



THE WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Governance | Accountability | Achievement | Oversight | Career & College Readiness

Title:	Assessment Requirements for High School Graduation	
As Related To:	<input type="checkbox"/> Goal One: Effective and accountable P-13 governance. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goal Two: Comprehensive statewide K-12 accountability. <input type="checkbox"/> Goal Three: Closing achievement gap.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goal Four: Strategic oversight of the K-12 system. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goal Five: Career and college readiness for all students. <input type="checkbox"/> Other
Relevant To Board Roles:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Policy Leadership <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> System Oversight <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Advocacy	<input type="checkbox"/> Communication <input type="checkbox"/> Convening and Facilitating
Policy Considerations / Key Questions:	The State Board of Education (SBE) will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider approving Smarter Balanced Consortium Achievement Level cut scores on the Smarter Balanced Assessments (SBAC) for use in Washington. • Consider approving an approach to setting a graduation cut score for high school SBAC and high school transition assessments. • Continue discussions on refining an SBE position statement on the assessment system, and may consider approving a position statement. 	
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>OSPI staff will create a video to present the recommendation of the Superintendent to approve the consortium-determined Smarter Balanced Achievement Level cut scores for use in Washington. This video will be available for members to view prior to the Board meeting.</p> <p>Board discussion will be focused on considering an approach to setting a graduation cut score on the high school SBAC and transition exit exams, and the Board position on high school assessments. The Board may consider approving a single document that expresses the Board's position as well as the approach to setting a graduation cut score. A Board work group of four members has been meeting to develop and recommend a draft position document. Work group members will share their discussion and recommendations.</p>	



ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS FOR HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION

Policy Considerations

At the January 2015 State Board of Education (SBE) meeting, the Board will consider approving:

- The Smarter Balanced Consortium Achievement Level cut scores on the Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBAC) for use in Washington.
- An approach to setting the high school graduation cut score on the high school SBAC and the transition exit exams.

The Board may consider approving:

- A revised Board position statement on high school assessments required for graduation.

This memo is intended to provide background information to inform Board discussion on these three considerations. In addition to this memo, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) staff created a video prior to the January meeting summarizing the Superintendent's recommendation regarding the first point of consideration, the SBAC cut scores. The video will be posted on the SBE website.

To address the second and third points of consideration, the SBE convened a work group of four members, Members Wilds, Koon, Estes, and Maier, to discuss and recommend an approach to setting a graduation achievement level on high school assessments and a revised Board position on assessments required for high school graduation. At the January meeting work group members will be sharing their discussion and thoughts with the Board, and offering a document summarizing a draft position on high school assessments. The draft position statement is included in this Board packet.

Background

Brief History of Assessments Required for High School Graduation

The Commission on Student Learning was created by the Legislature in 1992 and began its work in 1993. The duties of the Commission included establishing Essential Academic Learning Requirements and assessments, and establishing the date for making high school assessments required for high school graduation (a Certificate of Mastery, later called a Certificate of Academic Achievement). The Commission was directed to work closely with the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and the State Board of Education (SBE). Three members of the Commission were selected by the SBE among SBE members.

The Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL), assessments in reading, writing, and math based on Washington Learning Standards, was first administered in 1997. Legislation in 2004 (3ESHB 2195) made the WASL a graduation requirement for the Class of 2008. Initially, WASL science was also planned to be required for the Class of 2010. This was later postponed first to the Class of 2013, then to the Class of 2015. In 2006 legislation passed (ESSB 6475) that implemented alternative assessments methods by 2006-2007, specifically, grade

comparison, collection of evidence, Career and Technical Education collection of evidence, SAT and ACT. In 2009-2010, the WASL was replaced with the High School Proficiency Exam.

In 2007, ESSB 6023 postponed the math assessment graduation requirement from the Class of 2008 to the Class of 2013, by allowing students to earn one or two additional math credits in place of passing the math assessment.

In 2008 legislation (ESHB 3166) directed OSPI to develop end-of-course (EOCs) for Year 1 and Year 2 math to replace the math WASL for implementation by 2010-2011. In 2011, HB 1412 specified that one, rather two math EOCs were required for graduation.

Also in 2011, the legislature directed that the science assessment be an EOC in biology.

In July 2011, Superintendent Randy Dorn adopted the Common Core State Standards for Washington. These new standards in English Language Arts and mathematics will be fully implemented in 2014–2015, when new assessments based on the Common Core State Standards will be administered. Washington State is a member of the Smarter Balanced Consortium (SBAC) which developed assessments based on the Common Core Standards. In addition, Washington State is a member of a partnership of states developing new science standards, the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). New assessments for the NGSS could be available for the 2017–18 school year.

The SBAC consortium agreement requires all states to use the 11th grade assessments for federal accountability purposes. The pass score for federal accountability is determined by the consortium and is tied to career and college readiness (the SBAC Level 3 Achievement Level). It is anticipated that these assessments will be more difficult than the Washington High School Proficiency exams and math end-of-course exams and, at least during the early years following adoption, that fewer students will meet the career- and college-ready standard than pass the current 10th grade assessments required for graduation.

Table 3 lists sources and links to additional background information regarding the history of assessments required for high school graduation.

SBE's Role in the Assessment System

The Board has three responsibilities in regards to the assessment system (see statutes in Table 1):

- Establish cut scores, including scores on all statewide assessments at all grade levels and the scores students must meet on assessments required for high school graduation.
- Set graduation requirements, including the certificate of academic achievement (earned by students who pass the state assessments required for graduation). In practice, the Legislature has set assessment graduation requirements since 2004, and current graduation assessments and approved alternatives are in statute.
- Provide consultation to OSPI to maintain, develop and revise the state assessment system.

Table 1: State Board of Education Responsibilities in the Assessment System

Statute and Summary	Text
RCW 28A.655.070 (3)(a) Provide consultation to OSPI to maintain, develop and revise the state assessment system	<p>“In consultation with the state board of education, the superintendent of public instruction shall maintain and continue to develop and revise a statewide academic assessment system in the content areas of reading, writing, mathematics and science for use in the elementary, middle, and high school years designed to determine if each student has mastered the essential academic learning requirements....”</p>
RCW 28A.305.130(b)(i) Set cut scores on statewide assessments	<p>“...identify the scores students must achieve in order to meet the standard on the statewide assessment... [and to] determine student scores that identify levels of student performance below and beyond standard.”</p>
RCW28A.305.130(c) Review the reporting system	<p>“...annually review the assessment reporting system to ensure fairness, accuracy, timeliness, and equity of opportunity, especially with regard to schools with special circumstances and unique populations of students.”</p>
RCW28A.305.130(b)(iii) Set cut scores for graduation on the SBAC	<p>“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.”</p>
RCW28A.305.130(b)(ii) Set cut scores for graduation on the transition exit exams	<p>“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 tenth grade English language arts assessment and the end-of-course mathematics assessments developed in accordance with RCW 28A.655.070 to be used as the state transitions to high school assessments developed with a multistate consortium.”</p>
RCW 28A.230.090 (1) and (1)(b) High school graduation requirements	<p>“1) The state board of education shall establish high school graduation requirements or equivalencies for students, except as provided in RCW 28A.230.122 and except those equivalencies established by local high schools or school districts under RCW 28A.230.097. The purpose of a high school diploma is to declare that a student is ready for success in postsecondary education, gainful employment, and citizenship, and is equipped with the skills to be a lifelong learner...(b) The certificate of academic achievement requirements under RCW 28A.655.061 or the certificate of individual achievement requirements under RCW 28A.155.045 are required for graduation from a public high school but are not the only requirements for graduation.”</p>

Smarter Balanced Consortium Achievement Level Cut Scores

[RCW28A.305.130\(b\)\(iii\)](#) requires that the SBE approve scores used for students to meet standard on statewide assessments. Therefore, the SBE must approve the Smarter Balanced Consortium Achievement Level Scores for the scores to apply in Washington. The Smarter Balance Consortium implemented a multi-part process for developing the scores. In November 2014 the chief state officers of the consortium states, including Superintendent Dorn, approved the scores developed by the Consortium.

Included in this memo are the following Smarter Balanced documents:

1. A table of the Smarter Balanced Consortium Cut Scores for Level 1/Level 2, Level 2/Level 3, and Level 3/Level 4.
2. [Smarter Balanced States Approve Achievement Level Recommendations](#) Press Release. This document includes graphs of the Achievement Levels and the percent of students consortium-wide in each of the achievement levels based on the field testing results.

Additional information, with links, on Achievement Levels from the Smarter Balanced Consortium is listed in Table 4.

High School Graduation Cut Scores and a Revised Board Position on High School Assessments Required for Graduation

The Board work group tasked with making a recommendation on a Board position statement considered establishing the high school graduation cut score and the revised Board position on high school assessment as part of the same discussion. In their discussion, the work group considered (1) approaches to setting the high school graduation cut score, (2) the current position the Board has taken on high school assessments, and (3) additional alternatives and modifications to current alternatives to high school assessments required for graduation.

High School Graduation Cut Scores

[RCW28A.305.130\(b\)\(iii\)](#) and [RCW28A.305.130\(b\)\(ii\)](#) require that the SBE establish cut scores for graduation on the high school SBAC and the exit exams during the transition period (2015-2018). The transition exit exams include a Math Year 1 end-of-course exam (EOC) and a Math Year 2 EOC.

The Board discussed the high school graduation cut score at the November 2014 Board meeting. Materials on considerations in setting the graduation cut score are in the meeting packet. Assistant Superintendent Robin Munson of OSPI presented to the Board on possible options for setting a cut score for high school graduation. These included:

- Equal impact: Establishing a score that would yield the same “passing” rates as previous assessments;
- Using the SBAC Achievement Level 2 as the graduation score; and
- Establishing a new achievement level for high school graduation.

In establishing a graduation cut score, the SBE may also consider a schedule for revisiting the cut score and raising it over time to eventually coincide with the SBAC college- and career-ready level.

Current State Board of Education Position on High School Assessments

At the November 2014 SBE meeting, the Board adopted a legislative priority to end the Biology End-of-Course exam (EOC) as an exit exam:

Additionally, the Board urges the Legislature to end the biology end-of-course exam as a high school graduation requirement in favor of developing a comprehensive science exam that aligns with Next Generation Science Standards.

On January 10, 2013, the SBE adopted a motion identifying the SBE's position on assessments:

The State Board of Education (1) recognizes the state is in a time of transition with implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS); (2) strongly urges alignment and work with higher education so the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) 11th grade assessment would be meaningful in admissions and placement; (3) affirms exit exams as part of a meaningful high school diploma; (4) move towards exit exams consisting of: Algebra 1 EOC, Biology EOC, Reading and Writing transitioning to ELA (comprehensive SBAC 10th or 11th grade needs further exploration); and (5) more work to broaden Science assessment options (concerns about narrowing of curriculum through Biology EOC).

In addition, the Board has established an intent in rule ([WAC 180-17-100, adopted March 2014](#)) that graduation requirements should ultimately align with career and college readiness, but that 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.

Exploring Alternatives to High School Assessments Required for Graduation

The Board workgroup and Dr. Doug Kernutt, in his reports at the September and November Board meetings, reviewed ways that alternatives to the assessment required for high school graduation could be simplified or be accessed by more students. OSPI staff presented Superintendent Dorn's two possible plans for modifying the assessment system, Plan A and Plan B, at the September 2014 Board meeting. (Table 3 has links to the OSPI presentation, as well as memos by Dr. Doug Kernutt on alternative to high school assessments.) The Governor's budget proposal includes a modification to Collections of Evidence.

Table 2 summarizes possible new or modified alternatives, with some of the advantages and challenges of each. The possible alternatives are grouped into the following categories:

- College credit alternatives
- Career readiness alternatives
- Instructional alternatives
- Modifications to Collections of Evidence
- Adjustments to existing alternatives
- Eliminating exit exams
- Earlier testing

Action

The Board will consider:

- Approving the Smarter Balanced Consortium cut scores for the SBAC for use in Washington.
- Approving an approach to setting a graduation cut score on the high school SBAC and transition exit exams.

The Board may consider:

- Approving an SBE position statement on high school assessment graduation requirements. This position statement may include the approach to setting a graduation cut score and the high school SBAC and transition exit exams.

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

Table 2: A Summary of Possible Modifications to Existing Alternatives and New Alternatives to High School Assessment Graduation Requirements

	Alternative/Option	Modification or New?	Explanation	Advantages	Concerns	Comments
College Credit Alternatives	College Credit in ELA and Math Content Areas	New	Earning college credit in a math or ELA course. Dual credit programs include Running Start, College in the High School, and Tech Prep. Also passing, AP, IB, and Cambridge courses.	Provides an instructional alternative to the assessment requirement. Success in a college level course demonstrates readiness for college level work.	Students across the state have unequal access to opportunities to earn college credit. There may be imperfect alignment to ELA and math standards.	Discussed by SBE work group for further exploration. Part of Supt. Dorn's Plan B.
	College Credit in Any Content Area	New	Earning college credit through dual credit programs such as Running Start, College in the High School, and Tech Prep. Also passing, AP, IB, and Cambridge courses.	Provides an instructional alternative to the assessment requirement. Success in a college level course demonstrates readiness for college level work.	A process would need to be developed to ensure there is sufficient alignment to standards. There also may be unequal access across the state.	Discussed by SBE work group for further exploration.
Career Readiness Alternatives	Professional Certification	New	Earning a rigorous professional certification.	Provides an indication of work-readiness.	There is a lot of variability in professional certifications. There may be no alignment with standards. And, there may be unequal access across the state.	Discussed by SBE work group for further exploration.
	Additional Work Readiness Assessments	New	Passing certain assessments such as WorkKeys, or Precision Exams.	Provides an indication of work-readiness.	There may not be sufficient alignment in ELA and math standards. There may be a cost with some assessments.	Discussed by SBE work group for further exploration.

	Alternative/Option	Modification or New?	Explanation	Advantages	Concerns	Comments
	Career and Technical Education program completion	New	Completing a full CTE program at a Skills Center, or a rigorous CTE program at a high school	Provides an indication of work-readiness. Good for students who have a clear career pathway. CTE programs are generally well-aligned with standards.	There is some variability in the length and rigor of CTE programs. There is unequal access across the state.	Discussed by SBE work group for further exploration.
Instructional Alternatives	Bridge Courses (graduation readiness transition course)	New	Passing a bridge course developed through a secondary/post-secondary partnership.	Recognition by higher education for college readiness and course placement.	Does not address the needs of all students who are not successful at the assessments. Cost to the district in staff resources.	Discussed by SBE work group for further exploration, and in the Governor's budget.
	Additional High School Credit in Content Area	New/used for math prior to 2013	Passing any additional high school course in the math or ELA content area (this was done for math prior to 2013).	A relatively simple and easily available option.	Insufficient rigor and alignment with standards. Students are already taking 4 credits of English in high school--would they need to 'double-up?'	Part of Supt. Dorn's Plan B.
Modifications to COEs	Reduce COEs in Math to Year 1 only	Modification	Currently, COEs are available for both Math Year 1 (Algebra) and Math Year 2 (Geometry). This option would reduce COEs in math to only Math Year 1.	Simplify the process for administering and grading the math COE.	Geometry is more accessible for some students' learning styles.	Part of Supt. Dorn's Plan B.
	District Grading of COEs, and coursework.	Modification	Revises the administration of the Collection of Evidence alternative to allow students to submit their credit bearing coursework as demonstration of high school proficiency. School districts, instead of the state, will assume responsibility for evaluating the Collection of Evidence materials	Eliminates the cost to the state of grading COEs. Eases the effort in creating a COE by allowing the use of student work from non-COE courses.	Increases burden on districts for scoring the COEs. Could reduce consistency and equity in high school education around the state.	Governor's proposal.

	Alternative/Option	Modification or New?	Explanation	Advantages	Concerns	Comments
Adjustments to Existing Alternatives	Out-of-State Tests	Modification	Currently, students may be waived from the assessment graduation requirement if they transfer into WA in the 11 th or 12 th grade. This option would expand eligibility to students in any grade.	Expands this alternative to more transfer students.	Probably would not affect many students—fewer than 1%.	Part of Supt. Dorn's Plan B.
	Transfer Waiver	Modification	Change date of transfer to January 1 from March 1—this would be a procedural change that could be made in WAC.	Intended to improve the process.	Probably would not affect many students—fewer than 1%.	Part of Supt. Dorn's Plan B.
	Grade Comparison	Modification	A student's grades in courses corresponding to specific content areas are compared with the grades of students who took the same courses and passed the exit exam. This option is available to 12 th graders who have an overall grade-point average of 3.2. This option would eliminate the GPA criteria.	This modification would allow more students to access this low-cost alternative.	District staff currently do the calculation for this alternative. If more students access, more district staff time would be used to do the calculation.	Part of Supt. Dorn's Plan B.
Eliminating Exit Exams	Eliminating all high school exit exams	New	Eliminates the assessment graduation requirements. The assessments would continue to be administered for state and federal accountability, and as an indicator of services and instruction needed in the senior year.	Eliminates the need for alternatives, and the cost of alternatives. Simplifies the assessment system for districts.	Reduces student motivation to take assessments and do well on assessments. Could reduce consistency and equity in high school education around the state.	Supt. Dorn's Plan A.
	Eliminate the Biology End-of-Course as an exit exam	New	Eliminates the biology assessment graduation requirement. The assessment would continue to be administered for state and federal accountability.	Eliminates the need for alternatives to the biology assessment and the cost of the alternatives. Simplifies the assessment system.	Reduces focus on science.	SBE Board Resolution and Legislative Priority

	Alternative/Option	Modification or New?	Explanation	Advantages	Concerns	Comments
Earlier Testing	Administering the SBAC to 10 th graders in both ELA and Math	New	During the transition period, the ELA SBAC will be administered to 10 th graders as well as 11 th graders. This option would expand to math as well, and extend beyond the transition period.	Allows more time for high school course-taking and alternatives.	Cost of testing students in both the 10 th and 11 th grade, and time given to testing impinges on instruction.	Discussed by SBE work group for further exploration.

Table 3: Additional Information on High School Standards, Assessment and Exit Exams

Source	Link	Comment
<u>Statement of Support: Achievement Level Setting for the Smarter Balanced Assessments.</u>	<u>http://www.smarterbalanced.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/ALS-Statements-of-Support.pdf</u>	SBAC document that includes statements from the SBAC Technical Advisory Panel, the SBAC Advisory Panel, and the external auditor.
<u>Interpretation and Use of Scores and Achievement Level.</u>	<u>http://www.smarterbalanced.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Interpretation-and-Use-of-Scores.pdf</u>	SBAC document with recommendations for use of SBAC scale scores and Achievement Levels.
<u>OSPI Presentation at September 2014 SBE Board Meeting</u>	<u>http://www.sbe.wa.gov/documents/BoardMeetings/2014/Sept/OSPIassessmentPresentation1.pdf</u>	History of high school assessments, Supt. Dorn's Plan A and Plan B
<u>OSPI Presentation at the November 2014 SBE Board Meeting</u>	<u>http://www.sbe.wa.gov/documents/BoardMeetings/2014/Nov/OSPIcutscores.pdf</u>	Includes possible approaches to setting a graduation cut score on high school assessments
<u>SBE Memo for September 2014 Board Meeting</u>	<u>http://www.sbe.wa.gov/documents/BoardMeetings/2014/Sept/04Assessments1.pdf</u>	Includes a general background and the role of the Board and the impact of the assessment system on districts
<u>SBE Memo for November 2014 Board Meeting</u>	<u>http://www.sbe.wa.gov/documents/BoardMeetings/2014/Nov/08CutScore.pdf</u>	Includes a summary of what other states are doing
<u>Dr. Doug Kernutt's memo on Alternative Assessments for High School Graduation</u>	<u>http://www.sbe.wa.gov/documents/BoardMeetings/2014/Nov/09LegislativePrioritiesUpdate2.pdf</u>	Included as part of the SBE agenda on Legislative Priorities
<u>Core to College Website</u>	<u>https://c2cwa.wordpress.com/about/</u>	Information about the Bridge to College transition courses

**Smarter Balanced Threshold Scale Scores
for Four Achievement Levels**

Math Scale Score Thresholds			
Grade	Level 1-to-2	Level 2-to-3	Level 3-to-4
3	2381	2436	2501
4	2411	2485	2549
5	2455	2528	2579
6	2473	2552	2610
7	2484	2567	2635
8	2504	2586	2653
11	2543	2628	2718

ELA Scale Score Thresholds			
Grade	Level 1-to-2	Level 2-to-3	Level 3-to-4
3	2367	2432	2490
4	2416	2473	2533
5	2442	2502	2582
6	2457	2531	2618
7	2479	2552	2649
8	2487	2567	2668
11	2493	2583	2682

Approved Nov. 14, 2014



Smarter Balanced States Approve Achievement Level Recommendations

OLYMPIA, WASH. (November 17, 2014) —Members of the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium have voted to approve initial achievement levels for the mathematics and English language arts/literacy (ELA) assessments that will be administered in 17 states and one territory this school year. The vote marks an important milestone in the development of the assessment system.

"These initial achievement levels were developed with input from thousands of educators and community members, reflecting a diverse cross-section of views on education. Moving forward, the achievement levels, along with scale scores that also will be reported, will help teachers and parents understand student performance and needs for support," said Smarter Balanced Executive Director Joe Willhoft.

The achievement levels serve as a starting point for discussion about the performance of individual students and of groups of students in mathematics and English Language arts. There are other measures that students, teachers and parents can also use to help evaluate the academic progress of students and schools, such as scale scores, growth models, and portfolios of student work. The states also unanimously approved a position paper to provide broad guidelines for how the scores and achievement levels can be used and interpreted by state officials, parents, teachers and other stakeholders.

Since Smarter Balanced is offering assessments for both ELA and math for grades 3-8 and high school, the recommendations include achievement level scores for both subject areas and at each of those grade levels. The attached charts display the threshold scores that distinguish four achievement levels and display the estimated percentage of students across all Smarter Balanced states who would have scored at each level based on data from the Consortium's spring 2014 field test. Smarter Balanced estimates that the percentage of students who would have scored "Level 3 or higher" in math ranged from 32 percent in Grade 8 to 39 percent in Grade 3. In English language arts, the percentage of students who would have scored "Level 3 or higher" ranged from 38 percent in Grade 3 to 44 percent in Grade 5. See the charts below for further details.

"Because the new content standards set higher expectations for students and the new tests are designed to assess student performance against those higher standards, the bar has been raised. It's not surprising that fewer students could score at Level 3 or higher. However, over time the performance of students will improve," said Willhoft.

Willhoft added, "It's important to note that the figures released today are a Consortium-wide estimate based on the spring 2014 Field Test. Once the operational assessment is administered in 2015, states will have a much clearer picture."

To create the achievement levels, Smarter Balanced organized an unprecedented level of educator and public input, involving thousands of interested constituents, using a rigorous process known as the "bookmark procedure."

During an in-person panel, held in Dallas, Texas, close to 500 teachers, school leaders, higher education faculty, parents, business and community leaders reviewed test questions and determined the threshold scores

for four achievement levels for each grade and subject area. Member states had representatives at each grade level for grades 3 through 8 and high school. Educators with experience teaching English language learners, students with disabilities and other traditionally under-represented students participated to help ensure that the achievement levels are fair and appropriate for all students.

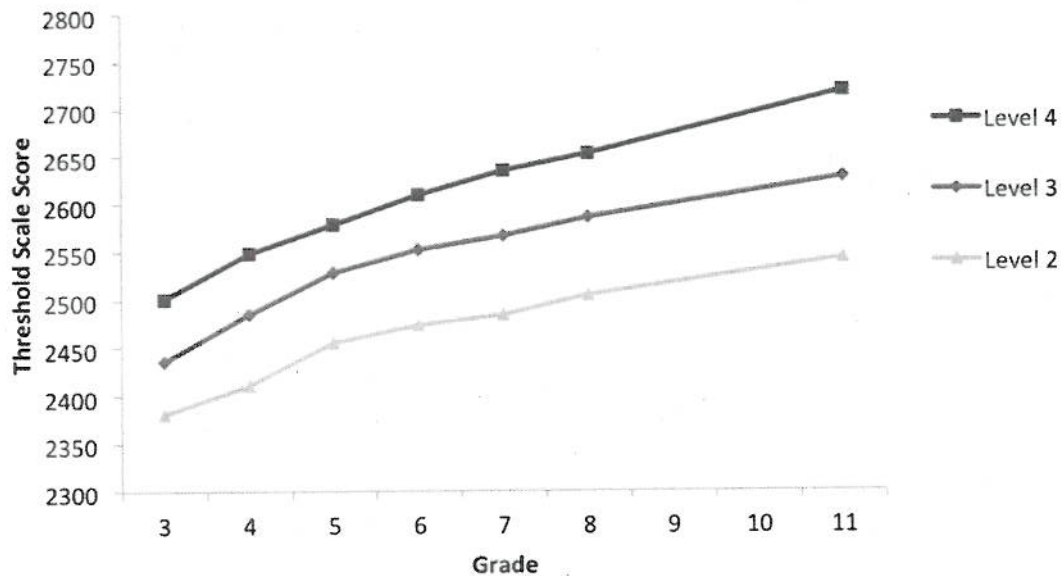
In addition, an online panel was open to educators, parents and other interested members of the community to provide unprecedented input on the achievement levels. More than 2,500 people participated in the online panel. A cross-grade review committee composed of 72 members of the in-person panels then took the results of the online and in-person panels into account to develop recommendations that coherently aligned across grades and that reflected student progress from year to year.

As an additional step, Smarter Balanced engaged an external auditor, an Achievement Level Setting Advisory Panel and its standing Technical Advisory Committee to review the recommendations before they were presented to the states for approval. The auditor and both advisory panels certified that Smarter Balanced conducted a valid process that is consistent with best practice in the field.

In approving the Achievement Levels, Smarter Balanced member states relied primarily on the recommendations from the Achievement Level Setting process. Members also gave consideration to other sources of information about the general content readiness of high school students to engage in credit-bearing college-level work. This included a comprehensive body of research on college academic preparedness of high school students conducted by the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB), the oversight body for the National Assessment of Educational Progress.

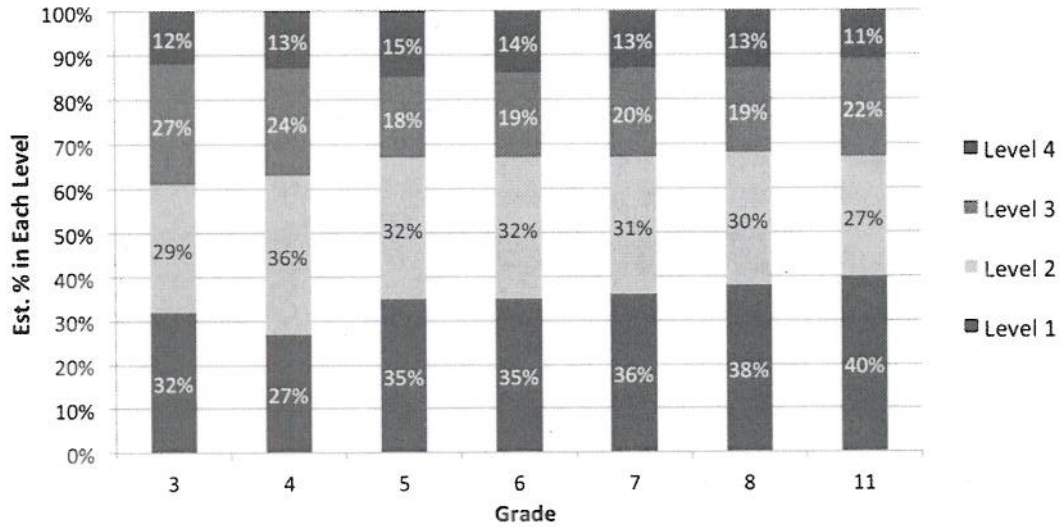
Over the coming months, member states will present these achievement level recommendations to the policy-making entities that have the authority to formally adopt achievement levels in each state. This authority most typically rests with the state board of education.

Mathematics: Threshold Scale Scores



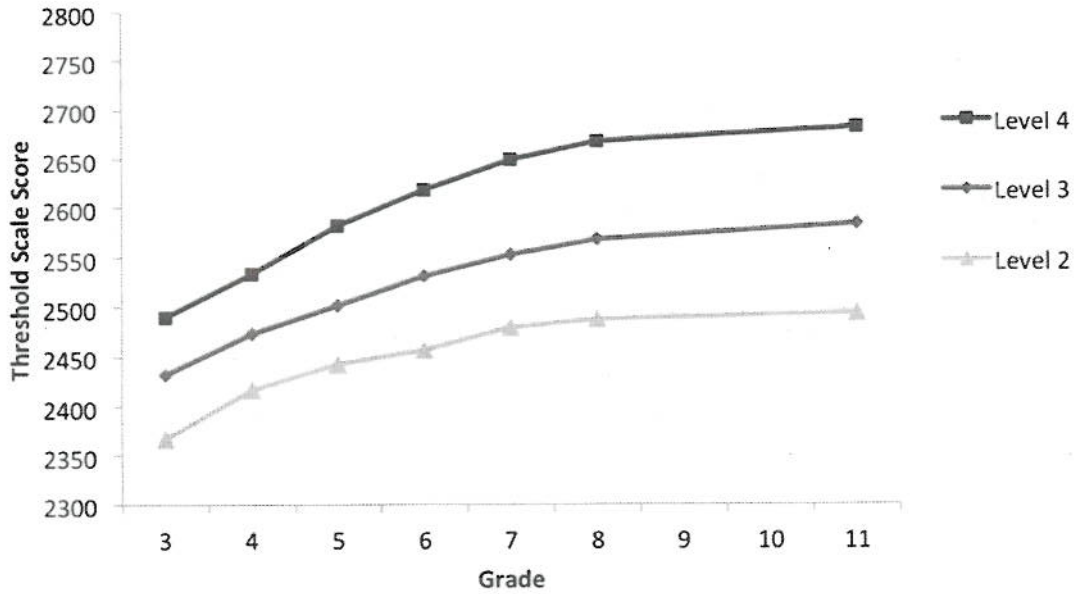
Adopted November 14, 2014

Mathematics: Estimated Percentage of Students Scoring at Each Achievement Level



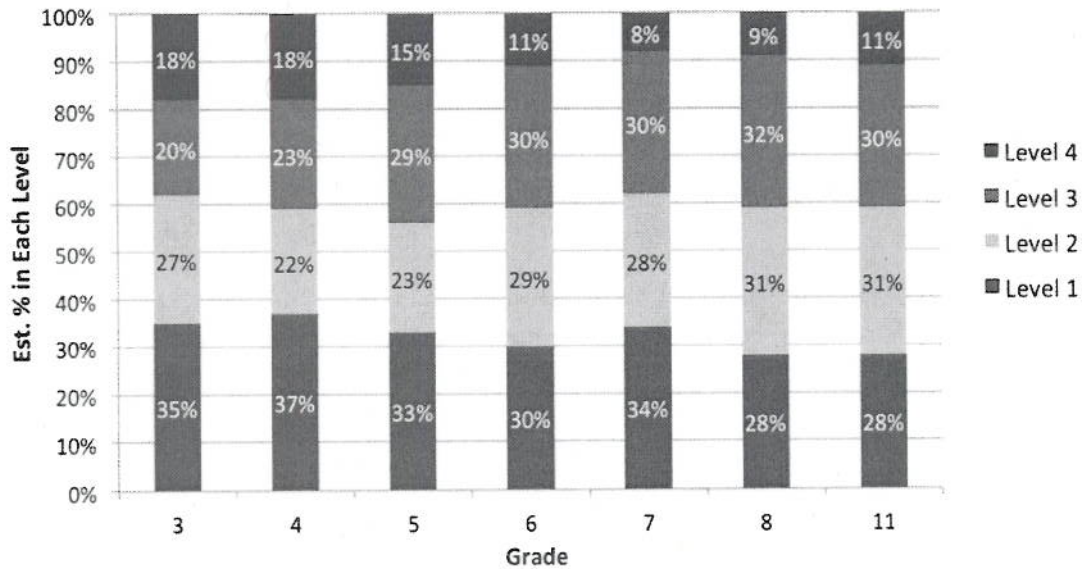
Estimates based on Spring 2014 Smarter Balanced field test in 21 states and USVI.

English Language Arts/Literacy: Threshold Scale Scores



Adopted November 14, 2014

English Language Arts/Literacy: Estimated Percentage of Students Scoring at Each Achievement Level



Estimates based on Spring 2014 Smarter Balanced field test in 21 states and USVI.

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About Smarter Balanced

The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium brings together states to create a shared, innovative assessment system for mathematics and English language arts/literacy that is aligned with the Common Core State Standards and helps prepare students for success in college and careers. The Consortium involves educators, researchers, policymakers, and community groups in a transparent and consensus-driven assessment development process. For more information, please visit www.smarterbalanced.org.

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DRAFT

State Board of Education Position Statement on High School Assessments Required for Graduation

Background

- College- and career-ready Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBAC) cut scores were set nationally by the Smarter Balance Assessment Consortium in November 2014, establishing scores for Achievement Levels 1 to 4. The scores must be approved by the State Board of Education (SBE) for use in Washington. The SBAC assesses both mathematics and English Language Arts.
- SBAC tests will be taken by Washington students in spring 2015, with results expected by summer 2015.
- By statute (EHB 1450 passed in 2013), by the end of August 2015 the SBE must set an SBAC cut score students must meet for high school graduation.
- In its resolution on assessments adopted in January 2013, the SBE previously affirmed that exit exams are a part of a meaningful high school diploma.
- Accountability framework rules adopted by the SBE in May 2014 states that graduation requirements should ultimately be aligned to the performance levels associated with career and college readiness. The rules also recognized the necessity of a minimum proficiency standard for graduation as both students and educators adapt to the increased rigor of Common Core State Standards.
- The legislature stated its intent in statute (EHB 1450 passed in 2013) that the state transition from a biology end-of-course assessment to a more comprehensive science assessment.
- By its resolution adopted in November 2014, the SBE urged the Legislature to end the biology end-of-course exam as a high school graduation requirement in favor of developing a comprehensive science exam that aligns with the Next Generation Science Standards.
- Washington public institutions of higher education have agreed to use the high school SBAC for postsecondary placement decisions.
- The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges and OSPI have an on-going project to establish high school transition courses for Math and English Language Arts, called Bridge to College courses.

Guiding principles

The State Board of Education:

- Holds a goal of a graduation requirement that aligns with a career- and college-ready performance level; but recognizes that it will take time for students, educators, and the system to adapt to the increased rigor of Common Core State Standards and Next Generation Science Standards.
- Recognizes that the state is in a time of transition to new standards and assessments. There are challenges, but there are also opportunities to strengthen education and create greater alignment between secondary and postsecondary educational systems.
- Reaffirms high school exit exams, or alternatives, aligned to rigorous standards that all students are required to take as part of a meaningful high school diploma and an opportunity for students to demonstrate their readiness for postsecondary education, training and careers.
- Supports multiple ways for students who are not successful on the assessments to demonstrate meeting standard and readiness for postsecondary options.

- Intends to set initial cut 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 cut 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.
- Supports the use of the SBAC assessments, and in the future the Next Generation Science Standards assessment, by postsecondary institutions in placement and admissions decisions.
- Supports the development and use of transition courses to prepare high school students for success in college-level work.
- Supports the streamlining of the high school assessment system, including alternatives to passing exit exams.
- Continues to recommend ending the biology assessment as a requirement for graduation, while maintaining the exam for federal accountability, in favor of developing a comprehensive science exam that aligns with the Next Generation Science Standards.

Options to explore:

The State Board of Education (SBE) sees potential in additional options for high school students to demonstrate meeting standard and readiness for postsecondary education and work, as quality alternatives to meeting standard on high school assessments required for graduation. The SBE supports seeking further information and exploration of:

- Tenth grade students taking the high school SBAC, allowing more time for high school course-taking and alternatives if the student is not on-track.
- Earning credit in Bridge To College transition courses recognized by higher education for college placement.
- Earning dual credit in specific college-level courses.
- Earning a professional certification or completing a Career and Technical Education (CTE) Program.
- Additional assessments as alternatives, including CTE and work-readiness assessments.