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# SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

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January 8, 2015

( ) Action Required  
(X) Informational

## MEMORANDUM NO. 003-15M ASSESSMENT & STUDENT INFORMATION

**TO:** Educational Service District Superintendents  
Educational Service District Special Education Directors  
School District Superintendents  
School Building Principals  
School District Assessment Coordinators  
School District Special Education Directors

**FROM:** Randy I. Dorn, State Superintendent of Public Instruction

**RE:** 2014–15 Alternate Assessment Graduation Requirement

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Agency TTY: 360-664-3631

For the 2014–15 school year, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) introduced the Washington Access to Instruction and Measurement (WA-AIM) as the alternate assessment instrument aligned to the state's new K–12 learning standards in English language arts and math. (Current state science standards were also included in the WA-AIM design for administrative consistency). Looking at the existing expectations placed on the state's alternate assessment to serve at high school as both a measure of system accountability and an exit exam for the students with the most significant cognitive challenges, WA-AIM is designed to continue in this capacity. But as with all transitions, certain portions of student cohorts fall in to overlapping testing situations.

Since the administration of WA-AIM will require establishing new achievement levels (cut-scores), asking 12th graders to access the new assessment would not allow for availability of results before commencement ceremonies. Yet these current 12th grade students, who are served by an alternate assessment and who have yet to meet the graduation requirements, still need an opportunity this spring that will provide an avenue to receive their diplomas.

In the case of current 11th graders served by an alternate assessment, as the state has shifted its accountability testing to grade, these students will be asked to assess in English language arts (ELA) and math using the WA-AIM instrument, much like their general education cohort will do with the 11th grade ELA and math assessments. But for science, 11th grade students served by an alternate assessment were previously census tested in 10th grade per the state's accountability requirements. For this reason the state will not ask 11th grade students to assess science in spring 2015 using the WA-AIM instrument. Again, much like current 12th graders,

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there will be 11th grade students, who have yet to meet standard in science, that need an opportunity to fulfill the graduation requirement.

In the situation where 12th grade students need an alternate assessment instrument to fulfill graduation requirements, OSPI will establish procedures for a WAAS-Portfolio administration that can be used for all content areas applicable to a student's particular circumstance. This same WAAS-Portfolio administration will also be available to 11th grade students to fulfill a graduation requirement, but only for science (as stated previously, 11th graders are expected to assess ELA and math through WA-AIM).

OSPI is working through the details of the various logistic and administration processes needed to serve this unique administration. The procedural elements required at the school and district level will be released in January along with a schedule of the requisite activities to allow for a successful administration of this WAAS-Portfolio opportunity.

Recognizing that stand-alone assessments are challenging for the whole system, OSPI acknowledges the burdens that will be assumed by school and district administrators in implementing a successful administration. Though the agency expected this past fall's WAAS-Portfolio retake opportunity to be the last as we transitioned to WA-AIM, as graduation requirements are still a part of each student's high school matriculation, OSPI felt this plan was the fairest for all students while adhering to the state's mandated expectations.

If you should have any questions regarding this memorandum, or more specifically, the spring 2015 WAAS-Portfolio administration, you may direct them to Lesley Siegel at [lesley.siegel@k12.wa.us](mailto:lesley.siegel@k12.wa.us) or 360-725-4970 or Michael Middleton at [michael.middleton@k12.wa.us](mailto:michael.middleton@k12.wa.us) or 360-725-6434, though we expect many technical elements will be addressed with the planned January release of protocols and procedures. The agency TTY number is 360-664-3631.

## K-12 EDUCATION

Gil Mendoza, Ed.D.  
Deputy Superintendent

## ASSESSMENT & STUDENT INFORMATION

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