

#### THE WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

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

# Washington's Indicators of Educational System Health

### 2016 Briefing

In much the same way that healthcare professionals rely on vital signs of health to guide treatment decisions, the indicators of educational system health provide policymakers a shared framework upon which to guide their assessment of the success of Washington's education system. Established by the Legislature in 2013,

It therefore becomes very important to intervene early and often in a child's educational journey.

the indicators are an expression of what student outcomes are most important to measure. They provide an important platform to continue our inquiry into how well we are serving our students across the system.

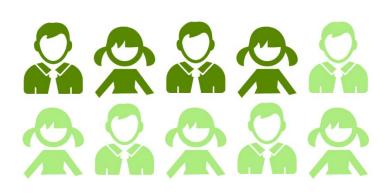
The State Board of Education has worked closely with partner agencies to report data, and to derive meaning from it. With this summary document and our full report, it is the Board's intention to offer insights into what the indicators are telling us and how the system can improve in serving individual students.

First, it is clear that closing achievement gaps for our students requires a deep understanding of the gaps in opportunity that exist for our historically underserved student populations. In the same way that medical professionals expend most of their energies treating ailments, rather than "admiring the problem," educational policymakers and practitioners must also commit most of their energies to addressing the *causes* of the outcomes, rather than merely reiterating the outcomes themselves. This has the appropriate effect of emphasizing the failures of the system, which is responsible for creating inequitable opportunities for students, rather than blaming the students themselves.

This work also requires an understanding of how gaps present in our system, beginning very early in the

educational journey, and often persisting beyond high school. As an example, students qualifying for free or reduced-price lunch are approximately 30 percent less likely to demonstrate readiness for kindergarten, and ultimately more than 60 percent less likely to earn a certificate or credential by age 26. We also observe large gaps by race and ethnicity in virtually all outcome measures. Regardless of which indicators are analyzed – whether early in the educational journey or late – the same student groups reveal as underserved by our system.

Only About 4 in 10 kids enter school "Kindergarten-ready."



Data Source: WaKIDS results on all six domains for All-Students group (40.8% in 13-14, 39.5% in 14-15, 44.2% in 15-16) lcon made by Freepik from www.flaticon.com

It therefore becomes very important to intervene early and often in a child's educational journey, so that, to the greatest extent possible, gaps aren't allowed to develop. In general, the Board believes it will be easier (and cheaper) to prevent gaps initially, rather than to attempt to close them years later.

# **Indicators of Educational System Health**

This figure depicts the statutorily required indicators

Indicator	Trend	2016 Actual	2016 Target	
Kindergarten Readiness	Improving	44.2%	51.8%	
4 <sup>th</sup> Grade Reading	Improving	57.0%	59.0%+	
8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Math	Improving	47.8%	50.7%+	
High School Graduation	Improving	78.1%	81.9%	
Readiness for College Coursework	Improving	73.6%*	75.2%	
Post-Secondary Attainment and Workforce	One Year of Data	42%*	44%	

<sup>\*</sup>Note: represents the most recent year of data.

It is also for these reasons that the Board has sought to steer the accountability system in the direction of utilizing student growth measures. The gaps present at the earliest stages of our educational system cannot be closed by merely narrowing the rate of growth. Rather, these students require enhanced resources and an accelerated program to make up the gap. Put simply, the only way to close achievement gaps is to reverse growth gaps. Developing a greater understanding of growth data helps us focus on the metrics that truly matter for our system's progress.

As we move forward, the Board seeks to use the platform of the

educational system health indicators to reinforce the importance of system alignment. There is significant change occurring in our state accountability system. The reauthorization of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act has caused the state to revisit its long-term goals for schools as part of its Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Consolidated Plan. It has also necessitated a review of the state's Achievement Index metrics. The Board acknowledges that achieving full alignment of these accountability metrics will require revisiting our Educational System Health goals once our state consolidated plan is complete.

As the Legislature is focused on how to make ample provision for public schools, and what impact those resources may have on our ability to meet the ambitious goals we set for students and schools, we hope our analysis of the indicators and our policy recommendations add value to the discussion.

The Board Recommends	In Order to Improve Student Achievement in			
Expand access to high-quality early childhood	Kindergarten readiness and third grade literacy			
education.				
Expand and fully fund high-quality professional learning for educators.	Kindergarten readiness, 3rd grade literacy, 8th grade high school readiness, and high school graduation.			
Increase access to high-quality expanded	3rd grade literacy, 8th grade high school			
learning opportunities.	readiness, and high school graduation.			
Expand supports and services that prepare	High school graduation and post-secondary			
students for postsecondary opportunities.	readiness			

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>+</sup>Note: represents the 2016-17 target that was reset because of the transition to the Smarter Balanced Assessments.

#### **Kindergarten Readiness**

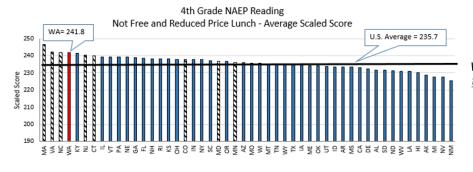
Less than half (approximately 44 percent) of kindergarten students are "kindergarten-ready" as defined by meeting the standard on the six domains of the Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developmental Skills (WaKIDS). Less than one in three Hispanic students are kindergarten ready, a rate we also see in children who qualify for the Free and Reduced Price Lunch program. Enrollment and attendance in high quality early childhood education would improve children's chances of being kindergarten ready. But only about 40 percent of three- and four-year olds in Washington enroll in early childhood education, a rate in the bottom quartile of the 50 United States.

#### 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Reading

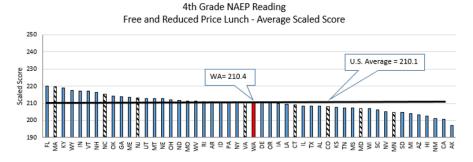
Among students in the 15 states using the Smarter Balanced 4<sup>th</sup> Grade, English/language arts assessment, Washington students met the standard at the highest rate (58 percent ) in the 2015-16 school year, according to the <u>Dec. 5, 2016 Seattle Times</u>. Those high scores, and the scores of 4th graders who do not qualify for the Free and Reduced Price Lunch program, made Washington the 4<sup>th</sup> highest performing state on the 2015 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in reading.

However, Washington 4<sup>th</sup> grade students who do qualify for Free and Reduced Lunch perform only average on the 2015 NAEP in reading, which means Washington has a large performance gap in reading based on poverty status.

# **4**<sup>th</sup> **Grade NAEP in Reading** Students in Poverty Fare Worse than Students Not in Poverty



Washington <u>ranks in the</u> <u>top 5 states</u> in 4<sup>th</sup> grade Reading for non-low Income students



However, Washington ranks near average for low-income students.

#### 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Math

Approximately one-half (49.4 percent) of Washington 8<sup>th</sup> grade students met the standard on the Smarter Balanced math assessment for 8<sup>th</sup> graders in the 2015-16 school year. This was the best of the 15 states who use the assessment. On the 2015 8<sup>th</sup> grade NAEP in math, Washington Not-FRL students were the 4<sup>th</sup> best in the country and the FRL students were the 11<sup>th</sup> best in the nation.

#### Washington students look good on Smarter Balanced tests

Washington students in grades 3-8 performed at or near the top among the 15 states that administered the Smarter Balanced test in 2015.

A selection of the top performing states:

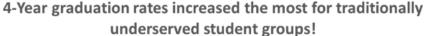
MATH TEST						
STATE	GRADE 3	GRADE 4	GRADE 5	GRADE 6	GRADE 7	GRADE 8
Washington	60.0%	56.5%	50.1%	49.0%	51.1%	49.4%
New Hampshire	57.0%	51.0%	48.0%	47.0%	52.0%	47.0%
Vermont	55.8%	49.9%	43.3%	40.9%	46.0%	43.9%
South Dakota	54.0%	48.5%	38.2%	41.0%	42.6%	41.9%
Delaware	55.1%	50.6%	41.5%	37.0%	39.6%	37.7%

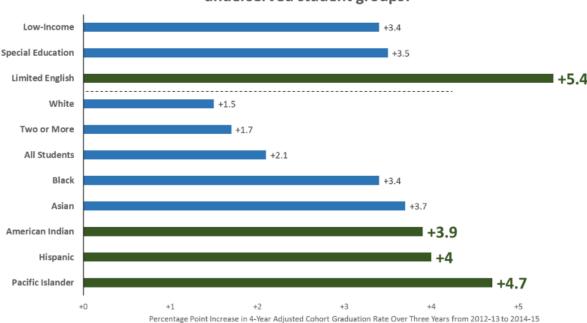
Source: Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction

Graphic from the Seattle Times

#### **High School Graduation**

Over the three most recent years, the on-time graduation rate increased by 1.5 to 5.4 percentage points for all student groups. Students with limited English made the greatest gains. Large gains were also made by Native American/Alaskan Native, Hispanic/Latino, and Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian student groups. Substantial increases in the graduation rate were also made by low income students and students with a disability. The graduation gap is shrinking. However, in the latest national comparison, the on-time graduation rate for Washington is in the bottom quartile nationally.



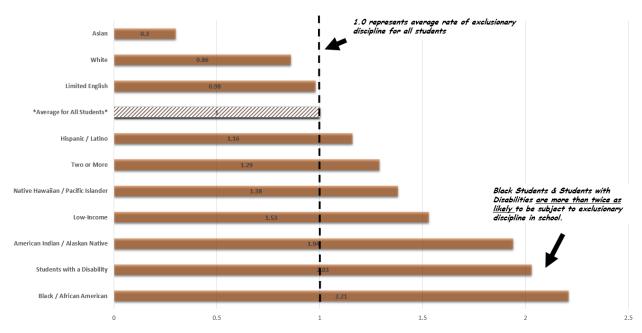


## **Student Discipline**

In 2016, the Board for the first time recommended tracking discipline as an indicator of overall educational system health. This indicator focuses on the lost educational opportunity caused by exclusionary discipline practices, which likely contributes to opportunity and achievement gaps.

## Rates of Exclusionary Discipline for Different Student Populations

Ratio of incidents of discipline in relationship to total student population - from OSPI Composition Index



# **Access to Quality Schools**

Over the past three years, Washington used the school Achievement Index to rate school performance. Student performance on math and ELA assessments is increasing and graduation rates are improving, which is leading to improved school ratings for many students. However, large performance gaps for students of color persist at all school levels.

# Achievement Gaps by Race Are Apparent in All Achievement Index School Tier Ratings

