



# THE WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

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*A high-quality education system that prepares all students for college, career, and life.*

## ESTABLISHING SCORES ON ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENTS AND REVIEWING HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION SCORES ON STATE MATH ASSESSMENTS

### Policy Considerations

At the August 15, 2016 special Board meeting, the State Board of Education (SBE) will consider adopting graduation scores on the following high school assessment alternatives: Collections of Evidence and college admissions ACT and SAT tests. Key questions include:

- Were there any unanticipated issues with the score-setting process, and if so, how did the outcomes change?
- From the perspective of a citizen board, do the recommended threshold scores seem reasonable and fair for students?

The SBE will also review current high school graduation scores on the Smarter Balanced math assessment. At a special Board meeting in August 2015, the Board set a high school graduation score on the math Smarter Balanced assessment. Due to low participation by 11<sup>th</sup> grade students, the high school graduation score was set to be approximately equivalent to 10<sup>th</sup> grade results in English language arts (ELA). At the August 2015 meeting, the Board passed a motion that:

Prior to the beginning of the 2016-2017 school year, the Board will review the minimum score on the mathematics Smarter Balanced assessment to earn a Certificate of Academic Achievement to determine whether or not the current minimum score needs to be changed.

Key questions in reviewing the high school math score include:

- How do participation rates compare between 2016 and 2015?
- Do 2016 math testing results indicate a need to change the current graduation score?

### Background on Assessments and Alternative Assessments Required for Graduation

#### *High School Tests Required for Graduation (Certificate of Academic Achievement)*

The SBE is required by law to identify the scores high school students must achieve to meet standard on statewide student assessments ([RCW 28A.305.130\(4\)\(b\)](#)), including assessments that students must pass to earn a Certificate of Academic Achievement. A Certificate of Academic Achievement (CAA) is required for graduation and is awarded to students who meet standard on high school state assessments identified by the Legislature ([RCW 28A.655.061](#)).

Table 1 summarizes the assessed subjects required for high school graduation from 2008 to 2019 and beyond, and highlights the transition from assessments in reading and writing to a comprehensive assessment in English language arts. For the Classes of 2008 to 2015, high school assessments required for graduation were in reading, writing and math. A science assessment, currently biology, is required for graduation for the Class of 2017 and beyond<sup>1</sup>. For the Class of 2019 and beyond the assessed subjects are English language arts, math and science.

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<sup>1</sup> The state will transition to a comprehensive high school science assessment, once it has been developed and the Legislature has approved it ([RCW 28A.655.068](#)).

The Common Core State Standards for English language arts and math were adopted in Washington in 2011. The adoption of new standards required the implementation of new state assessments aligned to the standards. The first full administration of the Smarter Balanced assessments was in spring 2015 and the second was this past spring of 2016. The Smarter Balanced assessment in English language arts replaces the High School Proficiency Exams (HSPE) in reading and writing, and the Smarter Balanced assessment in math replaces End-of-Course (EOC) math exams.

**Table 1: High School Subjects Assessed as Part of the Certificate of Academic Achievement**

Classes of 2008 to 2015	Class of 2016	Class of 2017	Class of 2018	Class of 2019 and beyond
Reading	Reading and Writing or English Language Arts	Reading and Writing or English Language Arts	Reading and Writing or English Language Arts	English Language Arts
Writing				
Math	Math	Math	Math	Math
		Science (biology)	Science (possible transition to comprehensive science assessment)	Science (possible transition to comprehensive science assessment)

The full transition to the new assessments will take place over several years, and will particularly affect the Classes of 2016, 2017 and 2018. Students in these classes will have additional assessment options to earn a CAA, but may be required to test in one more grade than previous or subsequent classes. For example, some students in the Class of 2017 are likely to have taken a math EOC in their 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> grade, and also the Smarter Balanced math test in 11<sup>th</sup> grade. Table 2 summarizes how most students will meet the high school assessment requirements. For two transition year classes, 2017 and 2018, there will be interim exit exams. These exams, like the Smarter Balanced assessments, are aligned to the new standards. Unlike the Smarter Balanced assessments, the interim exams are EOCs and not comprehensive exams.

**Table 2: Exit Exams in English language arts and Math That Most Students Will Use to Demonstrate Meeting Standard**

Class of:	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
	Former WA Learning Standards		Common Core Standards		
English language arts	HSPE	HSPE	◆ SB	SB	SB
Math	EOC	EOC	◆ EOC EXIT	EOC EXIT	◆ SB

HSPE-Reading and Writing High School Proficiency Exam

SB-Smarter Balanced Assessment

EOC-Math Year 1 and Math Year 2 End-of-Course Assessments aligned to the former Washington math learning standards

EOC EXIT-Math Year 1 and Math Year 2 End-of-Course Assessments aligned to the new Washington math learning standards, the Common Core State Standards. These assessments are for use during the transition period to the new assessments.

◆ Tests for which the SBE established graduation scores at the August 2015 meeting.

### *Alternatives to Assessments Required for Graduation*

The law ([RCW 28A.655.061](#) and [RCW 28A.655.065](#)) specifies several alternatives to statewide standardized tests required for graduation. These alternatives provide students the opportunity to earn a CAA and meet the assessment graduation requirements. (Students receiving Special Education services have multiple assessment options for earning a Certificate of Individual Achievement, CIA.) CAA

alternatives must be “comparable in rigor” to state assessments ([RCW 28A.655.065](#)). The alternatives include:

- Collections of Evidence
- Grade Point Average Comparison
- College Admission Tests (SAT and ACT)
- Advanced Placement Tests
- International Baccalaureate Tests

At the August special meeting, the Board will consider adoption of graduation scores for new Collections of Evidence (COE) assessments in English language arts and math that are aligned to Common Core Standards. A COE is a set of work samples prepared by the student with instructional support from a teacher. Students prepare the work samples under supervision of an educator, using state guidelines for preparing and submitting the collection. COEs are scored at the state level. More information about COEs is available on the OSPI Graduation Alternatives [Collections of Evidence webpage](#).

The Board will also consider adoption of new graduation scores on the ACT and SAT. The Board will be considering an ACT English language arts graduation score. A new score is necessary because of the change from the HSPE reading and writing tests to the Smarter Balanced English language arts assessment. The SAT college admissions test and scoring changed in spring 2016 and this change compels establishing new graduation scores for the SAT. At its July 2016 meeting, the Board approved a new graduation score on the SAT for the Class of 2016 only, for reading, writing and math. At the August 2016 special meeting, the Board will consider adoption of graduation scores on the SAT for the Class of 2017 and beyond, for English language arts and math. New Washington graduation scores are necessary for the SAT because the SAT test and scoring was redesigned, and because of the change in Washington from assessing reading and writing to English language arts. Additional information about ACT and SAT as graduation alternatives is available on OSPI’s Graduation Alternatives [College Admission/AP/IB webpage](#).

### **Current High School Graduation Scores**

As shown in Table 2, at the August 2015 special meeting a year ago the Board approved:

- WA-AIM achievement level threshold scores
- Interim EOC exit exams in math achievement level threshold scores and graduation scores
- ELA and math graduation scores

The participation rate and achievement by 11<sup>th</sup> graders taking the Smarter Balanced assessments were very low. For these students, the Smarter Balanced assessments were not a graduation requirement. For 10<sup>th</sup> grade students who took the Smarter Balanced English language arts test in 2015 the assessment was required for graduation and both achievement and participation was much higher, with 90-95 percent participation and a 71 percent proficiency rate.

Generally, the Smarter Balanced math test was not a graduation requirement for the cohort of students who took the test in 2016, and it will not be for the cohort of students who will take the test in 2017. The participation rate may increase as students and educators become more familiar with the tests, and requiring a test for graduation appears to be a significant factor in students taking and performing well on an assessment. The effect on participation and achievement of requiring the test for graduation will show up in the results in spring 2018, when most juniors in the Class of 2019 will be taking the Smarter Balanced math test.

For setting the current score for high school graduation, OSPI developed methods that conform with an “equal impact” approach based on the [SBE’s position on assessment](#) adopted in January 2015 which stated that the Board:

Intends to set initial minimum scores for graduation on the high school SBAC that bridges past statewide performance on exit exams to the initial statewide performance of students on the SBAC assessments. This approach will begin the process of moving toward the more rigorous SBAC college- and career-ready level by setting initial high school proficiency scores that would impact students in the next few years approximately equally to how students have been impacted by exit exams during the past few years. These initial minimum scores would be re-evaluated over the following years, as new standards are implemented and as more students gain the skills necessary to be SBAC College and Career Ready.

At the August 2015 special board meeting, OSPI offered possible graduation scores for the Smarter Balanced assessments based on using 11<sup>th</sup> grade results and 10<sup>th</sup> grade results. After discussion, the Board adopted graduation scores for both math and English language arts that reflects the achievement of 10<sup>th</sup> graders in English language arts. The complete [materials for the August 2015 meeting](#) may be found on the SBE website.

### **Action**

The Board will consider adoption of graduation scores on high school assessment alternatives, including:

- Collections of Evidence
- ACT English language arts
- SAT English language arts and Math

In addition, the Board will review the high school graduation scores on the Smarter Balanced math assessment.

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