

RCW 28A.300.041 Statewide student assessment system—Redesign—Reports to the legislature. (1) The legislature finds that a statewide student assessment system should improve and inform classroom instruction, support accountability, and provide useful information to all levels of the educational system, including students, parents, teachers, schools, school districts, and the state. The legislature intends to redesign the current statewide system, in accordance with the recommendations of the Washington assessment of student learning legislative work group, to:

(a) Include multiple assessment formats, including both formative and summative, as necessary to provide information to help improve instruction and inform accountability;

(b) Enable collection of data that allows both statewide and nationwide comparisons of student learning and achievement; and

(c) Be balanced so that the information used to make significant decisions that affect school accountability or student educational progress includes many data points and does not rely on solely the results of a single assessment.

(2) The legislature further finds that one component of the assessment system should be instructionally supportive formative assessments. The key design elements or characteristics of an instructionally supportive assessment must:

(a) Be aligned to state standards in areas that are being assessed;

(b) Measure student growth and competency at multiple points throughout the year in a manner that allows instructors to monitor student progress and have the necessary trend data with which to improve instruction;

(c) Provide rapid feedback;

(d) Link student growth with instructional elements in order to gauge the effectiveness of educators and curricula;

(e) Provide tests that are appropriate to the skill level of the student;

(f) Support instruction for students of all abilities, including highly capable students and students with learning disabilities;

(g) Be culturally, linguistically, and cognitively relevant, appropriate, and understandable to each student taking the assessment;

(h) Inform parents and draw parents into greater participation of the student's study plan;

(i) Provide a way to analyze the assessment results relative to characteristics of the student such as, but not limited to, English language learners, gender, ethnicity, poverty, age, and disabilities;

(j) Strive to be computer-based and adaptive; and

(k) Engage students in their learning.

(3) The legislature further finds that a second component of the assessment system should be a state-administered summative achievement assessment that can be used as a check on the educational system in order to guide state expectations for the instruction of children and satisfy legislative demands for accountability. The key design elements or characteristics of the state administered achievement assessment must:

(a) Be aligned to state standards in areas that are being assessed;

(b) Maintain and increase academic rigor;

(c) Measure student learning growth over years; and

(d) Strengthen curriculum.

(4) The legislature further finds that a third component of the assessment system should include classroom-based assessments, which may be formative, summative, or both. Depending on their use, classroom-based assessments should have the same design elements and characteristics described in this section for formative and summative assessments.

(5) The legislature further finds that to sustain a strong and viable assessment system, preservice and ongoing training should be provided for teachers and administrators on the effective use of different types of assessments.

(6) The legislature further finds that as the statewide data system is developed, data should be collected for all state-required statewide assessments to be used for accountability and to monitor overall student achievement.

(7) The superintendent of public instruction, in consultation with the state board of education, shall begin design and development of an overall assessment system that meets the principles and characteristics described in this section. In designing formative and summative assessments, the superintendent shall solicit bids for the use of computerized adaptive testing methodologies.

(8) Beginning December 1, 2009, and annually thereafter, the superintendent and state board shall jointly report to the legislature regarding the assessment system, including a cost analysis of any changes and costs to expand availability and use of instructionally supportive formative assessments. [2009 c 310 § 1.]