

Title	Executive Update
Staff lead:	Gene Sharratt
Position	Executive Director
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Synopsis:	The Executive Update will provide members with a review of current agency work related to program administration and policy. The Executive Director will provide this synopsis at the beginning of each Council meeting.
Guiding questions:	Do the activities of the agency align with our statutory mission?
Possible council action:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Only <input type="checkbox"/> Approve/Adopt <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
Documents and attachments:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brief/Report <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PowerPoint <input type="checkbox"/> Third-party materials <input type="checkbox"/> Other

Executive Update

November 2014

Gene Sharratt, Executive Director



Two-Month Review



The Executive Director update will highlight the agency's efforts related to our statutory mission and program administration.

The two-month summary chart provides a synopsis of agency efforts since the last Council meeting.

Agency Update Two-Month Executive Summary

Project	Recent Work
Outreach and advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GEAR UP West Conference. College Application Campaign concludes, assisting students with college applications at over sixty sites statewide. College Goal Washington preparations underway (to assist students with FAFSA filing). Thus far, 66 schools are committed to hosting an event. Washington Educators' Conference (October) included multiple staff presentations and a CBS panel. Presentations to the PTA Legislative Assembly on postsecondary preparation, admissions, financial aid, and affordability.
	Near future: Initiation of 2015 College Goal Washington Campaign.
Policy and research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disability Task Force recommendations. Veterans Employee Resource Group. SBAC - November 6 meeting at Skagit Valley College – discussion on course placement; continued work on SBAC achievement level setting (national). ESSB 5491 – metrics of systems health-feedback to SBE. STEM Innovation Alliance, Microsoft summit. Continued work of the Council committees.
	Near future: Formal delivery of the 2014 Strategic Action Plan.
Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy and process improvements to workforce-related programs. Presentations to the Washington Financial Aid Administrators Conference. Presentations through SBCTC on residency and the WASFA application process and requirements. GET open enrollment and new website.
	Near Future: Formal delivery of the 2014 State Need Grant report.
Legislative work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued meetings with legislators to understand their priorities and communicate the importance of higher education. Strategic Action Plan advocacy. Continued outreach to/collaboration with the Governor's office, OFM analysts, and stakeholders.
	Near Future: Assembly days outreach and support.

Recent Highlights and Future Efforts



Category	Activity
Outreach and Advocacy	GEAR UP West conference; College Application Campaign concludes; College Goal Washington begins January 2015; PTA Legislative Assembly; Washington Educators' Conference.
Policy and Research	Veterans Employee Resource Group; SBAC; metrics of systems health; STEM update; Council Committee work; Disability Task Force Recommendations (staff presentation).
Programs	Washington Financial Aid Association Conference; GET open enrollment and new website.
Legislative Work	Legislative meetings; stakeholder collaboration; SAP advocacy.

Continue the
Conversation

Gene Sharratt, Ph.D.
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**Agency Update
Two-Month Executive Summary**

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WASHINGTON STUDENT
ACHIEVEMENT COUNCIL
EDUCATION › OPPORTUNITY › RESULTS

Council Meeting November 19

Task Force to Improve Access for Students with Disabilities

Background

SB 5180 – 2013 Legislative Session.

- Task force to improve access to postsecondary education for students with disabilities.
- Requires the Council to staff the task force, which must submit annual reports to the Legislature until Dec. 2015
- Composed of 29 members appointed by the Governor's Office and 9 different organizations.



Governor Jay Inslee signing SB 5180
May 14, 2013



2014 Themes and Report Recommendations

Expand disability-related training for secondary and postsecondary educators, administrators, and personnel

Improve communication between K-12 and postsecondary sectors

Enhance postsecondary transition planning during K-12

Improve targeted outreach to students with disabilities

Increase access and opportunity for all students

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Monthly Program Update

Due Dates:

Task	Due Date (Monthly)
Submit form to Communications	First Thursday
Pieces combined in newsletter service, edited, and forwarded to Executive Director	Second Wednesday
Executive Director finishes edits	Third Monday
In Touch sent (non-meeting months)	Third Thursday

The monthly program update is your opportunity to highlight the work of your programs and staff **specifically for Council members**. During Council meeting months, the Executive Director will present this information as part of his update. In other months, Communications will compile program updates into the *In Touch* newsletter.*

Cover Sheet:

Copy and paste the following into the body of an email to Communications. Keep word count under 200 and err on the side of brevity. Note: Please **highlight** any item that demonstrates the Council meeting its advocacy mission (to inform the public about the benefits of higher education and the need for increased financial support/civic commitment).

Monthly Program Update	
Author	Anne Messerly
Section	<input type="checkbox"/> Executive Director Update <input type="checkbox"/> Agency Operations (Deputy Director) <input type="checkbox"/> Roadmap (Policy) <input type="checkbox"/> Policy (Policy) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Academic Affairs (Policy) <input type="checkbox"/> Legislative (Legislative Director) <input type="checkbox"/> Research (Research Director) <input type="checkbox"/> SFA (SFA Director) <input type="checkbox"/> CAS (CAS Director) <input type="checkbox"/> GET (GET Director) <input type="checkbox"/> Good News (Any) <input type="checkbox"/> Articles of Note (Any)
Program Update(s): May include article text and/or bulleted program or data highlights.	<p>The disability task force was created in legislation in 2013 to improve access to postsecondary education for students with disabilities. The task force is staffed by the WSAC, however WSAC is not represented on the task force. This year, the task force is making recommendations around the following themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • expanding disability-related training for secondary and postsecondary educators, administrators, and personnel; • improving communication between K-12 and postsecondary sectors; • enhancing postsecondary transition planning during K-12; • improving targeted outreach to students with disabilities; and • other recommendations intended to increase access and opportunity for all students.

* Please note: Communications may determine that a particular item is more suited to the wider audience of our external newsletter, *Council Conversations*. We will let you know if this is the case, as such pieces will likely be condensed for, or cut from, *In Touch*.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Nov. 17, 2014

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Smarter Balanced States Approve Achievement Level Recommendations

Inclusive, collaborative process collected input from thousands of educators and community members using rigorous design; initial achievement levels will help teachers and parents monitor student progress and focus support in the classroom

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 (see attached).

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 attached charts 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.

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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.

Interpretation and Use of Scores and Achievement Levels

States in the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (Smarter Balanced) will report scores on its assessments in several ways, which can serve different purposes for their stakeholders. **Scale scores** are the basic units of reporting. These scores, which fall along a continuous vertical scale (from approximately 2000 to 3000) that increases across grade levels, can be used to illustrate students' current level of achievement and their growth over time in a relatively fine-grained fashion. When aggregated, these scores can also describe school- or district-level changes in performance on the tests and can measure gaps in achievement among different groups of students.

Smarter Balanced has also developed a set of initial, policy **achievement level descriptors** (ALDs) for English language arts/Literacy (ELA/Literacy) and mathematics that are aligned with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and the Smarter Balanced assessment claims. The purpose of these descriptors is to specify, in content terms, the knowledge and skills that students display at four levels of achievement (i.e., Level 1, Level 2, Level 3, and Level 4), which in some contexts may also be described qualitatively in terms such as “novice, developing, proficient, advanced” or others.¹

Defining these levels of achievement (“Achievement Levels”) is a reporting feature that is federally required under the No Child Left Behind Act, and one that has become familiar to many educators. However, characterizing a student’s achievement solely in terms of falling in one of four categories is an oversimplification. Achievement Levels should serve only as a starting point for discussion about the performance of students and of groups of students. That is, the Achievement Levels should not be interpreted as infallible predictors of students’ futures. They must continuously be validated, and should be used only in the context of the multiple sources of information that we have about students and schools. Achievement level descriptors do not equate directly to expectations for “on-grade” performance; rather, they represent differing levels of performance for students within a grade level. Additionally, the Achievement Levels do not preclude or replace other methods of evaluating assessment results, including measures of year-to-year growth that use the underlying scale scores.

Although the Achievement Level Descriptors are intended to aid interpretation of Achievement Levels, they will be less precise than scale scores for describing student gains over time or changes in achievement gaps among groups, since they do not reveal changes

¹ The Achievement Level Descriptors were developed based on the feedback of reviewers who engaged in a validation process based on examining the Common Core State Standards in each content area and the items on the examination. Additional research will be needed to validate the achievement level descriptors in relation to the actual success rates of students when they enter college and careers.

of student scores within the bands defined by the achievement levels. Furthermore, there is not a critical shift in student knowledge or understanding that occurs at a single cut score point. Thus, the achievement levels should be understood as representing approximations of levels at which students demonstrate mastery of a set of concepts and skills, and the scale scores just above and below an achievement level as within a general band of performance.

As Smarter Balanced states consider these Achievement Levels, they will continue to investigate and apply a variety of methods of analyzing and reporting the data that provide information to their students, parents and teachers, including but not limited to student and student subgroup averages, medians, and other descriptive statistics that utilize the underlying vertical scale.

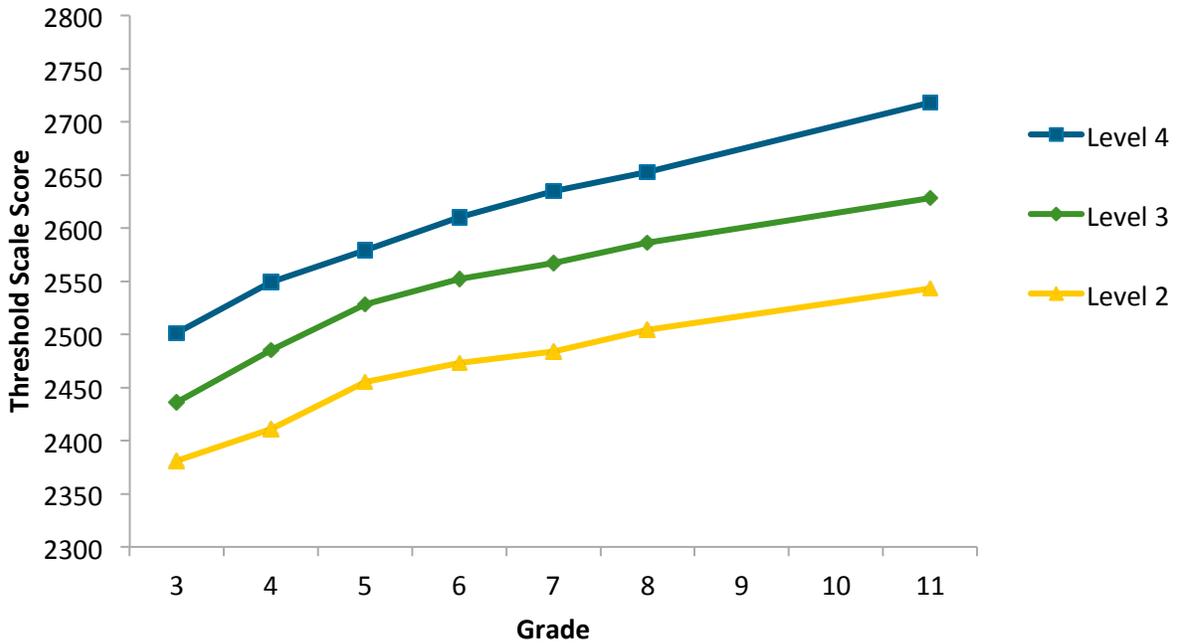
The Achievement Level Descriptors presented here are linked to an operational definition of **college content-readiness** to inform score interpretation for high schools and colleges. In particular, a score at or above “Level 3” in 11th grade is meant to suggest conditional evidence of readiness for entry-level, transferable, credit-bearing college courses. Since college readiness encompasses a wide array of knowledge, skills, and dispositions, only some of which can be measured by the Smarter Balanced assessments, “college readiness” in this context is defined as “content-readiness” in the core areas of ELA/Literacy and mathematics.

High schools may combine scores at 11th grade with additional data (courses completed, grades, portfolios, performance assessments, other test data) to determine appropriate courses of study and supports for students in the 12th grade. Similarly, as colleges interpret scores on Smarter Balanced assessments, they are encouraged to evaluate additional data (courses completed, grades, portfolios, performance assessments) to determine admissions, advisement, and placement in developmental or credit-bearing courses.

Smarter Balanced does not yet have a parallel operational definition and framework for **career readiness**.

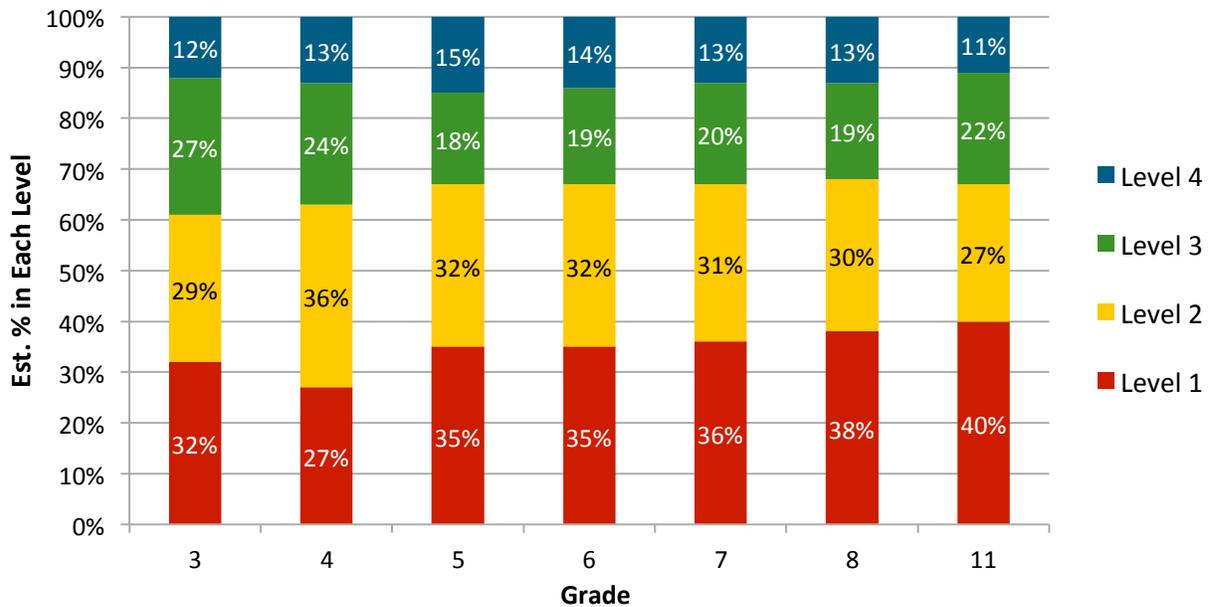
Adopted November 14, 2014

Mathematics: Threshold Scale Scores



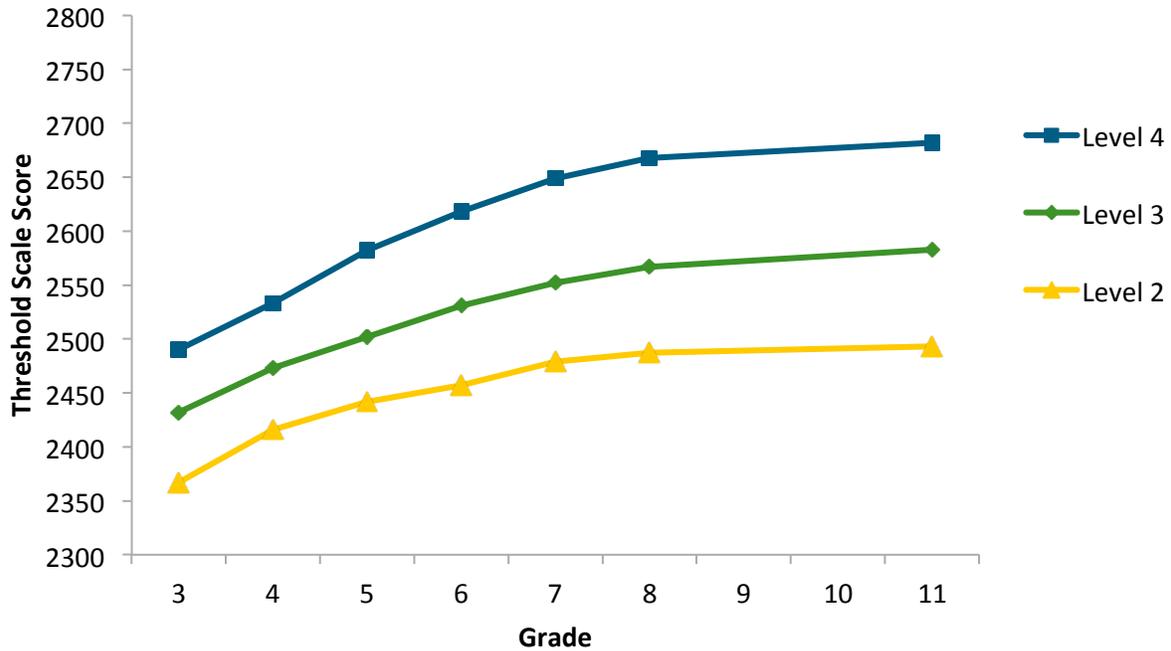
Adopted November 14, 2014

Mathematics: Estimated Percentage of Students Scoring at Each Achievement Level



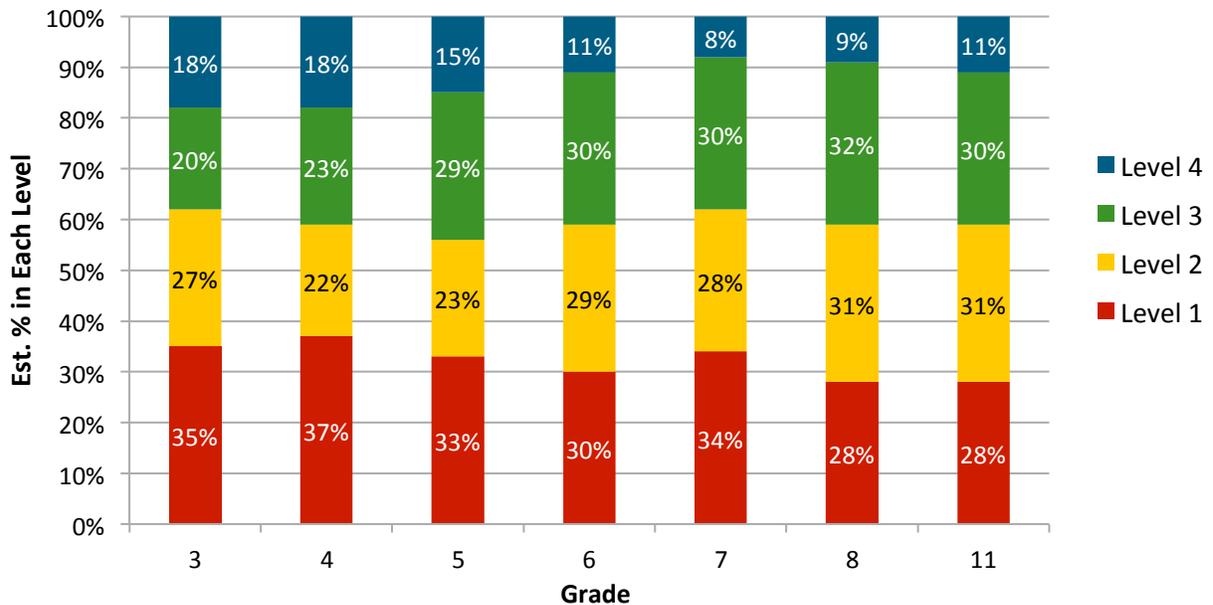
Estimates based on Spring 2014 Smarter Balanced field test in 21 states and USVI.

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.

Currently, only 89 percent of adults in Washington have a high school diploma or equivalent, and just less than 50 percent of these adults have a postsecondary credential. By 2023, Washington State is aiming for all adults in the state to have a high school diploma and at least 70 percent of adults to have a post-secondary credential.

Getting students on the pathway to success after high school is where the Common Core State Standards come in. They provide clear, consistent guidelines for what every student should know and be able to do in math and English language arts from kindergarten through 12th grade.

SBA SMARTER BALANCED ASSESSMENT

The Smarter Balanced assessment system, which is aligned to the new Common Core State Standards, provides a way to measure student progress on those standards throughout the year and make adjustments and interventions as necessary to help ensure students are on the pathway to success. The assessments are administered in grades 3 - 8 and 11.

HS +BP HIGH SCHOOL AND BEYOND PLAN

The High School & Beyond Plan brings parent/guardians, educators and students together to develop each student's personalized pathway toward college- and career-readiness. The plan outlines educational and career goals, and the courses, exams, and community or work-related experiences necessary to get them there. Review the plan with your family, teachers and guidance counselors throughout high school to make sure you're on track to reach your goals.

SBA Your **Smarter Balanced Assessment** scores will fall into one of four levels. You will receive a SBA score for math and a separate SBA score for English. Whether you score 1-2, or 3-4, there is a pathway to success.



YOU'VE GOT THIS!

You have many options after high school, but it's going to take hard work and extra help to get there.



Stay focused!
Meet with your counselors and make sure to focus on areas of improvement.



Ask for help!
Check in with your teachers, counselor and/or parents about extra help.



Challenge yourself!
Take more rigorous courses.

YOU CAN DO THIS!

You CAN go to college, but it's going to take focus, determination and extra help to get there.



Transition courses
For high school seniors who need additional help to prepare for entering and being successful in college, teams of teachers and college faculty are developing and piloting transition courses.



8TH GRADE
SBA



After receiving your SBA scores in both English and math, work with your parents/guardians, counselor and teachers to develop a **High School & Beyond Plan** to help set goals for your high school years.



GREAT WORK!
You're on the college- and career-ready path!



Maintain a challenging yet manageable schedule.



Keep your parent(s)/guardians in the loop.



Plan ahead!
Find out what rigorous classes you can take as well as those that offer college credit.



11TH GRADE
SBA

12TH GRADE

HS+BP Check-in



KEEP IT UP!
You're on target to be college- and career-ready by 12th grade.



Save money!
Earn college credit and reduce costs through Running Start, Advanced Placement, or other dual-credit options.

GRADUATE
Congrats!
You've graduated from high school with the skills to succeed in whatever path you choose!



Apprenticeship



College or University



Professional Technical Program



Military

