



THE WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

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Title:	Considerations in Establishing a Graduation Achievement Level on the High School Smarter Balanced Assessment	
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Policy Considerations / Key Questions:	<p>The Board will consider approving a position statement on setting a score that meets the standard for high school graduation on the high school Smarter Balanced Assessment. Key questions could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the relationship between minimum proficiency and career and college ready? • How should a graduation cut-score on the high school SBAC relate to the Washington state High School Proficiency Exams (HSPE) and Math End-of-Course (EOC) exams? • Should the Board consider building in a timetable for revisiting the graduation cut score? • Should setting the graduation cut-score affect graduation rates? <p>In addition, at the November meeting the Board will consider a legislative priority concerning reducing the assessment required for graduation by eliminating the Biology EOC as an assessment required for graduation (students would still take the assessment for federal accountability, but it would not be a graduation requirement and therefore would not require alternative assessments).</p> <p>The Board will also consider approval of a cut score on the science portion of the ACT as equivalent to the Biology EOC.</p>	
Possible Board Action:	<input type="checkbox"/> Review <input type="checkbox"/> Adopt <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Approve <input type="checkbox"/> Other	
Materials Included in Packet:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Memo <input type="checkbox"/> Graphs / Graphics <input type="checkbox"/> Third-Party Materials <input type="checkbox"/> PowerPoint	
Synopsis:	<p>At the meeting, the Board will receive an update on implementation of the Smarter Balanced Assessments and an overview of methods for setting an achievement level for high school graduation. This memo includes an overview of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. SBAC Consortium Cut scores and Achievement Levels. 2. Legislative Direction for Setting a Graduation Cut score and Achievement Level. 3. Transition Assessments. 4. Update on Smarter Balanced. 5. How are Other States with Exit Exams Planning on Transitioning to Common Core Assessments? 	



CONSIDERATIONS IN ESTABLISHING A GRADUATION ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL ON THE HIGH SCHOOL SMARTER BALANCED ASSESSMENT

Policy Considerations

At the November 2014 SBE meeting, the State Board of Education (SBE) will:

- Consider approving a position statement on setting a score that meets the standard for high school graduation on the high school Smarter Balanced Assessment. A draft position statement is included in the business items section of this packet.
- The SBE will also consider a legislative priority concerning streamlining the assessment system as a follow-up to the Board discussion in September. The legislative priority may include reducing the assessments required for graduation by eliminating the Biology end-of-course assessment as an exit exam. Students would still take the assessment for federal accountability, but it would not require alternative assessments. Information on alternative assessments is provided by Dr. Doug Kernutt, and included in the Legislative Priorities section of this Board packet.
- The Board will consider approving a cut score on the ACT test that is equivalent to the Biology end-of-course (EOC) test. The science portion of the ACT test is an approved alternative for the biology assessment, and [RCW 28A.655.061](#) directs that the SBE may establish an equivalent score as soon as there is sufficient data available to make a reliable equivalent score. The Superintendent of Public Instruction will make a recommendation to the SBE of an equivalent score.
 - This option is important to some community colleges with high school programs. Access to the Biology EOC is a challenge to students, such as international students, seeking a diploma through a community college program who do not have a home school district.
 - RCW 28A.655.061 authorizes the SBE to establish the equivalent score on the ACT and the SAT. There is not yet enough data to establish an SAT equivalency. The statute also stipulates that once the equivalent score is established it may be revised upward, but not downward.

The Board will receive an update from Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) staff on implementation of the Smarter Balanced (SBAC) Common Core State Standard assessments (the assessment developed by the Smarter Balanced consortium of states) and an overview of methods for setting a graduation achievement level. Key questions may include:

- What is the relationship between minimum proficiency and career and college ready?
- How should a graduation cut score on the high school SBAC relate to the Washington state High School Proficiency Exams (HSPE) and Math End-of-Course (EOC) exams?
- Should the Board consider building in a timetable for revisiting the graduation cut score?
- Should setting the graduation cut score affect graduation rates?

This memo is intended to provide background information for the Board's discussion on establishing a graduation achievement level on the SBAC by setting a graduation cut score. It contains an overview of:

1. SBAC Consortium Cut scores and Achievement Levels.

2. Legislative Direction for Setting a Graduation Cut score and Achievement Level.
3. Transition Assessments.
4. Update on Smarter Balanced.
5. How are Other States with Exit Exams Planning on Transitioning to Common Core Assessments?

1. SBAC Consortium Cut scores and Achievement Levels

In spring 2015, the SBAC will be administered to Washington students. To interpret raw student scores, the Smarter Balanced consortium has been conducting achievement level-setting during fall 2014. The achievement level-setting process identified three cut scores associated with four achievement levels. The cut scores define the partitions between Level 1 and 2, between Level 2 and 3, and between Level 3 and 4. Table 1 describes the student performance at each of the four achievement levels. The descriptions of what student can do at each level are called 'Achievement Level Descriptors. The Achievement Level Descriptors in Table 1 are the highest, policy-level Descriptors. More detailed, content and grade-level descriptors were developed for the actual cut score setting).

Table 1: Policy Achievement Level Descriptors. From Smarter Balanced *Initial Achievement Level Descriptors and College Content-Readiness Policy*, April 26, 2013

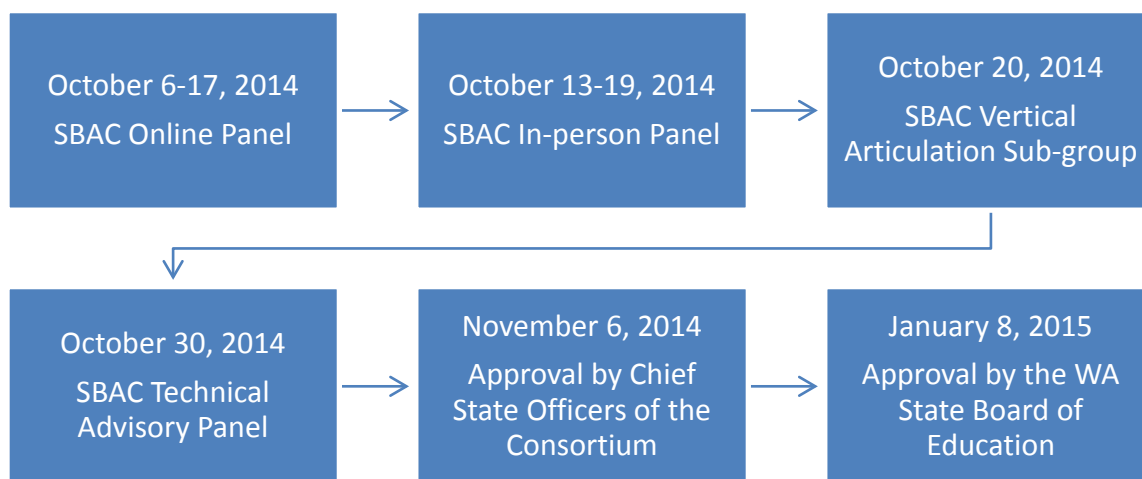
Level	Policy Achievement Level Descriptor (ADL)	Implications for Grade 12
4	Student demonstrates thorough understanding of and ability to apply the knowledge and skills associated with college content-readiness.	Within each state, students may be required to satisfactorily complete Grade 12 English and/or mathematics courses to retain the exemption from developmental course work (higher education and K-12 officials may jointly determine appropriate courses and performance standards). Students are encouraged to take appropriate advanced credit courses leading to college credit while still in high school.
3	Student demonstrates adequate understanding of and ability to apply the knowledge and skills associated with college content-readiness.	Within each state, higher education and K–12 officials may jointly determine appropriate evidence of sufficient continued learning (such as courses completed, test scores, grades or portfolios). Students are encouraged to take additional 4th year courses as well as appropriate advanced credit courses leading to college credit while in high school.
2	Student demonstrates partial understanding of and ability to apply the knowledge and skills associated with college content-readiness.	States/districts/colleges may implement Grade 12 transition courses or other programs for these students. States also may choose to retest these students near the conclusion of Grade 12 (scoring will occur within two weeks, allowing opportunity for colleges to use scores the following fall).
1	Student demonstrates minimal understanding of and ability to apply the knowledge and skills associated with college content-readiness.	States/districts/colleges may offer supplemental programs for these students. States also may choose to retest these students near the conclusion of Grade 12.

Students who attain a Level 3 or 4 on the SBAC will be considered on-track to be career and college ready when they graduate high school. For the consortium-determined achievement levels to be applied in Washington, the cut score will be approved first by Washington's Superintendent of Public Instruction at a meeting of the governing states of the Smarter

Balanced Consortium, and then recommended to the State Board of Education (SBE) for approval. By statute, the SBE shall “identify the scores students must achieve in order to meet the standard on the statewide student assessment and, for high school students, to obtain a certificate of academic achievement¹.” (RCW.28A.305.130(b)(i)). Therefore, for the SBAC achievement levels to indicate meeting standard for students in Washington, the SBE must approve them.

The consortium-determined cut scores defining the achievement levels will include scores for English language arts (ELA) and mathematics, for grades three through eight, and for the high school assessment administered in grade eleven for federal accountability. Consideration of approval of the use of the SBAC achievement levels and cut scores in Washington will occur at the January 2015 SBE meeting. Figure 1 shows the timeline of Smarter Balance Consortium achievement level-setting steps and approval for Washington state.

Figure 1: Timeline of Achievement Level Setting



2. Legislative Direction for Setting a Graduation Cut score and Achievement Level

In addition to approving the consortium-determined achievement levels for use in Washington, the SBE has the responsibility to establish the achievement level students need for high school graduation. The Washington high school graduation achievement level need not be the same as the career- and college-ready achievement level determined by the Smarter Balanced consortium. This responsibility was articulated in EHB 1450, passed in 2013:

The legislature further intends that the eleventh grade consortium-developed assessments have two different student performance standards: One for the purposes of high school graduation that will be established by the state board of education and one that is intended to demonstrate a student's career and college readiness.

The legislation also directed the SBE to establish the scores students must achieve for graduation by the end of the 2014-2015 school year. To determine the score, the bill directs the SBE to 1) review the experience of students taking the SBAC, 2) review the experience of students in other states taking the SBAC, and 3) review the scores used in other states that have exit exams taken by students in the eleventh grade:

¹ In Washington, students who pass all assessments required for high school graduation are said to have earned a Certificate of Academic Achievement. The state no longer sends students actual certificates, although some districts may do so. The Certificate of Academic Achievement is noted on a student's transcript.

By the end of the 2014-15 school year, establish the scores students must achieve to meet the standard and earn a certificate of academic achievement on the high school English language arts assessment and the comprehensive mathematics assessment developed with a multistate consortium in accordance with RCW 28A.655.070. To determine the appropriate score, the state board shall review the transition experience of Washington students to the consortium-developed assessments, examine the student scores used in other states that are administering the consortium-developed assessments, and review the scores in other states that require passage of an eleventh grade assessment as a high school graduation requirement. The scores established by the state board of education for the purposes of earning a certificate of academic achievement and graduation from high school may be different from the scores used for the purpose of determining a student's career and college readiness.

The Board has expressed intention in rule ([WAC 180-17-100](#)) that graduation requirements should ultimately align with career and college readiness, but during the transition to new content standards and assessments, the graduation level should be a minimum proficiency standard rather than career and college readiness:

(e) The state's graduation requirements should ultimately be aligned to the performance levels associated with career and college readiness. During implementation of these standards, the board recognizes the necessity of a minimum proficiency standard for graduation that reflects a standard approaching full mastery, as both students and educators adapt to the increased rigor of common core and the underlying standard of career and college-readiness for all students.

The graduation cut score-setting process will occur in summer 2015, once the results of the spring high school SBAC test administration are available.

3. Transition Assessments

During the transition to Common Core assessments additional options will be available to students to meet the assessment graduation requirements. The transition period extends from the Class of 2015 to the Class of 2018. By the Class of 2019, the state will fully transition to the new assessments for ELA and math, and the high school SBAC in these subjects will be required for high school graduation.

In 2015 and 2016, the Reading and Writing HSPE will be available to eleventh and twelfth graders who have not yet passed the assessment required for graduation. Otherwise, the HSPE will no longer be administered to students.

For the Class of 2015 to 2018 additional assessments will be available for meeting high school graduation requirements. The additional assessments are:

- Transition math assessments: Math Year 1 and Math Year 2 End of Course (EOC) Exit Exams. These assessments will be created with items from the SBAC, and will assess Common Core standards.
- Transition ELA assessment: EHB 1450 called for a "tenth grade English Language Arts assessment developed by the Superintendent of Public Instruction using resources from the multi-state consortium." OSPI has decided the best way to fulfill this directive is simply to use the high school ELA SBAC itself and make it available to tenth graders to meet the assessment graduation requirement.

The SBE will approve the scores for high school graduation on the two math EOC exit exams to be used during the transition period, in addition to setting the graduation cut score on the high school SBAC assessment.

4. Update on Smarter Balanced

While the summative end-of-year SBAC assessments will be used for school and state accountability, and the high school SBAC will be used for graduation, other features and components of Smarter Balanced have the potential for significant impact on classroom teaching and learning. Taken together, the components and features are intended to help create a classroom-to-state level system of assessment.

Interim Assessments

SBAC Interim Assessments will be available in January 2015. These optional assessments have the potential to be an extremely useful tool for teachers, allowing teachers timely information that predicts how well students are likely to do on the summative test, and enabling teachers to quickly identify student needs. Items on the Interim Assessments will be the same type of questions, and will be administered and scored similarly to the Summative Assessments. Items will be mostly machine scored, allowing for instant results. Any items requiring hand scoring will be done locally. Rubrics and training will be provided online as part of the system.

Digital Library

The SBAC Digital Library has recently become available. The Digital Library is a repository of information and resources that address Common Core State Standards and the SBAC assessments, including formative assessment materials, instructional materials, and professional learning materials. It is populated now, but will grow over time, as more content is developed and submitted. Material can be submitted by state networks of educators, and by state leadership teams. All submittals will be vetted and reviewed for quality and alignment with standards before they enter the Digital Library. The Digital Library will help teachers plan classroom instruction and activities that directly support teaching and learning the standards.

Agreement by Washington Community and Technical College and Public Universities to Use the Smarter Balanced Assessment

Washington state has taken a pioneering role in K-12 to higher education alignment through an agreement by Washington public institutions of higher education to use the Smarter Balanced Assessment for college and university course placement decisions. The agreement creates an incentive for high school students to score at a career- and college-ready level (a Level 3 or 4) on the high school SBAC assessment. These students will not need to take a college placement test to access college level courses. Students who score with a Level 2, but who pass a college-developed transition course (currently being piloted) with a 'B' grade or better will also bypass a placement test.

Other Features of the SBAC

Additional features of the SBAC assessments should provide enhancements to the Washington state system of assessments. These include:

- Computer-adaptive testing with many items in a wide range of difficulty, so it should better assess students in the higher and lower achievement levels, as well as more accurately assess students in the middle ranges.
- A menu of accommodations including:
 - Color contrasts and zoom.
 - Glossaries in 11 languages.
 - Text-to-Speech items.
- Scores more quickly available (weeks rather than months).
- Test items that are more varied and designed to assess higher-order thinking skills.

- Data comparability across other states in the consortium.

5. How are Other States with Exit Exams Planning on Transitioning to Common Core Assessments?

To set a graduation cut score, the direction to the SBE provided by the Legislature requires that the SBE review the scores of students in other states that are using the SBAC, and the scores of students in other states that require passage of an eleventh grade assessment as a high school graduation requirement. Table 2 includes members of the two Common Core assessment consortia, PARCC (Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers) and the Smarter Balanced consortia. Table 2 lists states that use comprehensive tests and states that use end-of-course (EOC) exams. Members of PARCC tend to use EOC exit exams, and members of Smarter Balanced tend to use comprehensive exit exams. Washington state uses a combination, but is transitioning to comprehensive exams, with the transition to using the high school Smarter Balanced assessment as exit exams for the Class of 2019.

Most states are in the midst of planning for the transition to Common Core-aligned assessments. Washington appears to be somewhat ‘ahead of the pack’ in planning and communications about the transition. As Washington and other states implement new assessments, further information on these states will be collected to help inform the Board’s decision on setting the graduation cut score, as required by the legislation.

Table 2: States that are Members of Common Core Assessment Consortia that also have Exit Exams. “P”—PARCC, Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers; “SB”—Smarter Balanced. (Much of the information on this table was graciously provided by Achieve staff.)

State	P/SB	Notes
AR	P	Algebra I and English II (PARCC) exams are required for graduation, but it is unclear at this time whether the state will set a particular cut score that students must reach.
ID	SB	<p>The state has proposed an assessment transition plan—Smarter Balanced assessments will be used for ELA and math.</p> <p>d. Those students who will graduate in 2016 and have not received a proficient or advanced score on the ISAT in grade nine (9), will be required to complete an alternative plan for graduation, as designed by the district, including the elements prescribed in Subsection 105.06.b. and may enter the alternate path prior to the fall of their senior year. (3-12-14)</p> <p>e. Students who graduate in 2017 are required to complete the ISAT in grade eleven (11) in mathematics and English language usage.</p> <p>f. Students who graduate in 2018 are required to pass the ISAT in grade eleven (11) in mathematics and English language usage at a grade nine (9) proficiency level.</p> <p>g. Students who graduate in 2019 are required to pass the ISAT in grade eleven (11) in mathematics and English language usage at a grade ten (10) proficiency level.</p> <p>h. Students who graduate in 2020 are required to pass the ISAT in grade eleven (11) in mathematics and English language usage at a college and career level proficiency of grade eleven (11).</p> <p>i. Beginning with the class of 2018, any student who passes the ISAT in mathematics and English language usage at a grade eleven (11) proficiency level while in grade nine (9) or grade ten (10) shall not be required to take the ISAT again.</p> <p>http://www.sde.idaho.gov/site/publiccomments/aug2014/TAB%2010%20Grad%20Req%20Prop.pdf http://educationidaho.blogspot.com/2014/03/fact-sheet-what-is-smarter-balanced.html</p>
MD	P	<p>The state has a multi-year transition plan from the Maryland State Assessments (MSAs) to PARCC. Students will need to pass PARCC 10 English and PARCC Algebra I, but options are dependent upon cohort. In 2014-15, PARCC exams become mandatory for incoming 9th graders. More detail can be found here: http://marylandpublicschools.org/stateboard/boardagenda/02252014/Tabs_J1_J2_J3_J4_MemoBoardTransitionfromHSA_to_PARCC.pdf</p>

MA	P	The state has not yet decided whether to transition fully to PARCC or stay with MCAS. For 2014-15, districts have the option of administering PARCC or MCAS (high school students must continue to take MCAS for graduation), with a final decision by the state to be made in 2015. Districts that choose PARCC for 2014-15 cannot have their accountability rating lowered.
NJ	P	The governor has proposed, for the classes of 2016, 2017, and 2018, requiring students to “achieve a passing score” on PARCC in ELA 9, 10, or 11, and Algebra I, Geometry, or Algebra II, OR achieve a passing competency on a Substitute Competency Test (SAT, ACT, ASVAB, Accuplacer – Write Placer, Accuplacer Math – Elementary Algebra), OR “meet the criteria of the NJDOE Portfolio Appeal.” Requirements for subsequent graduating classes have not yet been determined. http://education.state.nj.us/broadcasts/2014/SEP/30/12043/Graduation%20Requirements%20Class%20of%202016,%202017%20and%202018.pdf .
OH	P	The current OH Graduation Tests (OGT) are in five subjects - reading, writing, math, science and social studies. Students must pass all five tests as one of the requirements to earn an OH high school diploma. The Class of 2016 is the last required to pass OGTs for a diploma. The class of 2017 and beyond must earn 20 course credits based on OH's new learning standards as one of their graduation requirements. Instead of the OGT, students will take 10 EOCs (several are presumed to be PARCC). In addition, 10th grade students will take a nationally-standardized test of college and career readiness. http://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/baf2876c-403d-460f-8d78-cdbdc7471f49/New-Generation-Tests-on-Template.pdf.aspx
OR	SB	The state proposes identifying a Smarter Balanced cut score comparable with the current OAKS achievement standard that will be used for students in the 2011-2012 through 2014-2015 cohorts. ODE will identify these achievement standards by conducting an alignment study based on results from the 2013-14 Smarter Balanced field test, which the state argues satisfied the adequate notice requirement. http://www.ode.state.or.us/wma/teachlearn/commoncore/essential-skills-oaks-to-sbac-transition.pdf
RI	P	The test-based requirement for high school graduation has been delayed until 2020. More information can be found here: http://www.providencejournal.com/news/education/20140825-r.i.-education-commissioner-gist-recommends-delay-in-test-based-graduation-requirement-poll.ece
NM	P	For the classes of 2016 and 2017, NM has stated that students can either achieve a score of 3 (out of 5) on PARCC in reading and math, or a “composite score of 2273 on the New Mexico Standards Based Assessment (SBA), with neither individual score below nearing proficient.” There is also a requirement to pass “PARCC writing” at a level of 3 (out of 5), but it is not entirely clear if this indicates the state will use the writing sub-score of the broader PARCC ELA. It is also unclear at this point what NM means by “math” and “reading,” as PARCC assessments are designed as EOCs. It is probable that students will be assessed on the Algebra I and English 10 assessments, but that is not yet confirmed. Additionally, students <u>must take</u> “all available administrations of the PARCC assessments before using an ADC [Alternative Demonstration of Competency],” which include other (non-PARCC) EOCs, AP, PSAT, SAT, PLAN, ACT, Accuplacer, COMPASS, or IB exams. http://ped.state.nm.us/ped/Graduation_FAQ.html . http://ped.state.nm.us/ped/NMPARCCIndex.html
MS	P	The state school board approved an assessment transition plan from SATP2 to SATP3 (PARCC) exams, which can be found here . Students will need to pass SATP3 exams in Algebra I and English 10. The board explains that “standard setting committees will recommend cut scores as in the past for SATP3 (PARCC) tests. It is anticipated that final scores and student pass/fail statuses will not be finalized until late September 2015. It is expected that almost all impacted students will still have 4-6 retest opportunities depending upon their grade classification.” http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/student-assessment/student-assessment-satp2
CT	SB	In 2011, Public Act No. 11-135 stipulated that, beginning with the class of 2020, students would need to pass exams in Algebra I, geometry, biology, American history, and grade 10 English to graduate from high school. However, there has been little discussion of this requirement publicly, and if/how Smarter Balanced would be used for that purpose.

		Recently, Governor Malloy floated the idea of substituting the SAT exam at the 11 th grade level instead of the SBAC 11 th grade assessment. http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2748&Q=334726
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Action

At the November 2014 SBE meeting, the State Board of Education (SBE) will:

- Consider approval of a position statement on setting a score that meets the standard for high school graduation on the high school Smarter Balanced Assessment.
- Consider approval of a legislative priority on streamlining the assessment system by eliminating the Biology EOC as an assessment system required for graduation.
- Consider approval of a cut score on the science portion of the ACT that is equivalent to the biology EOC.

If you have questions regarding this memo, please contact Linda Drake at Linda.drake@k12.wa.us.