

## WASL Myths vs. Facts

Myth	Facts
Teachers can use WASL data to improve student achievement.	NO. Current WASL information cannot be used to diagnose student needs or inform instruction. The December 2006 Washington Institute of Public Policy (WSIPP) study reported that WASL strand results are inappropriate for diagnosing areas of student needs for improvement (Page 29).
READING: The reading WASL is a well constructed assessment that informs parents and teachers of a student's performance on Washington standards.	NO. The reading WASL is poorly calibrated. That means that the Reading WASL is a poor indicator of student performance because at one grade level it is too easy for the age of students and at another grade level it is too difficult for the age of students. This inconsistency in difficulty leads to inappropriate decisions regarding increasing resources to assist students and curricular changes.
READING: It is only fair to expect students to pass the reading WASL, they have had plenty of time.	NO. The Washington Institute of Public Policy reported that the reading curriculum in Washington State was not well aligned with the standards. Put simply students have <b>not had a sufficient opportunity to learn.</b>
READING The reading WASL is a fair assessment for students of color and students living in poverty.	The fact that the Reading WASL <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cannot provide diagnostic information</li> <li>Is poorly calibrated</li> <li>Lacks curricular alignment</li> </ul> Provides insight into why only 45% of those Hispanic, African American and Native American students who entered 9 <sup>th</sup> grade actually passed the 10 <sup>th</sup> grade (ACLU, 2007 report)
WRITING: The writing WASL is sufficiently reliable to make important student decisions.	NO. The Writing WASL, according to the OSPI Technical Report 2006, fell from .90 to a .77 level of reliability. This level is far below the .90 which is an acceptable level of test reliability. This means that the writing WASL cannot legitimately be used to determine, with any certainty, that a student does or does not know a particular writing concept or skill.
The WASL is the only assessment that can be used to measure performance on Washington State standards.	Assessment companies are able to align their assessments to the Washington standards. Many "off the shelf" tests will assess WA standards to the same degree as the WASL.
The WASL is the only rigorous assessment to determine if students have the skills and knowledge needed for today's work world or post secondary education.	Other states are using "second generation" tests which rigorously measure students abilities on national and international standards to enter career fields and post-secondary education .

1. Delay graduation requirement for reading, writing and math WASL.
2. Use diagnostic assessments from Kindergarten through High School which would serve to improve instruction and enable parents, teachers and students to know exactly what concepts and skills the student needs to learn.
3. Activate Goal 4 which involves students demonstrating preparation to enter the workforce.
4. Students should continue their education in the Community College system free of charge until they are prepared to pass one of the graduation assessments.

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