

## Washington

Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) and the new High School Proficiency Exam (HSPE)

### Part I: Policy Trends

<b>Type of test</b>	Comprehensive standards-based exam
<b>Purpose</b>	<p>The purpose of the exam is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine prospective high school graduates' knowledge and skill levels relative to those needed for entry-level employment and postsecondary education</li> <li>• Determine prospective high school graduates' mastery of the state curriculum</li> <li>• Encourage districts and schools to identify and serve students at risk of academic failure</li> <li>• Provide data to state policymakers on student attainment of state education goals to inform education policy decisions</li> <li>• Increase alignment of local curriculum and programs of instruction with state education standards</li> <li>• Promote equity of opportunity across all student groups</li> <li>• Meet a state mandate</li> </ul>
<b>Major changes in exit exam policy since the 2007-08 school year or any pending changes</b>	<p>The WASL was replaced by the HSPE in the spring of 2010. Students in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade took the HSPE instead of the WASL for initial administration of an exit exam. 11<sup>th</sup> grade or 12<sup>th</sup> grade students who had previously failed a portion of the WASL took and will continue to take the HSPE for their retake opportunities.</p> <p>The HSPE boasts shorter administration time (5 days of testing instead of 8) and does not include the longer extended response questions (however, essay questions are still included in the writing section).</p> <p>Math and science standards are tested in addition to reading and writing. However, the state is currently debating as to what year math and science will be included as graduation requirements. The law currently states that these new requirements will be implemented with the class of 2013. The state superintendent has proposed that implementation be delayed until the class of 2015 for math and 2017 for science.</p> <p>Additionally, there are still plans for end-of-course (EOC) assessments for high school math, beginning in spring 2011. Four courses will have EOCs: Algebra 1 or Integrated Math 1 (first-year high school math), and geometry or Integrated 2 (second-year high school math). Students in the class of 2013 will take the EOC assessment if they are enrolled in one of these courses, regardless of grade level (could be in 7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade).</p>

<b>Status of state’s decision regarding the Common Core State Standards and impact of that decision on exit exam policies</b>	<p>The state has adopted both the English language arts and math Common Core State Standards.</p> <p>OSPI plans to begin rolling out the new standards to teachers statewide beginning in the 2012-13 school year. However, they will not be incorporated into state assessments until the 2014-15 school year.</p>
<b>Test used by colleges or universities for undergraduate admission?</b>	Some state universities consider WASL or HSPE results when making admissions decisions; however, specific information on these considerations is not available from the state.
<b>Year first administered</b>	1999 for the WASL, 2010 for the HSPE
<b>Year diplomas first withheld</b>	<p>The class of 2008 was the first required to pass the reading and writing WASL to receive a diploma.</p> <p>Students in the graduating class of 2010 who had yet to pass the WASL in 2010 were required to pass the HSPE to receive a diploma. The same will apply for the graduating class of 2011. The class of 2012 took the HSPE instead of the WASL for the first administration of an exit exam, and therefore will be the first complete class for which diplomas are withheld based solely on the HSPE.</p> <p>The math and science sections of the HSPE test will become a graduation requirement in 2013 if the requirements are not delayed until 2015 and 2017, respectively.</p>
<b>Subjects tested</b>	Reading, writing, math, and science
<b>Types of questions</b>	<p>Multiple-choice and short-answer on the reading, science, and mathematics tests; and two writing prompts for the writing test</p> <p>The WASL also included an extended-response section in reading, but the HSPE does not.</p>
<b>Grade first administered</b>	10 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Grade(s) exam aligned to</b>	10 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Number of retakes allowed before end of grade 12</b>	Two retakes per year, starting in the summer after the first administration.
<b>Retakes after grade 12</b>	Students who have met all graduation requirements except passing the WASL/HSPE may continue to retake the exam after completing 12 <sup>th</sup> grade.

**Does the state have reciprocity with other states?**

In senate bill 6475, the state legislature instructed the state department of education to develop guidelines and appeal procedures for students who transfer from other states. Appeals are evaluated on a case-by-case basis, but students must demonstrate that they have achieved the requisite skills. Students demonstrate their achievement by presenting passing scores on another state's test or by achieving predetermined scores on the ACT or SAT.

**Exit exam used for No Child Left Behind?**

The state used the initial 10<sup>th</sup>-grade administration of the WASL to meet the requirements of NCLB in the 2008-09 school year and used the initial 10<sup>th</sup> grade administration of the HSPE in the 2009-10 school year.

**Same cut score for graduation and NCLB?**

Yes

**Evaluations of the state exit exam**

In 2002, SRI International completed a study for the math assessment, and studies of the reading and writing assessments in 2004. A science alignment study was conducted in 2007.

The math study is posted at

[www.k12.wa.us/research/pubdocs/pdf/SRIFinalReport.pdf](http://www.k12.wa.us/research/pubdocs/pdf/SRIFinalReport.pdf)

Other subject area alignment studies are available from the state on request.

No evaluations of the HSPE have been done at this time.

**State test contractor**

Education Testing Service and Data Recognition Corporation

**Does the state provide students with alternate paths to graduation?**

The state legislature has approved four alternate methods to meet the state's learning standards and receive a diploma:

- a. Assembling a collection of classroom-based evidence of a student's learning that includes specified work samples

In the 2008-09 school year 296 students (.44% of all graduates) used a collection of classroom-based evidence to fulfill the reading requirement, 51 students (.08% of all graduates for the writing requirement, and 3,000 (4.47% of all graduates) for the math requirement.

- b. Comparing a student's grades in certain classes with the grades of other students who took the same classes and met the standard

In the 2008-09 school year, 9 students (.01% of all graduates) used the comparison of student grades to fulfill the reading requirement, 6 students (.01% of all graduates) for the writing requirement, and 329 (.49% of all graduates) for the math requirement.

- c. Meeting a specific cut score on the SAT, ACT, or PSAT tests. The following cut scores were determined by the state board of education:

Mathematics: SAT: 470 ACT: 19 PSAT\*: 47  
 Reading: SAT: 350 ACT: 13  
 Writing: SAT: 380 ACT: Unavailable at this time

\*PSAT-Math scores may not be used after August 2008.

- d. Scoring a 3 or higher on select Advanced Placement (AP) exams.

In the 2008-09 school year, 254 students (.38% of all graduates) used substituted SAT, ACT, PSAT, or AP scores for the reading requirement, 142 (.21% of all graduates) for the writing requirement, and 839 (1.25% of all graduates) for the math requirement.

**Alternate paths to graduation specifically for English language learners**

The state has not developed, nor does it plan to develop, alternate paths specifically for English language learners.

There are no accommodations for English language learners specifically for the exit exam, but the state has accommodations for ELL students on all statewide assessments, which would include the exit exam. See

<http://www.k12.wa.us/assessment/WLPTII/pubdocs/2009-2010AccGuidelinesforELLStudents.pdf>

**Alternate paths to graduation specifically for students with disabilities**

Three alternate options are available:

1. WASL-Basic, in which students take the high school WASL (with or without accommodations) and IEP (individualized education program) teams adjust passing criteria to Level 2-basic proficiency. The HSPE version is known as HSPE-Basic.

In 2008-09, 1,081 students (1.61% of all graduates) took the WASL-Basic in reading, 1,130 students (1.68% of all graduates) in writing, 336 students (.50% of all graduates) in math, and 81 students (.12% of all graduates) in science.

2. Washington Alternate Assessment System (WAAS)-Portfolio, in which students unable to take paper-and-pencil tests show their skills and knowledge through a collection of their work.

In 2008-09, 453 students (.67% of all graduates) used the WAAS-Portfolio to fulfill the reading requirement, 455

students (.68% of all graduates) for writing, 447 students (.67% of all graduates) for math, and 286 students (.43% of all graduates) for science.

3. Developmentally Appropriate WASL (DAW), in which students in grades 11 and 12 only take the WASL (with or without accommodations) at the grade level that best matches their abilities. The HSPE version is known as the Developmentally Appropriate Proficiency Exam (DAPE).

In 2008-09, 1,043 students (1.55% of all graduates) used the WAAS-DAW to fulfill the reading requirement, 442 students (.66% of all graduates) for writing, and 1,676 students (2.5% of all graduates) in math.

Information on accommodations for students with disabilities is available online at <http://www.k12.wa.us/assessment/AlternativeAssessment/pubdocs/AccommodationGuidelines.pdf>

**Who makes decisions on whether a student is eligible to use alternate paths?**

State education agency assessment staff verify applications submitted by local education agencies.

**How are students identified as eligible for alternate paths to graduate?**

Information on this process is available at <http://www.k12.wa.us/assessment/CAAoptions/default.aspx>

**When calculating the graduation rate for adequate yearly progress (AYP) purposes, does the state count students taking alternate paths together with graduates who passed the high school exit exams?**

Yes

**How many full-time equivalent staff in the state department of education are involved in implementing alternate paths?**

Approximately four

**Types of assistance the state provides for all districts to raise initial pass rates for all students on the high school exit exam**

The state offers technical assistance to help:

- Teachers administer the exam, which includes online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, field-based specialists, and train-the-trainer workshops;
- All teachers prepare students for the exam, which includes online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, field-based specialists, train-the-trainer workshops, grants to districts, and fiscal resources to fund local personnel to provide assistance;

- Teachers become more proficient in their content area, which includes online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, field-based specialists, train-the-trainer workshops, grants to districts, and fiscal resources to fund local personnel to provide assistance;
- Schools identify and target students for assistance, which includes train-the-trainer workshops and fiscal resources to fund local personnel to provide assistance;
- Schools implement comprehensive school reform, which includes online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, field-based specialists, train-the-trainer workshops, grants to districts, and fiscal resources to fund local personnel to provide assistance;
- Districts improve professional development for teachers, which includes online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, field-based specialists, and train-the-trainer workshops.

The state also provides:

- State-developed courses specifically designed to prepare students for the exam
- Test items from prior years
- Exam preparation materials for students and teachers

**Types of assistance or remediation the state provides for all districts to help students who have failed to pass the exit exam**

The state provides:

- Targeted remediation programs for students
- Additional professional development for teachers in their content area
- Additional professional development for teachers in meeting the specific needs of students at risk of academic failure
- Additional professional development for administrators

**Does the state provide funding for remediation?**

Yes. In 2005, the legislature established the Promoting Academic Success program, which provided funding for remediation for all students who did not meet standards on the reading, writing, and/or mathematics WASL/WAAS. Although this specific program was eliminated by the legislature in March 2008, funding to provide remediation for high school students was shifted to the “Learning Assistance Program,” a state-funded compensatory education program that had previously not extended into high school.

**Are districts mandated by law to provide remediation?**

No

**Are students required to participate in remediation?**

No

**Part II: Student Performance**

**Initial pass rates, 2008-09**

<b>Percentage of Students Passing the WASL on the First Try in 10<sup>th</sup> grade, 2008-09</b>				
<b>Student Group</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Writing</b>	<b>Math</b>	<b>Science</b>
All students	81%	87%	45%	39%
White	85%	90%	51%	45%
African American	70%	79%	21%	18%
Latino	71%	78%	24%	19%
Asian/Pacific Islander	86%	90%	57%	46%
Native American	68%	76%	25%	19%
Limited English	37%	45%	8%	3%
Special Education	47%	60%	8%	6%
Low-Income	71%	79%	27%	22%
Migrant	62%	67%	16%	11%
<b>Passing score (scale for writing is 0-24)</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>400</b>

Note: Data retrieved from state Web site at <http://reportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/waslTrend.aspx?schoolId=1&reportLevel=State&year=2008-09&orgLinkId=&waslCategory=18&gradeLevelId=10&chartType=1> on July 13, 2010.

**Denominator used when calculating these rates:** Number of 10<sup>th</sup> graders enrolled during the testing window

**Cumulative pass rates, 2008-09**

<b>Percentage of Students Passing WASL by the End of 12<sup>th</sup> Grade, 2008-09</b>		
<b>Student Group</b>	<b>Reading &amp; Writing</b>	<b>Reading, Writing, and Math</b>
All students	93.5%	72.0%
White	94.5%	76.6%
African American	89.6%	47.4%
Latino	89.2%	51.4%
Asian/Pacific Islander	94.6%	76.9%
Native American	87.8%	56.8%
Limited English	70.6%	28.5%
Special Education	84.7%	58.1%
Low-Income	90.4%	57.4%
Migrant	NA	NA

Note: Data provided by the state department of education.

<b>State Graduation Rates</b>			
<b>Student Group</b>	<b>2008-09</b>		<b>2009-10</b>
	<b>On-Time</b>	<b>Extended</b>	
All students	73.5%	79.2%	Not available until Jan 2011
White	76.4%	81.2%	Not available until Jan 2011
African American	63.2%	72.0%	Not available until Jan 2011

Latino	62.9%	72.0%	Not available until Jan 2011
Asian/Pacific Islander	82.2%	88.1%	Not available until Jan 2011
Native American	52.7%	60.1%	Not available until Jan 2011
Limited English	50.7%	66.4%	Not available until Jan 2011
Special Education	55.6%	71.4%	Not available until Jan 2011
Low-Income	62.7%	71.0%	Not available until Jan 2011
Migrant	64.2%	77.5%	Not available until Jan 2011

Note: Data provided by the state department of education.

**Current state graduation rate calculation formula for AYP purposes**

Available from:  
<http://www.k12.wa.us/DataAdmin/pubdocs/GradDropout/08-09/GraduationDropoutWashington2008-09.pdf>