans to explore analyses and assessment options for reporting 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.

11. Statutory and/or budget language:

\$26,975,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2022, \$26,975,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2023, \$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.

12. Other relevant information:

See [Washington State Report Card](#)

13. Schools/districts receiving assistance:

[preliminaryfy23state-fundedprovisograntawardsupdated-42823.xlsx \(live.com\)](#)

14. Program Contact Information:

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