



THE WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

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

Title: Supporting Seamless Transitions to Postsecondary Education: a Focus on Assessments

As related to:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goal One: Develop and support policies to close the achievement and opportunity gaps. <input type="checkbox"/> Goal Two: Develop comprehensive accountability, recognition, and supports for students, schools, and districts.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goal Three: Ensure that every student has the opportunity to meet career and college ready standards. <input type="checkbox"/> Goal Four: Provide effective oversight of the K-12 system. <input type="checkbox"/> Other
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Relevant to Board roles:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Policy leadership <input type="checkbox"/> System oversight <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Advocacy	<input type="checkbox"/> Communication <input type="checkbox"/> Convening and facilitating
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Policy considerations / Key questions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are barriers to seamless secondary to postsecondary transitions?• Can different parts of the transition, for example graduation requirements, application and admissions, college placement, become better integrated to become more seamless?• Can the multiple assessments associated with student transitions from secondary to postsecondary education be reduced or streamlined?
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Relevant to business item:	No business item is associated with this agenda item.
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Materials included in packet:	The memo includes: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. An outline of the meeting segment with guiding questions that were shared with panelists.2. A brief discussion of some of the issues concerning assessments that the Board may face during the next few years.3. Background information<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Descriptions of common assessments that are used in secondary to postsecondary transitions.<ol style="list-style-type: none">i. State assessmentsii. College admissions testsiii. College placement testsiv. Dual credit testsb. Descriptions and links to further information on:<ol style="list-style-type: none">i. Bridge to College coursesii. Dual credit programsiii. The Smarter Balanced Consortiumiv. College and university admissions
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Synopsis:	The Board will hear from a panel including representatives of the Smarter Balanced Consortium and representatives from state higher education.
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This is the third of a three-meeting arc on student transition. The first meeting focused on planning, the second on supports, and this third meeting will focus on assessments and postsecondary admission.



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SUPPORTING SEAMLESS TRANSITIONS TO POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION—A FOCUS ON ASSESSMENTS

Policy Considerations

At the July 2017 State Board of Education (SBE) meeting, the Board will hear from a panel of representatives of the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) and representatives of the higher education system. The topic of discussion is how to make the transition from secondary to postsecondary education more seamless for students, with a focus on the role of assessments in the transition.

No business item is associated with this discussion, but it is possible that the Board will identify topics that the Board will want to take action on such as developing a position statement to advocate for a particular practice. The Board may also use this discussion to inform strategic planning and identification of legislative priorities for 2018.

Possible outcomes of the work on student transitions include:

- Increasing connections between secondary and postsecondary practices (such as exploring ways the High School and Beyond Plan could connect with community college student guidance and Guided Pathways.)
- Identification, recognition and advocacy for particular good practices in student transitions that address the opportunity gap.
- Collaboration with higher education to explore furthering the use of the high school Smarter Balanced Assessment.

This memo provides a description of format of the discussion and provides background information on topics that will be discussed by the panel. Included in this memo are:

1. An outline of the meeting segment with guiding questions that were shared with panelists.
2. A brief discussion of some of the issues concerning assessments that the Board may face during the next few years.
3. Background information
 - a. Descriptions of common assessments that are used in secondary to postsecondary transitions.
 - i. State assessments
 - ii. College admissions tests
 - iii. College placement tests
 - iv. Dual credit tests
 - b. Descriptions and links to further information on:
 - i. Bridge to College courses
 - ii. Dual credit programs
 - iii. The Smarter Balanced Consortium
 - iv. College and university admissions

This agenda item is the third in three-meeting arc examining student transitions. The SBE meeting in March focused on student planning and the meeting in May focused on supports for successful secondary to postsecondary transitions.

Panel Discussion Outline with Guiding Questions

Supporting Seamless Transitions to Postsecondary Education—A Focus on Assessments

9:00-10:45, Thursday July 13

9:00-9:05 (5 minutes) Introduction, Linda Drake

9:05-9:25 (20 minutes) Tony Alpert, Executive Director, and Christopher Mathias, Deputy Director of Higher Education, Smarter Balanced Consortium

1. A very brief introduction to the consortium—background and governance. Also, how do member states give input or feedback on the assessments or work on further technological developments?
2. Information on how the high school Smarter Balanced assessment is being used, or might be used in the future, by higher education for placement or admissions, including any update on the RFP that can be shared.
3. Information on how other states are using the high school Smarter Balanced assessment—is there variation in how states are administering the high school assessment (such as which grade it is administered in), and why?
4. What technological improvements are being worked on or are planned to the assessment system?

9:25-9:40 (15 minutes) Dr. Bill Moore, Director of K12 Partnerships, State Board of Community and Technical Colleges

1. Update on Bridge to College courses—How many students have accessed the opportunity and what is the plan for increasing the capacity to offer the courses? Is there any information yet on how students who took Bridge for College courses have transitioned to postsecondary education? If more students start taking the SBA as tenth graders, how would that impact the Bridge to College courses? Is there any progress on Bridge to College courses being accepted by the NCAA? (SBE wrote a March 2016 [letter to the NCAA](#) encouraging acceptance.)
2. Update on the agreement by postsecondary institutions on the use of the SBA for placement decisions—is there any information on if it is being used and if it has been an effective means of placement? Are the logistical and process challenges being addressed such as how colleges receive SBA results for students who want to use their results for placement?

9:40-10:00 (20 minutes) Wendy Jo Peterson, Executive Director of Admissions and Recruitment, Washington State University, and Catherine Sleeth, Director of Admissions, Eastern Washington University

1. Briefly introduce yourself and your institution. What is the undergraduate enrollment and what does your incoming classes look like? What percentage of undergraduates are from Washington?
2. What is the role of assessments in the university admissions process? Which assessments are used and how are they used? How are state high school Smarter Balanced assessments part of the process, or could be part of the process?
3. Walk the Board through the admissions process at your university—which steps are students the least prepared for? What do you wish students knew about university admissions before they apply? What do you wish they knew about the transition to postsecondary education?

10:00-10:45 (45 minutes) Board questions and discussion

Key questions that might be informed by this discussion include:

- What are barriers to seamless secondary to postsecondary transitions?
- Can different parts of the transition, for example graduation requirements, application and admissions, college placement, become better integrated to become more seamless?
- Can the multiple assessments associated with student transitions be reduced or streamlined?

issues Concerning Assessments

This meeting segment on student transitions with a focus on assessment is a timely discussion on an important topic. As this memo is being written, the Legislature appears poised to pass a bill that will significantly change the high school assessment system concerning assessments required for graduation. This legislation is likely to include provisions for:

1. A locally-determined course and assessment option for students who do not meet the graduation standard on the state assessments. The locally determined assessment will be certified by OSPI. Bridge to College will be accepted as this option.
2. Delaying the use of the science test for graduation.
3. Moving the math and ELA tests to the tenth grade.
4. An appeals process for students who graduated during the transition to new assessments and who did not pass the assessment requirement, but met all other graduation requirements.
5. Elimination of Collections of Evidence.
6. Dual credit courses that earn college credit in math and English as approved alternatives.

The state's concept of the purpose of a high school diploma is inexorably linked to the high school assessment system. As expressed in statute,

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. (RCW 28A.230.090.)

Arguably, until the state's adoption of the Smarter Balanced assessments, the high school assessment system was out of alignment with this purpose. The former tenth grade High School Proficiency Exams (HSPE) and math end-of-course (EOC) exams, were an expression of an outmoded concept of high school graduation requirements—that graduation requirements were a minimum standard aligned to a lower level of achievement than what students need to be ready for all postsecondary pathways. By implementing the Smarter Balanced assessments, that were designed and developed tied to the concept of career and college readiness, the state is re-aligning the assessment system to match the state's concept of the purpose of a high school diploma.

The former tests were administered on or around the tenth grade. Meeting standard on those tests were aligned to the knowledge and skills most students had achieved by their tenth grade. Having students take their high school exit exams in the tenth grade had an advantage in that it allowed two years for students to retake the test or take an approved alternative.

Smarter Balanced assessment achievement levels are consortium-determined and are approximately aligned to the knowledge and skills most students have by the eleventh grade. Earning a Level 3 on the Smarter Balanced assessment is an indicator that the student will be career and college ready by graduation. A significant disadvantage of students taking the exam in the eleventh grade is that if they are not successful on the exam they have less time to remediate and to take advantage of exit exam alternatives.

The proposed legislation fixes the administration of the Smarter Balanced assessments in the tenth grade. This will give student more time to become career and college ready by graduation if they are not, and allow students more options for retakes and alternative. However, it will be significantly more difficult for tenth graders to meet the Level 3 standard, particularly in math, since many students may not yet have been exposed to the content that would allow them to earn a Level 3.

Under the proposed legislation, the Board will approve a score for graduation on the Smarter Balanced test taken in the tenth grade. The Board will also approve a score indicating that the student is on-track for career and college readiness by the time they graduate. Considerations of the Board will include:

- What should the process and basis be for establishing these scores?
- Is the system ready for the scores indicating career and college readiness and the score for graduation to be the same score?—If not, when and how will the Board revisit the score for graduation?

The Board will also have a role in setting scores on the Next Generation Science Standards assessment. The new assessment is being field testing this year and will have its first full administration in the spring of 2018.

Throughout the next academic year and at least through the summer of 2018, the Board will have a significant and important role in establishing scores on the new science assessment and the Smarter Balanced assessments administered in the tenth grade.

Background

Common Assessments Used in Secondary to Postsecondary Transitions

High school students take multiple tests for a variety of purposes involved in their transition to postsecondary education, including college admissions, as an option for earning college credit, and for placement into college-level courses. Some tests are used for multiple purposes. The Board is interested in further exploring the use of tests for multiple purposes, when appropriate, to reduce costs for students and reduce the number of tests students take.

State assessments

High school students take three state assessments in English Language Arts (ELA), math, and science. Beginning with the Class of 2019, the incoming juniors in 2017-2018, the state ELA and math tests are the Smarter Balanced assessments. Classes prior to 2019 may also have taken the previous state assessments, the end-of-course tests in math, and High School Proficiency Exams (HSPE) in reading and writing. The current state high school science assessment is a biology end-of-course assessment, that will change to a comprehensive science test within the next one to two years. If proposed legislation on assessment passes, the biology test will be eliminated as a requirement for graduation. The new comprehensive science test will be aligned to the Next Generation Science Standards.

Through the WA Core to College Project and Dr. Bill Moore (one of the panelists at the July meeting) an agreement was developed with Washington institutions of higher education to use the Smarter Balanced assessments for placement into introductory college-level courses. All thirty-four of Washington Association of Community and Technical Colleges (WACTC), the six public baccalaureate institutions, and nine [private independent colleges](#) in Washington each agreed to consider Smarter Balanced test scores when deciding whether or not students need to take pre-college (remedial) courses.

The Smarter Balanced math test assesses content typically taught in pre-algebra, algebra I, algebra II and geometry courses. Because the assessment does not extend to advanced level math content, the use of the Smarter Balanced math assessment for placement is limited to placement into introductory level

college math courses. Placement into more advanced courses depends on additional local institutional placement processes.

Moving the administration of the Smarter Balanced to tenth grade may have an impact on institutions of higher education accepting the assessment results for placement into college-level courses.

For more information on the agreement by Washington's postsecondary institutions and the use of Smarter Balanced assessments, see:

- WA agreement on the use of Smarter Balanced Tests for placement
https://c2cwa.wordpress.com/final-sbac-agreement_wa/
- FAQ on the use of Smarter Balanced Tests for placement <https://www.sbctc.edu/resources/documents/about/agency/initiatives-projects/sbac-final-faq-process-2016-06.pdf>
- Council of Presidents' agreement on the use of Smarter Balanced Tests
https://c2cwa.files.wordpress.com/2013/11/2014_agreement_smarter_balance_finalsigns_bi.pdf
- Washington Student Achievement Council information on the Smarter Balanced Assessment
<http://www.wsac.wa.gov/college-readiness>

College admission tests

Students planning on attending a baccalaureate institution usually take one or more undergraduate college admission tests. The most common of these tests are the SAT and the ACT (these are the names of the tests, and are no longer acronyms). These tests may be required by postsecondary baccalaureate institutions, and results of these tests may be used for admissions decisions. There is a \$50 to \$80 fee for taking the test.

Students generally take these tests in their eleventh grade or fall of their twelfth grade. There is also a practice SAT, the PSAT, that students take in their junior year.

SAT and ACT are approved objective alternatives for the state testing graduation requirements. The SBE has approved the scores needed to meet standard as alternatives. When taking the SAT or ACT as an alternative, a fee waiver has been available for students.

College placement tests

Placement tests are used by institutions of higher education to place students into the appropriate courses. Students generally take these tests after they decided on attending a particular college or university. There are nationally available placement tests, and some that were developed in Washington for use by state institutions. The most commonly used placement tests are ACCUPLACER and COMPASS, according to the State Board of Community and Technical College. WA-MAP is a math placement test developed by Washington colleges. Community and technical colleges generally charge students a fee for taking placement tests (approximately \$30).

Many colleges are starting to use multiple measures for placement, including high school transcripts and the Smarter Balanced test results.

Dual credit tests

Advanced placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) courses are accelerated courses taught in high school by teachers who have received specialized professional development. These courses allow students the opportunity to earn college credit (the section in this memo on dual credit programs provides more information). Associated with these courses are summative tests. To earn college or university credit through an AP or IB tests, students must take the test and do well. The acceptance of

credit is locally decided by the accepting institution. By statute, AP and IB tests in certain math and English subjects are accepted as alternatives to state graduation tests ([RCW 28A.655.061](#))

Descriptions and Links to Further Information

Bridge to College Courses

The Bridge to College courses for English language arts (ELA) and Mathematics are fourth-year (senior-level) courses designed for students scoring a Level 2 on the Smarter Balanced high school assessment. Students who earn a “B” or better in the Bridge Course are eligible to enter credit-bearing coursework in any of the State of Washington Community and Technical Colleges.

In 2016-2017, over 300 teachers in 149 high schools across Washington State taught the course to approximately 6,000 students. Teachers receive specialized professional development, developed through collaboration between OSPI and the State Board of Community and Technical Colleges, and supported by the state and the College Spark Foundation.

For more information, see:

The Bridge to College website

<http://bridgetocollegecourses.org/>

OSPI’s webpage on Bridge to College courses

<http://www.k12.wa.us/CurriculumInstruct/BridgetoCollege/>

Dual Credit Programs

Dual-credit programs allow high school students to earn both high school and college credits in the same course, at the same time. Students earn dual credit through either standardized examinations (AP, IB, University of Cambridge International Examinations) or through college course enrollment (Running Start, Tech Prep, College in the High School, Gateway to College, Career Link—South Seattle Community College Career Link Program, Technical College Direct Funded Enrollment Programs). Dual credit programs include:

Running Start: Running Start is a partnership between community and technical colleges and local high schools. The program allows high school juniors and seniors to attend the college tuition-free and have the credits count for both high school and college credit. Students pay for books, class-based fees and transportation.

Tech Prep: Tech Prep is based on agreements between colleges and school districts, and allows high school students to earn college credit in their high school career and technical education classes without leaving their high school campus. Tech Prep is tuition free, located at the high school, and credits apply only to [professional-technical certificates or degrees](#).

College in the High School: College in the High School programs provide college-level academic courses to tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grade students. Courses are taught at the high school, by qualified high school teachers, with college curriculum, college textbooks, and oversight by college faculty and staff. Students pay a fee for the course that is typically much less than college tuition and may also pay for textbooks.

Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate: Advanced Placement (AP), Cambridge, and International Baccalaureate (IB) programs enable students to take college-level courses, taught by high school teachers, at the high school. Upon completion of the course, students take a standardized exam. Scores from the exams are considered by colleges, and varying levels of credit are awarded. Students do not pay tuition, but do pay fees for the final standardized exams. Fee waivers are available for lower-income students.

For more information, see:

The Washington Student Achievement Council's webpage on college credit in high school
<http://www.wsac.wa.gov/college-credit-high-school>

OSPI's webpage on dual credit programs
<http://k12.wa.us/secondaryEducation/careercollegereadiness/dualcredit/default.aspx>

The Smarter Balanced Consortium

Smarter Balanced is a public agency currently supported by 15 states, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the [Bureau of Indian Education](#). Smarter Balanced assessment system is the result of state education agency staff, teachers, higher education faculty, and other educators working together with the ultimate goal of increasing the number of students who are well prepared for college and careers.

The Smarter Balanced tests are:

- Conducted online and provides some built-in accommodations that are customizable for student needs.
- Composed of test questions that measure essential skills such as critical thinking, writing, and problem-solving.
- Scored quickly, so that teachers, students and parents have timely results to make course-planning decisions.
- Reported online so that teachers, school administrators and state administrators can check testing progress.

The testing system includes interim assessments and a library of in-class tools and lesson plans that teachers may use to assist in instruction. The interim tests and the summative tests provide teachers with some diagnostic information to inform instruction.

Smarter Balanced is now funded by the states that use its system. It is governed by its membership, which sets its budget and policies, operates the system, and continues to support research and development to further improve assessment.

For more information, see the Smarter Balanced websites: <http://www.smarterbalanced.org/about/history/>

College and University Admissions

College admissions decisions are made by individual colleges, and vary depending on the type of institution and other factors. While high school graduation (or the equivalent) is required by some institutions, high school graduation requirements are not completely aligned with college admissions standards. Students interested in participating in Division I or Division II college athletics will also need to take high school classes that meet the [National College Athletics Association requirements](#).

Community and Technical Colleges: Washington offers broad access to students through its 34 community and technical colleges, whose open admissions policies are designed to eliminate barriers between students and postsecondary education. Most colleges require students to apply for admission (including, 1. personal information; 2. course of study; 3. residency information; 4. race and citizenship information; 5. testing information; and, 6. academic history) and then take a placement test, as well as sign up for a student advising session.

Baccalaureate Institutions (Four Year Colleges and Universities): Students who wish to attend a baccalaureate institution in Washington must apply for admission. Factors influencing admission include high school grade point averages, test scores, and extra-curricular activities. The Washington Student Achievement Council establishes the [full minimum admission standards policy](#).

CADRS: Required high school courses that meet the minimum admissions policy are known as the College Academic Distribution Requirements (CADRs). Washington Administrative Code (WAC 392-415-070) requires that each school district determine which of its high school courses meet CADR requirements and ensure students' standardized high school transcripts designate such courses as meeting the requirements. Washington's 24-credit graduation requirements are very similar, but not an exact match to the CADRs. For example, CADRs require a minimum of two years of world language in the same language, while the 24-credit graduation requirements allows one or both of the world language credits to be replaced with personalized pathway requirements.

The Transfer Pathway: Students take various paths to a certificate, associate degree, bachelor's degree, or advanced degree. A large percentage of those who enter a four-year institution as freshmen graduate from that institution. Others may enroll at one four-year institution and then transfer to another. And still others start at a community college and transfer to a baccalaureate institution. Visit the Washington Student Achievement Council's [Transfers](#) page for more information.

For more information, please see: <http://www.wsac.wa.gov/college-admissions>

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