



Data dashboards for school directors

Using data for accountability
and student achievement

Washington State
School Directors' Association



This guide is a result of the leadership of the Washington State School Directors' Association (WSSDA) in recognizing the demands for all school board directors to have access to data relevant to the board's role in improving student learning in our 295 Washington state school districts.

The guide is the collaborative work of the WSSDA Student Achievement Task Force and the Center for Educational Effectiveness (CEE). CEE is the leading independent organization providing data analysis, research, and consulting services to support educational organizations, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, and schools and districts in Washington state in their improvement activities. The Center serves over 500 schools in over 80 districts across Washington.

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Data dashboards for school directors



Introduction

This guide is designed to inform school directors about the value of a data dashboard and to provide information on how districts can create a data dashboard for school directors.

A data dashboard is a tool for viewing and analyzing student achievement and performance data. Key data for monitoring student achievement and directing policy level decisions is presented in a series of charts and graphs or “gauges” much like a car’s dashboard displays.

In this guide we provide questions for each chart and graph that will help school directors understand the data and arrive at strategies for monitoring progress and improving district performance.

Editor’s notes: For this publication WSSDA has chosen to treat the word “data” as a singular noun because it represents a body of information. For example, common usage persuades us to say “the data is” instead of “the data are.”

The data displays in this document were provided by the Center for Educational Effectiveness.

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“By itself, data has no value. When data is put into a form that is easily understandable, it becomes information. When information is used to guide decisions that are in the best interest of students and families we serve, it becomes knowledge.”

~ Stan Beckelman,
former president of Boeing
Information Services and
former board member for
the Center for Educational
Effectiveness

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CHAPTER 1



In this time of heightened accountability and performance-based assessment, it is imperative that school directors understand how various forms and types of data can be used to help them guide policy and governance.

Background and purpose: Why a data dashboard for school directors?

Student achievement is the primary agenda for school boards. As policy-makers, school directors have a critical role ensuring that students learn what they need to know to be prepared for college, work and citizenship. As part of their preparation, students must demonstrate skills and knowledge on state and local measures of student learning. School boards are also responsible for schools and districts meeting federal achievement goals under the No Child Left Behind Act.

To fulfill these responsibilities boards must be data-driven, mission-focused and student-centered. Such boards have the greatest positive impact on district and school improvement and student achievement. This requires access to a wide range of data and the tools to continuously monitor student learning.

As districts collect increasing amounts of data intended to measure student progress and school improvement, the need arises to find ways to manage and integrate data into board decision-making. Boards require access to quality data. The better and more timely the data, the more strategic and proactive a board's actions.

Displaying data in meaningful forms for ease of analysis is critical. School directors want and need to view a variety of indicators measuring student learning, and have these indicators presented in ways that can guide them in carrying out their governance role.

While board members do not need to be experts in data analysis, they do need to know how to make use of data relevant to their role as school directors. Specifically, boards want to know:

- How do we define success? What data should we collect and have routinely presented to the board to measure success, identify trends and monitor progress?
- In what ways can student learning data at the district and school levels be presented so we can easily make sense of it?

DATA DASHBOARDS FOR SCHOOL DIRECTORS

Chapter 1:
Background
and purpose:
Why a data
dashboard
for school
directors?

- What are the best types of data comparisons that help boards determine the district’s challenges and strengths?
- Based on the data presented, what questions should be asked to get to the root cause of any problem or lack of improvement?
- Most importantly, how can we view the data to determine board options for addressing issues it reveals?

The challenge is to have a sufficient amount of accurate and meaningful data to analyze progress, but not so much data that it causes the board to get bogged down in minutiae and distracted from its priorities. This will require a consistent method of having data presented to you as a school board — in essence a data “dashboard” of key gauges for student achievement and district performance.

What would a data dashboard for school directors look like? How can you use the information in this guide to create and customize your board’s data dashboard?

Read on!

CHAPTER 2



“Data provide the power to...make good decisions, work intelligently, work effectively and efficiently, change things in better ways, know the impact of our hard work, help us prepare for the future, and know how to make our work benefit all children.”

- Victoria Bernhardt, 1998

The school board data dashboard

Could you picture yourself driving across country in a car with no dashboard? You would not know if your oil pressure, water temperature, or gas level were sufficient, nor would you know how fast you were going. Without a working dashboard you might be in trouble and not know until it's too late. When you think about it, a car's dashboard is really nothing more than a critical data management tool. At a glance you can tell the overall status of key indicators regarding the efficiency of your car.

Have you ever considered that your role as the director of a school district requires monitoring the performance of your district the way a driver monitors the gauges on the dashboard? Just like the car's dashboard with its many gauges that give the driver feedback, a data dashboard for school directors can be created to give specific feedback on student achievement and district progress. This allows the board to fulfill its role of improving student achievement and holding the district accountable.

Accessing data

Board members may ask where they can find the data or how they can collect data to use in creating a data dashboard. This may be particularly true for districts that lack staff dedicated to research and evaluation. One resource is the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) Web site.

School boards can use the OSPI Web site to access data for customizing their data dashboard. The OSPI Web site provides student achievement data from 1988-89 to the previous current school year (currently 2006-07). Go to www.k12.wa.us and click on the School Report Card. Select a district and the WASL tab. Always hit the “Go” button after each selection. Individual school WASL scores are available from a pull-down menu. In the right hand corner is a “Compare My School” tab.

Using this function WASL performance across three schools within a district or across districts can be compared. Once the schools are selected the comparison shows enrollment, free/reduced lunch percentage, ethnic-

ity percentages, dropout rates (for secondary schools), WASL reading, math, writing and science results, student-teacher ratios, and average teacher years of experience.

This is an excellent beginning point for boards to gather data and understand the current level of student performance. Using this data as a beginning the board can build a comprehensive road map for achievement.

Dashboard components

Data dashboards can be set up for a variety of users, including the school board, school principals and teachers, and the community. For example, Highline Public Schools has a District Data Dashboard with multiple set “destinations” such as “at least nine out of every 10 proficient in literacy and math” followed by various gauges measuring the indicator. They also have a district-wide Strategic Plan Dashboard with gauges measuring learning environments, staffing, achievement, resource allocation, funding balances and neighborhood and community engagement. This dashboard is especially useful for the school board. Some districts also have school level dashboards that are primarily used by principals and teachers in their continuous improvement work.

A data dashboard for school directors can be constructed to display a wide range of data, the most important being student achievement data. The key is to select district-wide indicators that reflect board priorities and are measured by data over time. Using a data dashboard with key data displayed in consistent formats at regular intervals gives boards the critical information needed to stay focused on what impacts student achievement.

Following are recommended components for a basic data dashboard for school directors made up of eight key indicators and at least one gauge for each indicator. Indicators are what we want to measure about a school or district’s performance. For example, because of the No Child Left Behind Act, all school districts have reading and math achievement indicators. Each indicator may have more than one gauge or set of numbers or statistics that give information about the indicator. For the reading achievement indicator, gauges most likely include “percent of fourth, seventh, and 10th grade students meeting WASL reading standards.” Other indicators to consider are what are referred to as “leading indicators,” those early measures of performance that lead to or help predict performance. For example, a board may want to include school readiness indicators as early measures that could help inform them about how students are likely to do on the fourth grade WASL reading assessment. Looking at these leading indicators gives direction about what changes may need to be made in programs or curriculum to affect reading perfor-

mance down the line. Most importantly, we recommend that boards work with their superintendents to determine the desired indicators for their data dashboards.

Recommended data dashboard components for school directors

Indicators

•Gauges

Reading achievement

- Percent of students meeting WASL reading standards fourth, seventh and 10th grades
- Percent of students in each WASL performance level fourth, seventh and 10th grades

Math achievement

- Percent of students meeting WASL math standards fourth, seventh and 10th grades
- Percent of students in each WASL performance level fourth, seventh and 10th grades

Writing achievement

- Percent of students at fourth, seventh and 10th grades meeting WASL writing standards

Achievement gap

- Percent of students meeting WASL reading standard by ethnicity at fourth, seventh and 10th grades
- Percent of students meeting WASL math standard by ethnicity at fourth, seventh and 10th grades

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) status

- Percent of students above and below state uniform bar by target group and grade

School attendance

- Unexcused absences by elementary, middle and high school levels

DATA DASHBOARDS FOR SCHOOL DIRECTORS

Chapter 2:
The school
board data
dashboard

High school graduation

- Percent of students dropping out
- Percent of students graduating on-time and with extended time

District enrollment and demographics

- Number of students enrolled — five year trend
- Percent of students enrolled by ethnic group
- Percent of students enrolled by special programs
- Percent of students enrolled by income groupings

Advanced data dashboards

School boards may also want to create “advanced” dashboards to monitor other key areas of student performance, or indicators of district operations or efficiencies at a more advanced data analysis level. In the sample data dashboard we used primarily WASL data in our gauges; however a district can also monitor student performance using other gauges with measures such as DIBELS, SAT scores, ACT scores or cohort data. In addition, other indicators such as student participation in extracurricular activities and college attendance rates may be important for certain communities to have included in their board’s dashboard.

Advanced dashboards may include non-academic indicators such as those listed below.

- Parent and community involvement (e.g., parent conference attendance rates; volunteer hours; parent satisfaction survey results)
- School and district climate
- Financial health of the district (e.g., reserve balances, levy passage rates)
- Staff retention
- Student discipline

Sample gauges for an advanced dashboard

- Percent of students at fifth, eighth and 10th grades meeting WASL science standards
- Cohort student academic achievement data
- Student discipline rates
- Second grade reading fluency and accuracy assessment results
- Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) test results obtained from classroom teachers at intervals throughout the academic year
- SAT and ACT scores

Chapter 2:
The school
board data
dashboard

CHAPTER 3

Model data dashboard: Visual representations



“Data can become a force for improvement by energizing those closest to their work. Most of all, data promote the flow of pertinent information and emerging expertise that is the lifeblood of optimism and improvement...If leadership provided the encouragement and opportunity for practitioners to begin gathering and examining collective student results, we would make real strides toward understanding our strengths and weaknesses.”

~ Mike Schmoker, author
“Results: The Key to
Continuous School
Improvement”

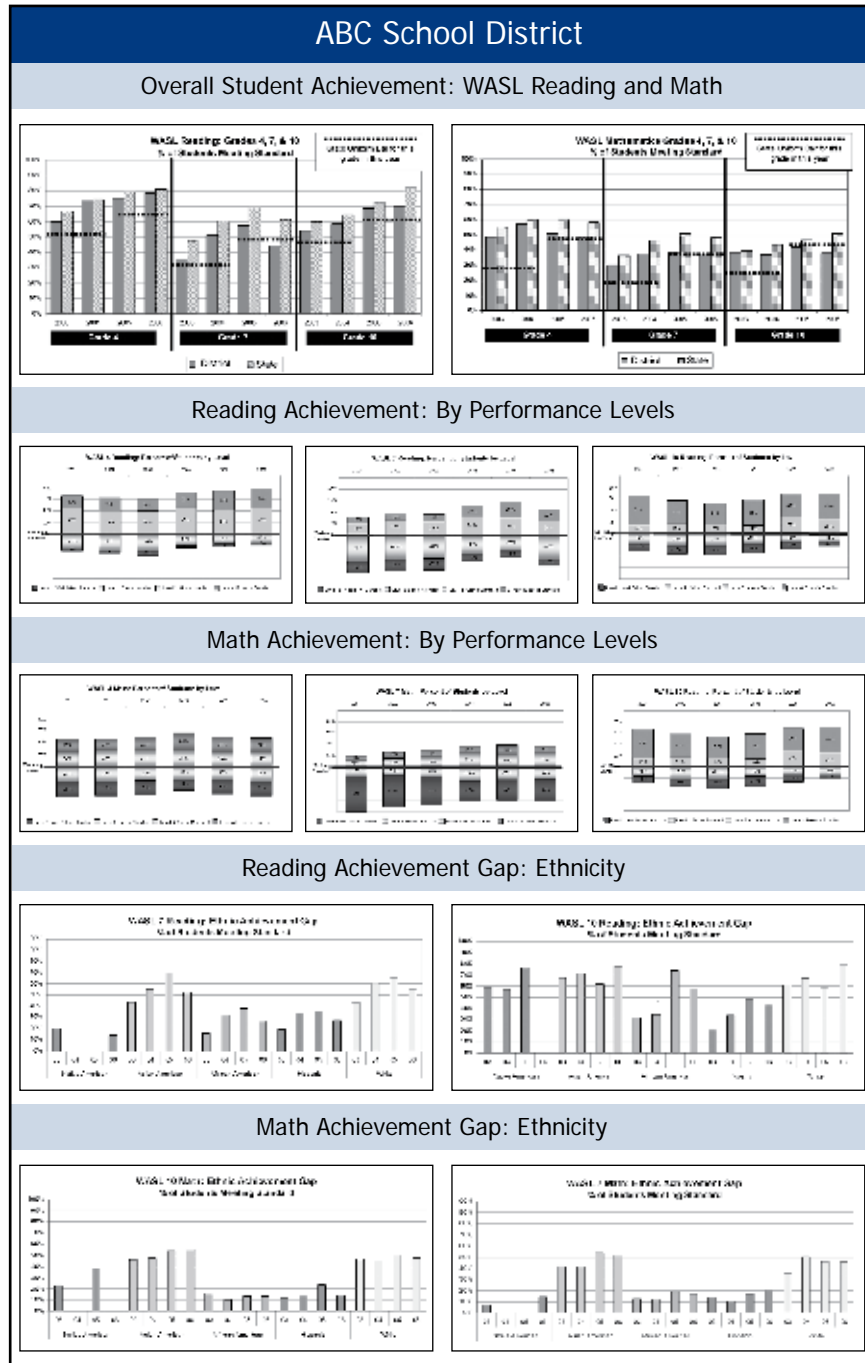
This chapter presents a graphical layout of a data dashboard that includes indicators we have identified for the basic dashboard. The first three dashboards presented use only graphs and charts. In some cases the board may also want to view data in tabular form, therefore the fourth dashboard presents the data in tables. Dashboards may also include a combination of data presented in tabular form and in graphs and charts.

The visual representations are examples of how a completed data dashboard for school directors might be presented.

DATA DASHBOARDS FOR SCHOOL DIRECTORS

Chapter 3:
Model data
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representations

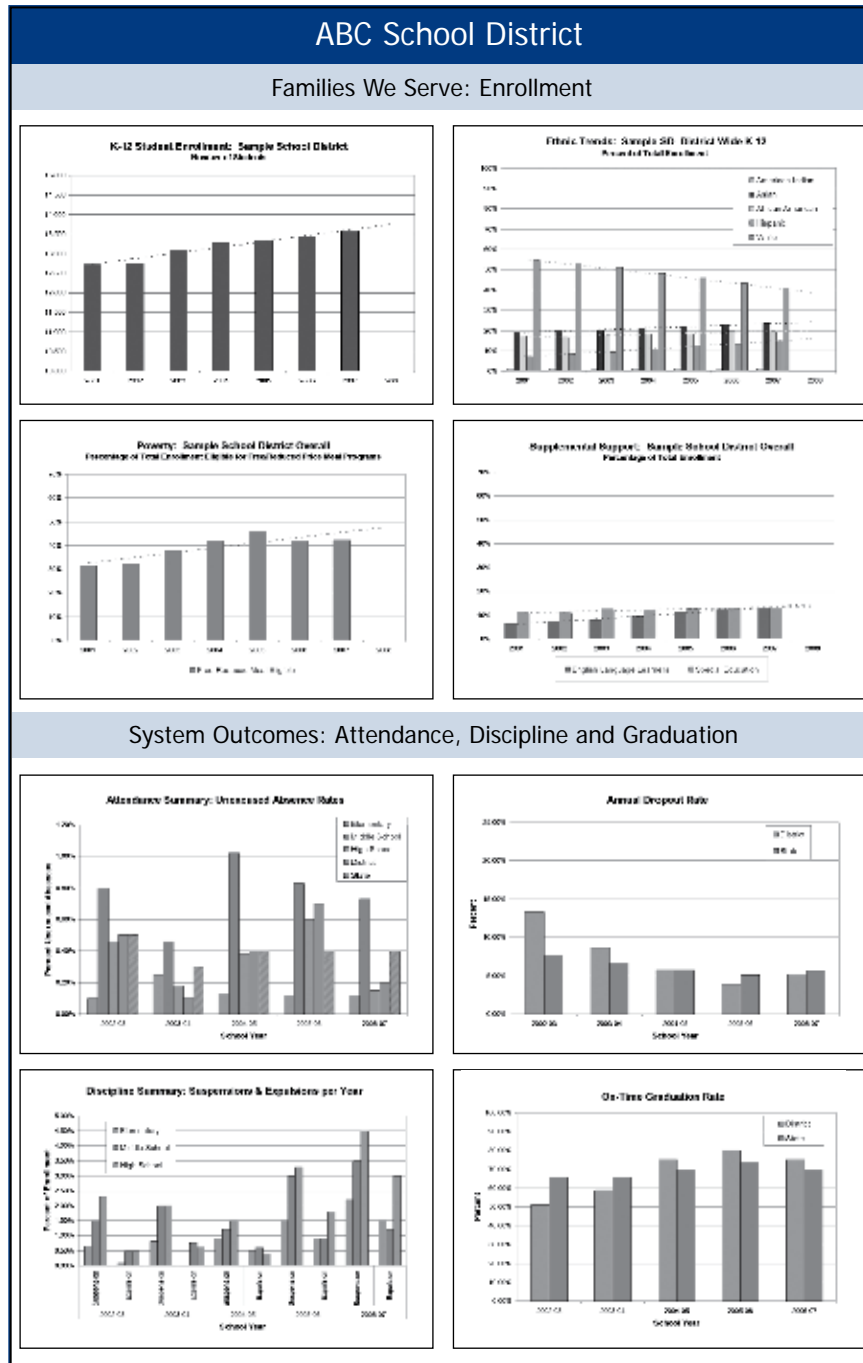
Graphs and charts ~ sample presentation*



* Please note: These presentations are offered solely as examples of the types of data and graphs that can be included in a dashboard. The graphics and text within individual chart elements are not intended to be readable.

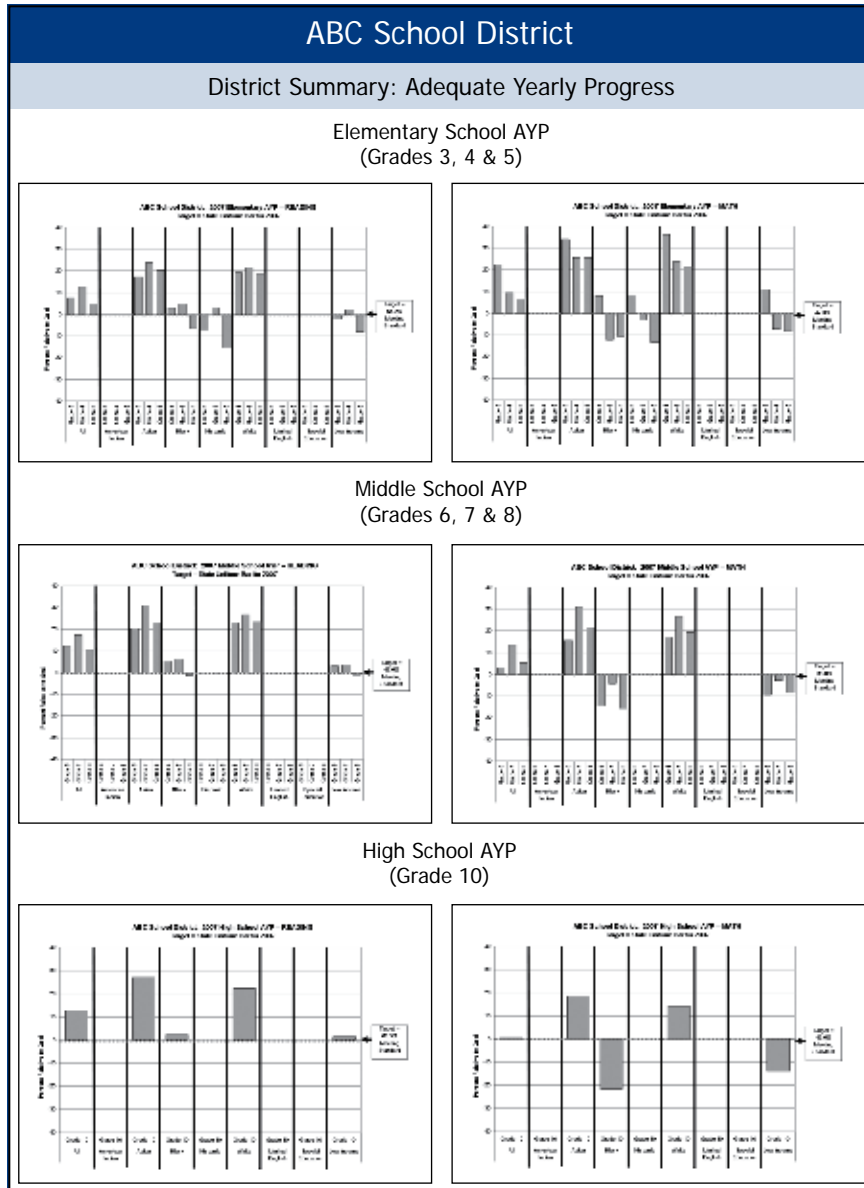
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DATA DASHBOARDS FOR SCHOOL DIRECTORS

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DATA DASHBOARDS FOR SCHOOL DIRECTORS


Tabular format ~ sample presentation

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ABC School District									
WASL Overall Results									
Reading									
		2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Elem-A		30.5%	32.2%	27.7%	69.4%	56.9%	63.6%	70.4%	
Elem-B		35.7%	47.6%	42.5%	58.1%	61.1%	59.9%	66.2%	
Elem-C		48.1%	34.6%	42.2%	43.5%	58.9%	69.8%	62.2%	
District ABCD		38.1%	38.1%	37.5%	57.0%	59.0%	64.4%	66.3%	
State		66.1%	65.6%	66.7%	74.4%	79.2%	81.1%	76.4%	
State Uniform Bar		52.2%	52.2%	52.2%	64.2%	64.2%	64.2%	76.1%	
Mathematics									
		2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Elem-A		9.9%	14.8%	19.7%	20.4%	23.6%	27.7%	37.0%	
Elem-B		52.1%	56.7%	60.8%	60.9%	45.8%	49.0%	51.2%	
Elem-C		24.6%	32.5%	41.3%	45.9%	46.8%	48.6%	58.6%	
District ABCD		29.4%	35.4%	43.1%	51.0%	46.4%	41.8%	43.1%	
State		43.4%	51.8%	55.2%	59.9%	60.6%	58.9%	57.9%	
State Uniform Bar		29.7%	29.7%	29.7%	47.3%	47.3%	47.3%	64.9%	
Achievement by Performance Levels									
Reading									
		2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Not Tested		6.1%	0.0%	0.0%	2.0%	1.4%	0.0%	0.0%	
Level 1		17.1%	12.6%	18.5%	8.2%	13.9%	4.5%	7.4%	
Level 2		46.3%	55.2%	53.8%	20.4%	27.8%	31.8%	22.2%	
Level 3		25.6%	26.4%	20.0%	57.1%	38.9%	42.4%	51.9%	
Level 4		4.9%	5.7%	7.7%	12.2%	18.1%	21.2%	18.5%	
Mathematics									
		2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Not Tested		3.7%	2.3%	0.0%	2.0%	2.8%	0.0%	0.0%	
Level 1		61.7%	55.7%	53.0%	36.7%	48.6%	55.4%	42.6%	
Level 2		24.7%	27.3%	27.3%	40.8%	25.0%	16.9%	20.4%	
Level 3		7.4%	10.2%	15.2%	18.4%	15.3%	21.5%	18.5%	
Level 4		2.5%	4.5%	4.5%	2.0%	8.3%	6.2%	18.5%	
Achievement Gap: Ethnicity									
Reading									
		2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Native American	Elem-A	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	
Asian American		23.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	40.0%	91.7%	100.0%	
African American		18.2%	29.2%	36.4%	64.3%	70.6%	58.3%	50.0%	
Hispanic		16.7%	10.0%	20.0%	64.3%	52.4%	45.0%	66.7%	
White		50.0%	47.1%	16.7%	70.6%	63.6%	75.0%	78.6%	
State Uniform Bar		52.2%	52.2%	52.2%	64.2%	64.2%	64.2%	76.1%	
Mathematics									
		2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Native American	Elem-A	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	
Asian American		17.6%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%	30.0%	41.7%	50.0%	
African American		0.0%	4.2%	22.7%	7.1%	29.4%	33.3%	0.0%	
Hispanic		18.2%	9.5%	20.0%	14.3%	14.3%	5.3%	40.7%	
White		10.7%	26.5%	16.7%	35.3%	27.3%	40.0%	42.9%	
State Uniform Bar		29.7%	29.7%	29.7%	47.3%	47.3%	47.3%	64.9%	
Achievement: Educational Program									
Reading									
		2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Special Needs	Elem-A	16.7%	26.3%	0.0%	0.0%	15.4%	0.0%	0.0%	
ESL/ELL/Bilingual		8.3%	7.7%	16.7%	0.0%	46.7%	28.6%	57.1%	
Free/Reduced Meal Eligible		0.0%	32.2%	27.7%	62.2%	58.3%	56.0%	68.8%	
Migrant		0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	
State Uniform Bar		52.2%	52.2%	52.2%	64.2%	64.2%	64.2%	76.1%	
Mathematics									
		2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Special Needs	Elem-A	5.6%	26.3%	0.0%	0.0%	7.7%	0.0%	0.0%	
ESL/ELL/Bilingual		16.7%	0.0%	11.1%	0.0%	13.3%	0.0%	38.1%	
Free/Reduced Meal Eligible		0.0%	16.2%	19.7%	16.2%	20.0%	33.0%	39.6%	
Migrant		0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	
State Uniform Bar		29.7%	29.7%	29.7%	47.3%	47.3%	47.3%	64.9%	

CHAPTER 4

How to use the data dashboard



“The bottom line in education reform is that all students, regardless of race or family income, can meet high academic standards when they have the right kind of opportunities, resources and support systems.”

- WSSDA: “Serving on Your Local School Board: A Guide to Effective Leadership”

The following section presents visual representations from a sample data dashboard for school directors. Included are seven indicators of student performance and examples of gauges for measuring each of these indicators. Not all gauges are presented. The purpose is to simply illustrate different ways gauges can display data for ease of analysis and school board discussion. The gauges present data in bar graphs and line graphs; however, some people may prefer that raw data be presented in tabular form and, in some cases, raw data along with charts or graphs. Examples of all of these are presented in this chapter.

In addition to examining each gauge, read the explanations of the data and the sample questions offered. These help interpret, filter the data and assist board members in maximizing the effective use of data.

To get started, here are general questions that apply to all indicators and gauges to guide school board discussion about data and keep the focus on student achievement.



General questions to guide data analysis

Educationally significant?

- Is the data presented appropriate for our use at the policy level?
- Does the data display use the right comparative groups to assist us in interpreting challenges and strengths?
- Is other educationally significant data available related to the problem, or that we need to collect?

Longitudinal and comprehensive?

- Does the data provide an adequate time frame to accurately gauge trends?

Chapter 4: How to use the data dashboard

- Do other factors impact outcomes? What else do we need to know?
- Is it possible to further disaggregate trend data to identify students' needs? For example, does an increase in reading reflect improvement for all students or only some groups?
- Is the data displayed an accurate representation of reality? Are there hidden or suppressed elements?

Context /community sensitive?

- Does the display of data take into account the specific features and characteristics of the students and families we serve?
- Are there ways we can disaggregate the data by adding demographic elements to better understand our students' performance?

What are we doing about the presenting problem?

- How is the district addressing the presenting problem? What additional resources or strategies do we need to put in place?
- Does the board have policies in place to address the problem or issue?
- Are there recurring systems' characteristics, either positive or negative, that impact student achievement?

Indicators and gauges in data dashboards

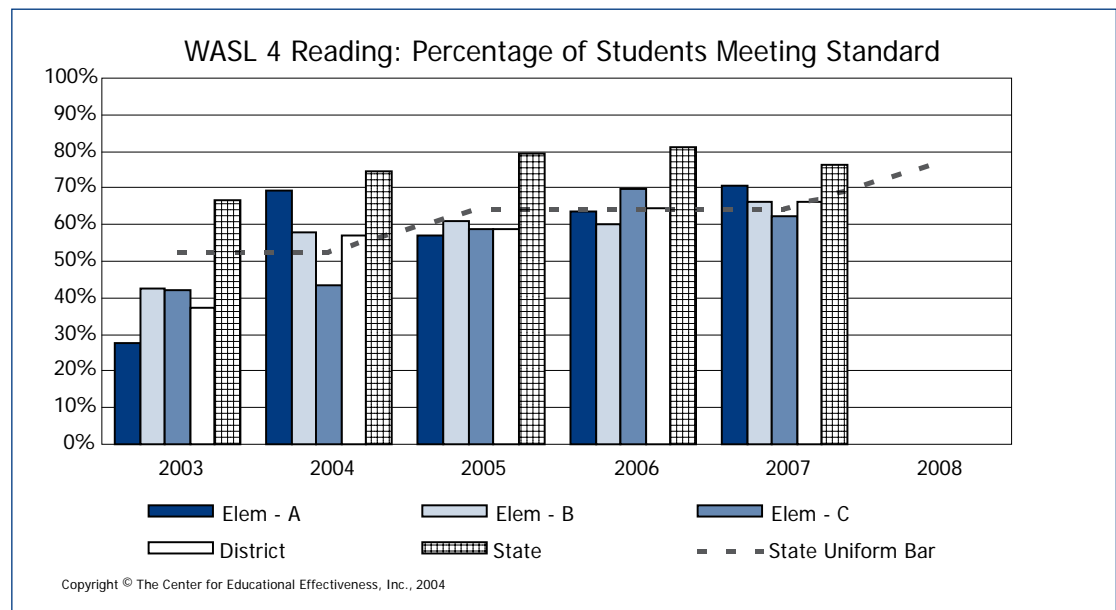
Indicator 1: Reading achievement

Sample gauge: Percent of fourth grade students meeting WASL reading standard

This chart shows the WASL reading results for a district's three elementary schools over five years, allowing the board to compare performance across schools, and with the district and state. The chart also shows where each school is relative to the state bar and meeting AYP, and how performance has changed over time.

The State Uniform Bar (the dashed line on the chart below) represents the threshold used to determine if a school and district have met the requirements of federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation.

The addition of the dashed line (the State Uniform Bar) overlays a line chart into the display. This type of chart can be useful to show outcome data (achievement in this case) and a threshold. In your district, this could be the State Uniform Bar and/or specific goals for each year.



Chapter 4:
How to use
the data
dashboard

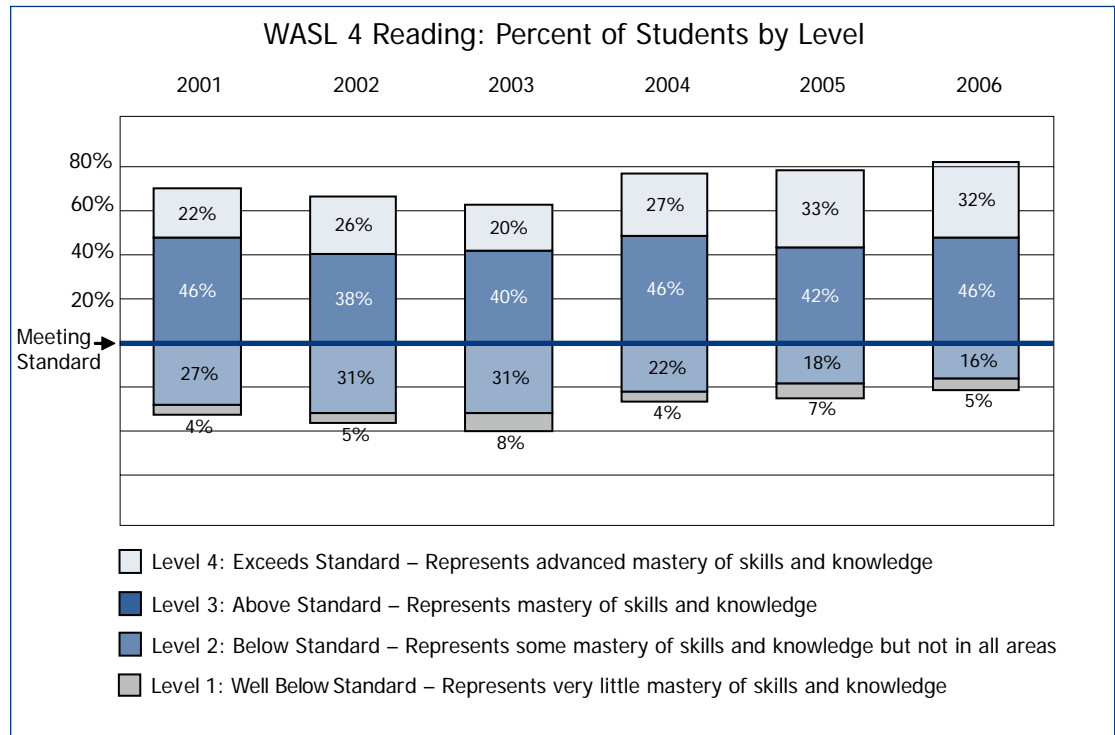


Questions to ask

- Overall performance: Are individual schools and the district above or below the state average in any year?
- Are some schools performing better than others compared to schools in/outside the district with similar demographics?
- Which schools are below and which schools are above the State Uniform Bar? Which schools are likely to be above or below in the next cycle?
- Regardless of level of performance, are some schools making greater improvement over time?
- Is the district improving each year?
- Gap: If we are below state levels, are we catching up or surpassing them?

Sample gauge: Percent of students in each WASL performance level

More specific than the first chart, this chart shows the percentage of fourth grade students district wide at each of the four WASL performance levels (see definitions below).



Note: Levels 3 and 4 represent students meeting or exceeding standard while Levels 1 and 2 represent students below standard.



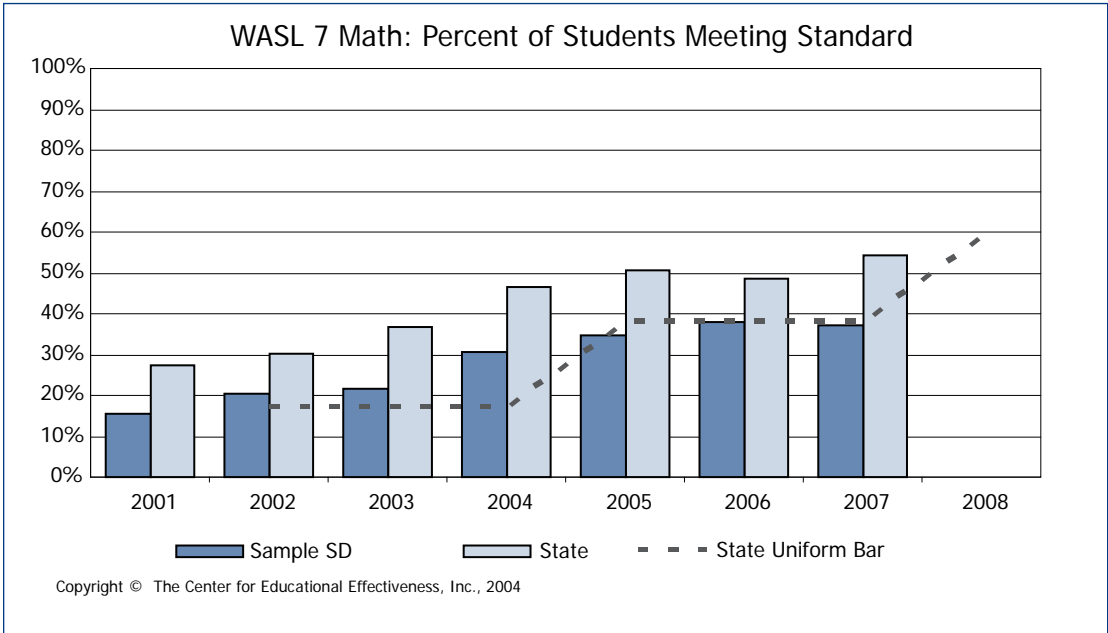
Questions to ask

- Is the percentage of students performing at Level 1 (our most struggling students) decreasing over time?
- Are we growing the percentage of students at Levels 3 and 4 over time?
- Who are the students in Levels 1 and 2? Are they from particular programs or schools, for example transitional, bilingual or special education programs, students in poverty, or students with low attendance?
- How far are we from the district goal and what will it take to meet our goal?

Indicator 2: Math achievement

Sample gauge: Percent of seventh grade students meeting WASL math standard

This chart shows district level performance for grade seven. The important point is the district improvement trend compared to the statewide trend. The degree of improvement in the past three years has tended to remain the same for this district.



Questions to ask

- Overall performance: Is the district continuing to improve?
- Is the rate of improvement at about the same level as the state?
- What degree of improvement must occur for the district to meet the State Uniform Bar standard in future years?
- Are individual schools and the district above or below the state average in any year?

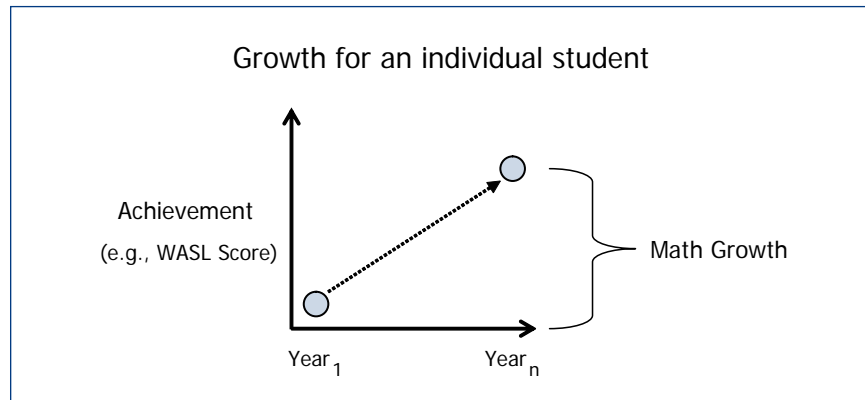
**Sample gauge for an advanced data dashboard:
Reading and math gains of students grades
seven through 10**

All of the indicators and gauges presented thus far are “status” indicators — that is they look at the status of a group at a given point in time (e.g., the percentage of seventh grade students meeting standard in math in the previous gauge). Remember that there are different students in seventh grade each year!

Now we are going to look at data over time. Growth modeling represents another form of achievement analysis. Unlike status models, growth models look at the growth of individual students as they progress through your school system. Also known as “cohort” data — where the group of students moving from seventh through 10th grade represents the cohort we want to measure.

Cohort data helps us answer the question, “Did a particular group of students or cohort make the expected rate of progress over time?”

As you can see in the figure below, growth models look at the same student over time. The growth reflects the impact of the district’s educational system over the period of year one to year n .

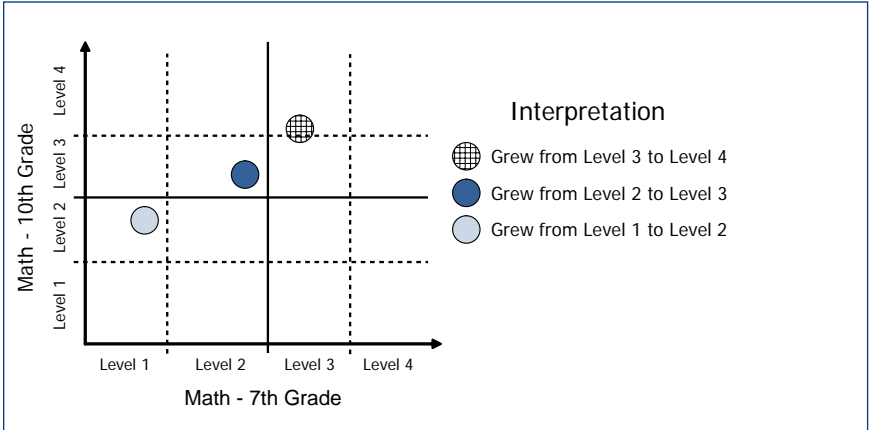


If we assume a standard time period — such as growth from grades seven through 10 (middle school to high school in most districts), then we can plot both seventh and 10th grade scores on the same graph.

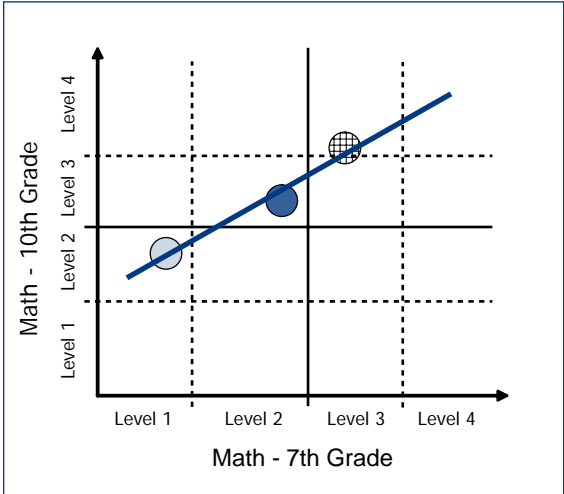
As you can see in the following figure, here are the growth results for three students showing grade seven and grade 10 results. The points are plotted based on the students’ WASL scale scores. Although we cannot directly compare WASL scale scores across grade levels, we can compare WASL level to level performance across grade levels.

DATA DASHBOARDS FOR SCHOOL DIRECTORS

Chapter 4: How to use the data dashboard



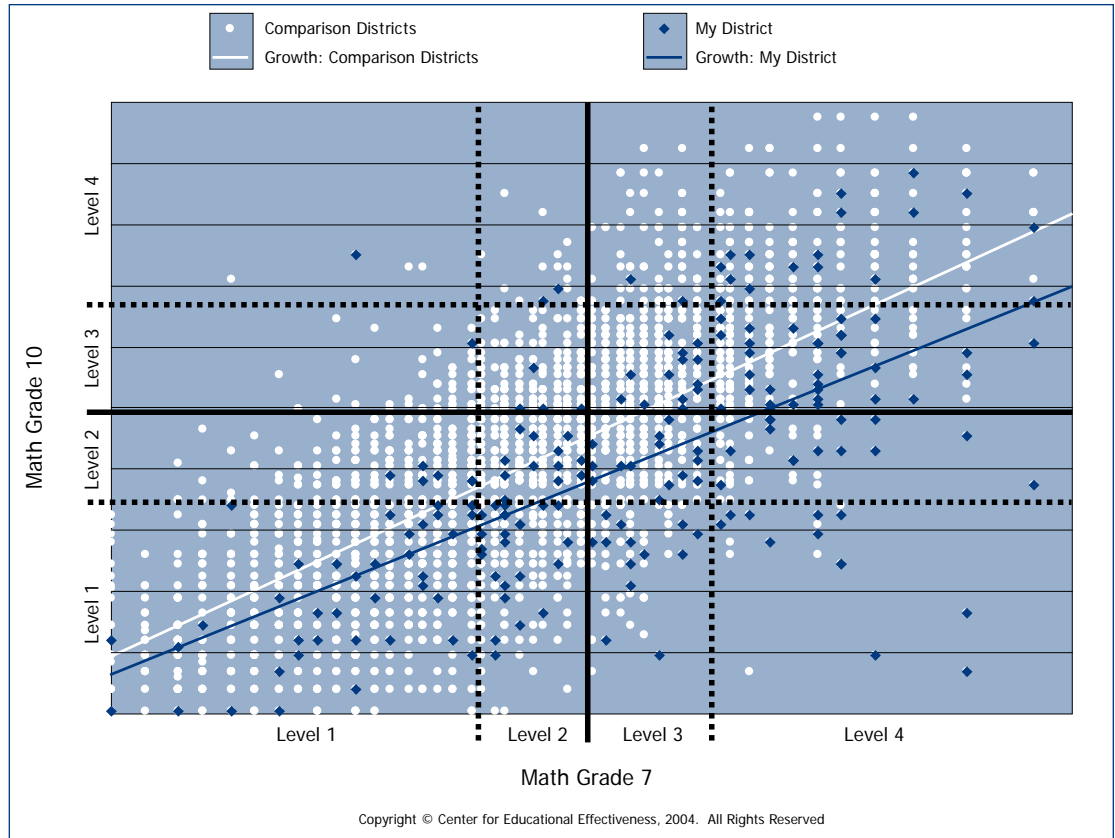
The growth or trend line can then be calculated and added to this graph. This represents the “line of best fit” through the points (linear regression line).



The following scatter chart plots students’ math scores in grades seven and 10. Note that the dark blue diamonds represent My District and the white dots represent comparison districts. The lines represent the rate of growth in math for these students from grade seven through grade 10.

Interpretation of this would be: My District shows less growth than comparison districts.

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Below is a tabular representation of the scatter plot data.

Mathematics Growth: Count of Students by Level					
My District		Same Students at 10th Grade			
Math Level at 7th Grade	Number of Students	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Level 1	45	40	4	0	1
Level 2	42	29	13	5	2
Level 3	49	14	13	12	3
Level 4	74	9	14	24	27
	Number of students	92	44	41	33



Questions to ask

- Is the slope of the trend line for My District similar or steeper than the Comparison District?
- In this example, students in My District are showing less growth than students in the Comparison District. What other data might the board consider to understand why this is happening?
- Based on the numerical data, are students making progress by moving up a level on the WASL from grade seven to grade 10?

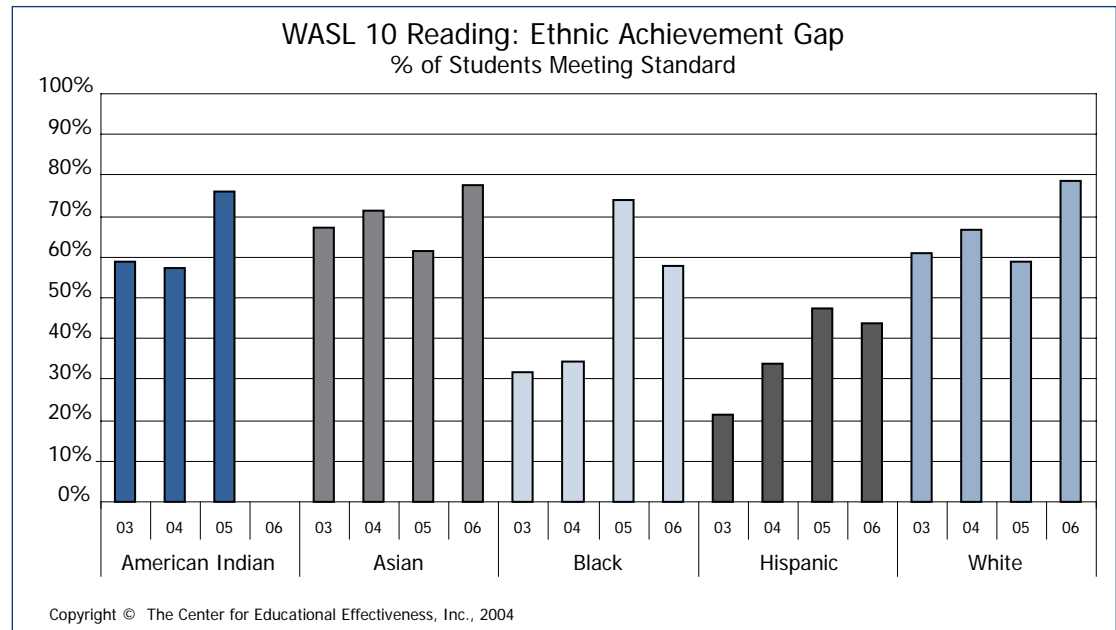
Indicator 3: Achievement gap

In viewing student achievement data, the term “achievement gap” most commonly refers to differences between groups of students. In this analysis two types of achievement gaps are presented:

- **Ethnic achievement gap:** The ethnic achievement gap typically refers to the comparison of the results of the five NCLB ethnicities. The gap is the achievement difference between the ethnicities.
- **Academic program:** A comparison of the results of students served in special instructional programs — such as special education or English Language Learner (ELL) programs — can also be presented to evaluate whether any gap in achievement exists.

Sample gauge: Percent of 10th grade students meeting reading WASL standard by ethnicity

This chart presents reading achievement data for each ethnic group over a four-year span. The difference among groups is significant as is the rate of improvement over the four years.



Note: In order to protect student anonymity and confidentiality — if the size of the group is less than 10 students the data is not displayed (see 2006 American Indian in the above chart).

The chart below compares the performance of Hispanic students to White students across the four years. As these numbers indicate and as the bar graph shows, the gap between these two groups has not been closed and remains about 30 percentage points.

Percent of Annual Achievement Gap between Hispanic and White Students				
	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Annual percent	39%	34%	12%	33%

Questions to ask

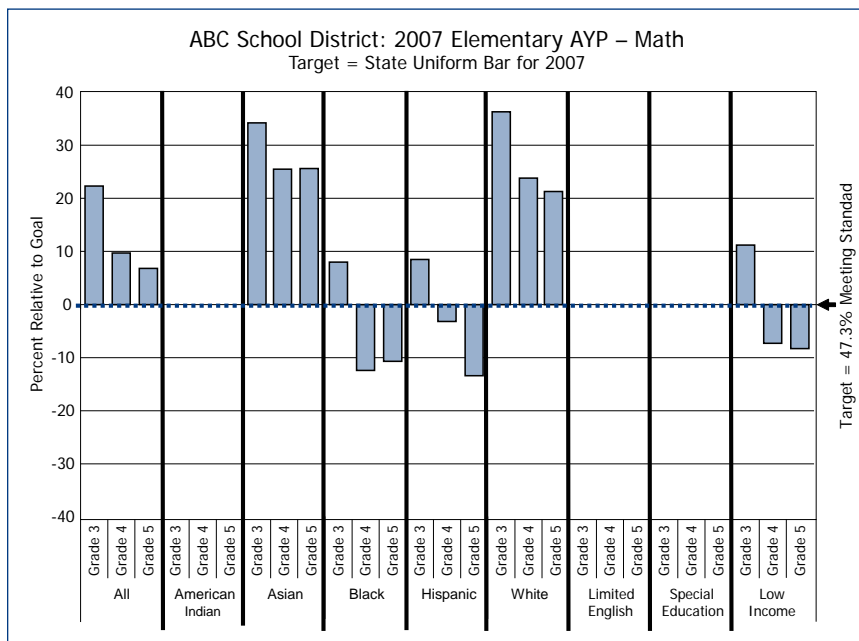
- Are students in some racial groups making greater progress in closing the gap?
- To what degree has the racial disparity remained unchanged?
- What related data should we consider in forming a strategy to close the gap? For example, for students who are achieving is extra assistance making a difference?

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Indicator 4: Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) status

Sample gauge: Percent of students above and below state uniform bar by target group and grade

AYP — or Adequate Yearly Progress — is a part of the No Child Left Behind legislation. For reading and math each state defined a target, which in our state is called the State Uniform Bar. The following chart depicts the elementary grades (three, four, and five) and whether each subgroup is above or below the target for 2007. The year 2007 is the first year to include grades three, five, six, and eight in AYP calculations so this graph only shows one year. Grades six and eight are combined with grade seven at the middle school level in the calculation of AYP.



Questions to ask

- What groups show performance below the target?
- When we look at elementary, middle, and high school all together do we see similarities across grades? (i.e., is there one group that is below target throughout our school district?)
- What are the gaps between groups?

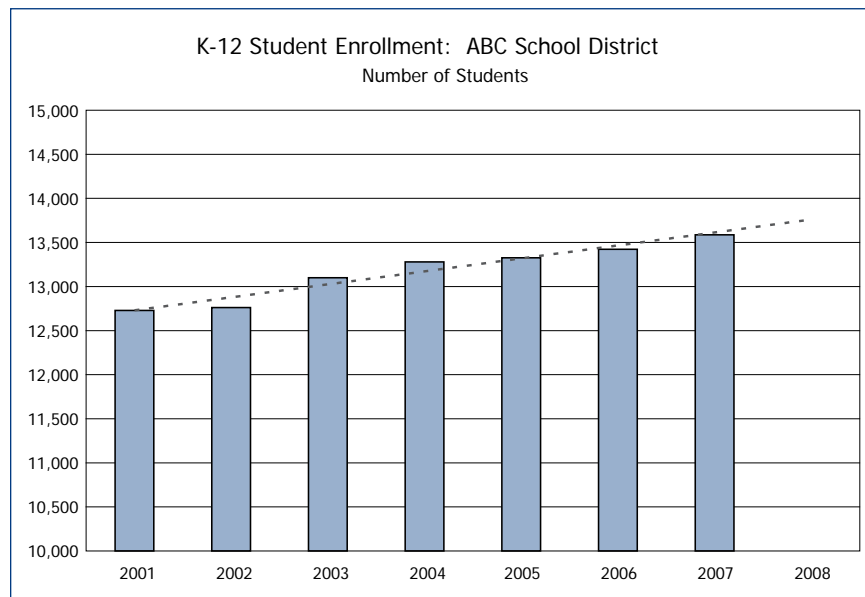
Indicator 5: District enrollment and demographics

Demographics refer to quantifiable ways to look at the community and students served in this district. In demographic charts, data indicates who the district serves and how they are served. This includes:

- **Enrollment:** Overall district-wide enrollment and enrollment specific to feeder patterns.
- **Ethnic enrollment trends:** District-wide and service-area specific trends illustrating changes in the ethnic characteristics of the students served.
- **Poverty:** District-wide and service-area specific trends illustrating changes in the family income levels of the students served.
- **Supplemental instructional services:** District-wide and service-area specific trends illustrating the percentage of students receiving services in special education or English Language Learner programs; the number of students participating in free or reduced price meal programs is often used to illustrate poverty within the community.

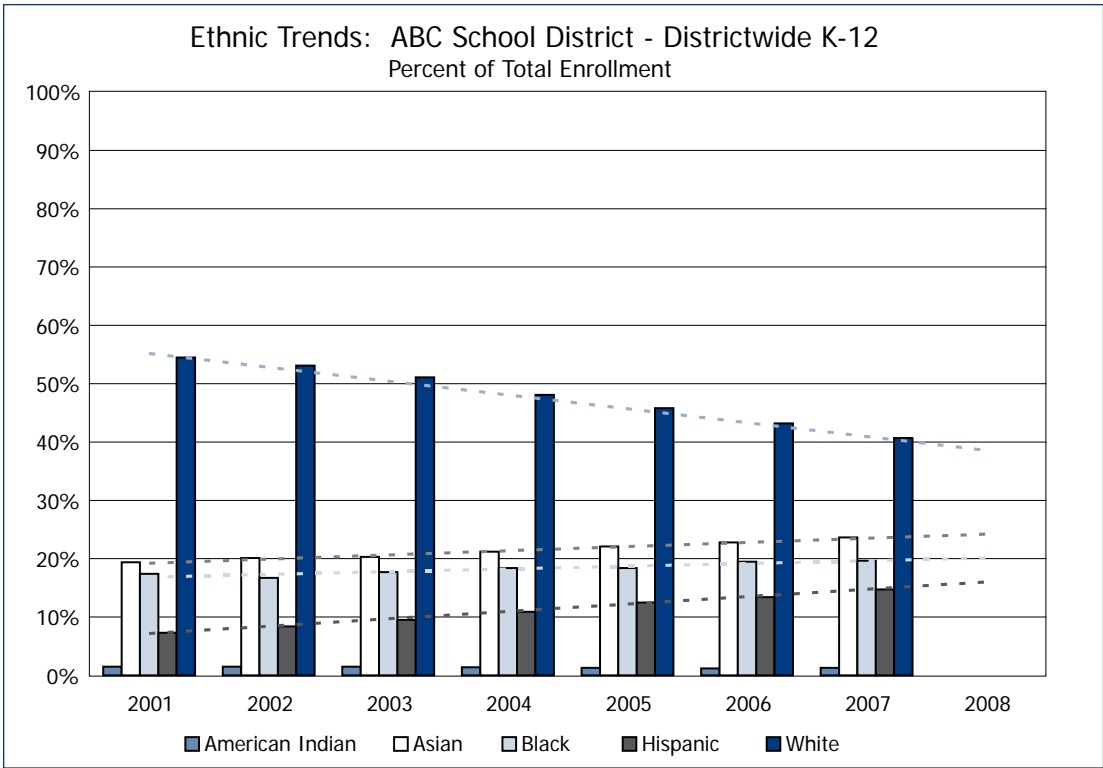
Sample gauge: Enrollment trend

The next chart is a seven-year trend of district enrollment. Based on the trend, the district's enrollment appears to have not yet leveled off. Growth rate of approximately 300 per year can be expected.



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Sample gauge: Enrollment trend by ethnic group



Questions to ask

- Change over time: Is there growth? Is there decline? What appears to be the trend?
- What is the fastest growing segment of the population?
- Do we know how the growth is occurring across the district? Is one feeder pattern or school experiencing more growth than others?
- Based on this data, what growth pattern can be predicted?

Indicator 6: Attendance

Sample gauge: Unexcused absences

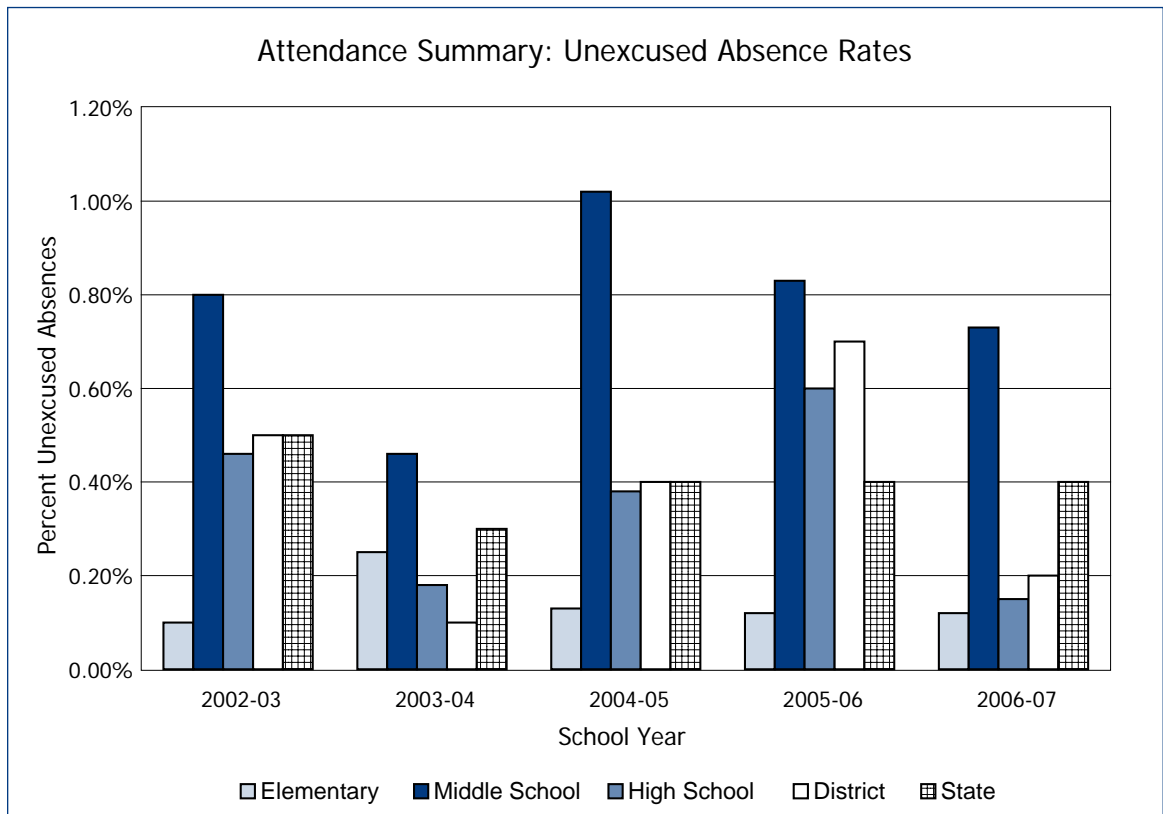
OSPI defines the unexcused absence rate as the percentage of student enrollment days in the school year that students had an unexcused absence. Defining an unexcused absence is a local decision, so the definition

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may differ among schools and districts. In general, a student who has an unexcused absence has not attended a majority of hours or periods in a school day, or has not complied with a more restrictive district policy, and has not met the conditions for an excused absence.

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This chart provides a look at the district's absentee rates by grade level as well as over a five year period. In addition, the chart compares the district absenteeism rate to the state's average unexcused absence rate. While the state's rate has held steady for three years, the district's rate has fluctuated significantly.



Questions to ask

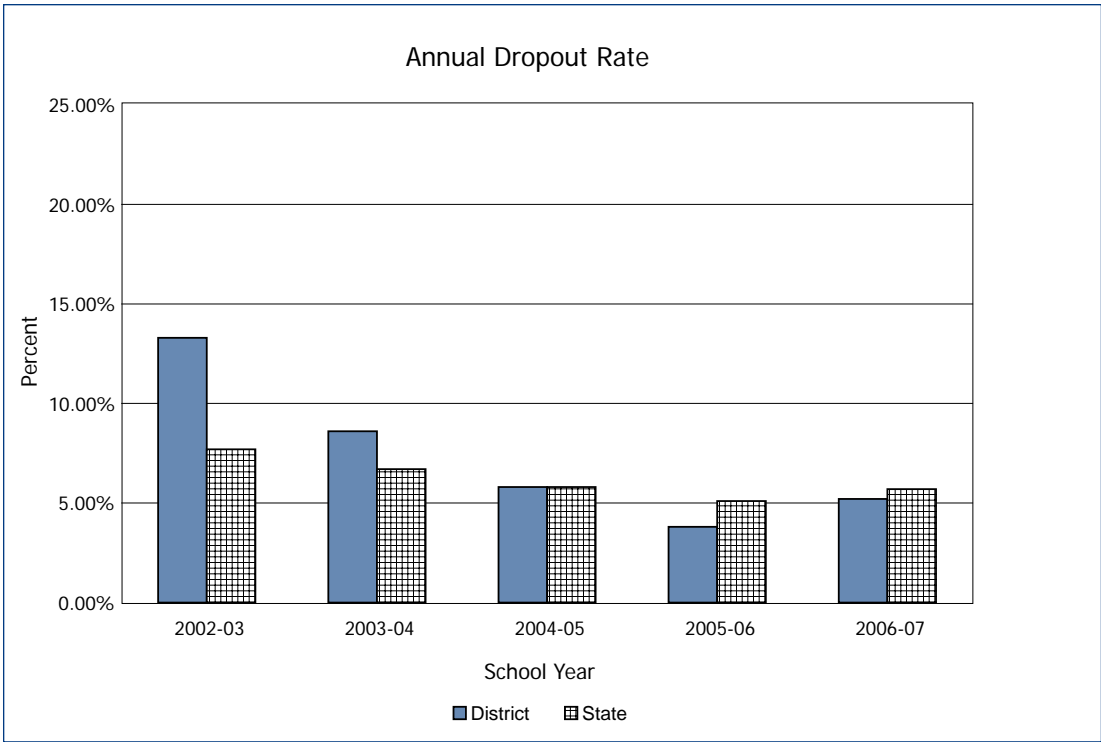
- What trends are evident?
- What might account for the differences among elementary, middle and high school?
- What might account for the high absentee rates at the middle school?

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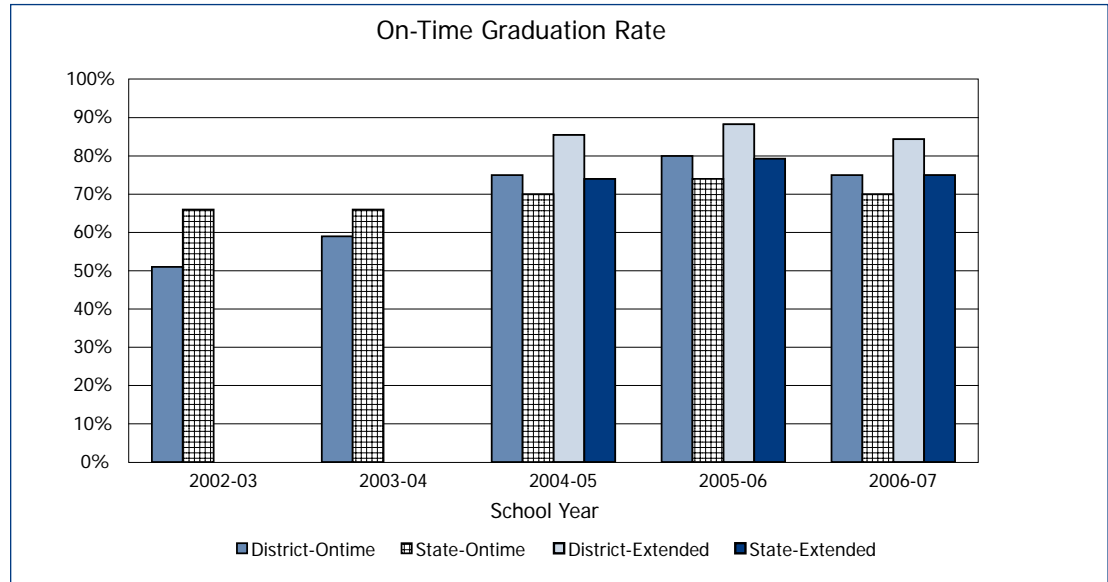
Indicator 7: Graduation rates

Sample gauge: Annual dropout rate

According to OSPI's Report Card Site Glossary, the annual dropout rate is the total number of students that drop out of school from grades nine through 12, divided by the total number of students, less the number of students that transferred out of the district/school. The extended graduation rate includes students who graduated after their expected graduation year. Late graduates are added to the total number of on-time graduates in the year they graduate when calculating the extended graduation rate.



Sample gauge: Percent of students graduating on-time and with extended time



Questions to ask


- Is our district’s definition of a graduate consistent with the state’s definition?
- How can we analyze graduation rates for students in our ethnic groups?
- How do rates for on-time graduation and extended graduation compare?
- Is there a relationship between graduation rates and seventh or 10th grade WASL passing rates?

Additional thoughts...

Data dashboards are meant to be customized to meet the needs of users and should include data that aligns with board priorities and strategic plans. In addition, dashboards are meant to increase accessibility of data and make district progress more transparent to stakeholders. Boards should set a schedule for reviewing their dashboard on a regular basis.

CHAPTER 5

Sample data dashboard policy



The Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools

- Clear and shared focus
- High standards and expectations for all students
- Effective leadership
- High levels of collaboration and communication
- High quality curriculum, instruction, and assessment aligned with standards
- Frequent monitoring of teaching and learning
- High level of parent and community involvement
- Focused professional development
- Supporting learning environment

For more information, see www.k12.wa.us/research/pubdocs/NineCharacteristics.pdf

To facilitate the board's implementation and monitoring process, the board should adopt a governing policy. At a minimum, the policy should outline the key indicators and gauges the board will use to evaluate student achievement, the primary goals of the dashboard, and a requirement that the dashboard be reviewed and updated periodically.

How often the board reviews data for student progress should be determined on the local level. For some districts, a review of the dashboard may occur at every meeting. For others, the review may occur less frequently, such as bimonthly, quarterly or annually. A sample policy is included.

Data Dashboard Policy

In order to help the district attain and maintain excellence in all key areas, the _____ (insert name of district) Board of Directors establishes a “data dashboard” that is aligned with the board’s management oversight responsibilities and the district/school accountability goals. The data dashboard will consist of a limited number of indicators selected by the board of directors (analogous to the dials on a car dashboard) for which data are gathered and analyzed by district staff, under the direction of the superintendent, and presented on a regular basis to the board of directors and the public.

Although the board of directors tracks district performance in many ways throughout the year, the data dashboard will enable the board and the public to monitor key indicators of system performance, including but not limited to student achievement, finance, operations, and parent, student, and teacher satisfaction. The indicators will enable the board and the public to see, at a glance, whether current improvement efforts are on track and to respond appropriately when problems arise. The indicators will enable the district to effectively and clearly communicate its priorities and progress to the public.

The data dashboard will do the following:

- Provide a concise, but comprehensive summary of district performance, including baseline data, targets and results;
- Present data clearly and in an easily understood manner;
- Communicate the board priorities to the community; and
- Contain regularly updated information based on regular management reports and management oversight workshops.

The data dashboard will be reviewed and updated at least quarterly during the school year.

The superintendent will ensure that the current version of the data dashboard accompanies this policy as an exhibit. The superintendent will also ensure that the data dashboard is widely disseminated throughout the school district and the community.

Adoption date:

School district name:

Revised:

Classification:

APPENDIX 1



A more detailed overview of the WASL for parents can be found at www.k12.wa.us/assessment/WASL/ and is available in English, Spanish and Russian.

WASL: A brief introduction (Washington Assessment of Student Learning)

In 1993, Washington legislators passed legislation designed to transform public education in Washington state. Known as House Bill 1209 (HB 1209) this education reform legislation required educators to create a common set of learning standards — what a child should know and be able to do. These learning standards are formally known as the Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRs). Additionally, the Grade Level Expectations (GLEs) provide specific state standards at each grade level in the areas of reading, writing, mathematics, science, and other content areas.

For students, the EALRs and GLEs describe the minimum requirements and the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) is the test which determines if the student has met these requirements.

? Who is tested and when?

The WASL is administered in the spring of each year for grades three through eight, and grade 10.

WASL Testing Schedule				
Grade level	Reading	Math	Writing	Science
Grade 3				
Grade 4				
Grade 5				
Grade 6				
Grade 7				
Grade 8				
Grade 9				
Grade 10				

Appendix 1:
WASL, a brief
introduction
(Washington
Assessment
of Student
Learning)



How are students tested?

Students are tested using a combination of multiple-choice, short-answer, and extended-response (essay) questions. The short-answer and extended-response items are designed to enable students to explain their thinking and communicate an understanding of the content area.

A student's score on the WASL is categorized into one of four levels:

- Level 4: Exceeds standard — represents advanced mastery of skills and knowledge
- Level 3: Meets standard — represents mastery of skills and knowledge
- Level 2: Below standard — represents some mastery of skills and knowledge but not in all areas
- Level 1: Well below standard — represents very little mastery of skills and knowledge

The percentage of students who have “met or exceeded standard” are typically the numbers reported in the media.

While the overall percentage of students meeting standard is an important measure, it is also critical that districts and schools focus on detailed results. Are districts reducing the number of students at Level 1? Are they moving students at Level 3 to Level 4? This information measures improvement and is important as we seek to help each student reach their full potential.

A more detailed overview of the WASL for parents can be found at www.k12.wa.us/assessment/WASL/ and is available in English, Spanish and Russian.

APPENDIX 2



Glossary

- **ACT:** A standardized achievement test for college admissions produced by ACT, Inc.
- **AYP:** Adequate Yearly Progress. Required by federal No Child Left Behind legislation. AYP is a determination of whether a school or district is improving (see www.k12.wa.us/ESEA/pubdocs/WhatisAYP.doc for more information). In Washington state, AYP determination is based upon results of the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL).
- **Bucket:** A set of logically related data used in the data carousel (e.g., “Mathematics Data”)
- **CEE:** Center for Educational Effectiveness (www.effectiveness.org)
- **Cohort V:** As in “SIA Cohort V.” Fifth group of schools going through the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction’s (OSPI) School Improvement Assistance Program
- **Cohort VI:** Sixth group of schools going through the OSPI School Improvement Assistance Program
- **Data carousel:** A group process for analyzing and interpreting data. Leads to prioritized needs which drive the district or school improvement plans
- **Data mining:** The process of “digging” into data to increase understanding of student needs and ways to improve student learning
- **DIBELS:** Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) are a set of standardized, individually administered measures of early literacy development. They are designed to be short (one minute) fluency measures used to regularly monitor the development of pre-reading and early reading skills.
- **DIF:** District Improvement Facilitator. An external consultant working with district leadership on improvement plans

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Appendix 2: Glossary

- **DIP:** District Improvement Plan
- **DIT:** District Improvement Team
- **EALR:** Essential Academic Learning Requirement. The description of what a student should know and be able to do
- **EES:** Educational Effectiveness Survey™: CEE’s tool for measuring the Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools with school and district staff, students, and parents
- **ELL/ESL:** English Language Learner/English as Second Language: descriptor referring to a student for which English is not their native language
- **Gap:** (as in “achievement gap”) Refers to difference between two groups. Most often refers to differences in student achievement between two ethnicities
- **GLE:** Grade Level Expectations. A version of the EALRs specific to each grade level (defined for grades K - 10)
- **Narrative statement:** A factual description of a piece of data, i.e., what is the data showing?
- **NCLB:** No Child Left Behind. Federal No Child Left Behind Act. Name given to the 2001 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965
- **OSPI:** Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. The state government agency chartered with overseeing public education in Washington state
- **PDC:** Professional Development Coach
- **Poverty:** In education, the percentage of students eligible for free/reduced price meal programs is the commonly used measure of poverty
- **SAT:** A college admissions standardized test owned and administered by the College Board
- **SIA:** OSPI School Improvement Assistance Program (see also “Cohort...”)
- **SIF:** School Improvement Facilitator. An external consultant working with school leadership on improvement plans
- **SIP:** School Improvement Plan
- **SIT:** School Improvement Team
- **SpEd:** Special Education. Refers to a student with specific disabilities as defined by federal and state guidelines
- **SSIRG:** School System Improvement Resource Guide. Developed by OSPI to assist district improvement efforts

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- **State Uniform Bar:** As part of NCLB, the State Uniform Bar is the minimum performance level in reading and mathematics **WASL:** Washington Assessment of Student Learning. The test which measures student learning in Washington state

Appendix 2:
Glossary

APPENDIX 3



Resources

- www.reportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us — The official source for school, district and state performance and demographic data
- www.k12.wa.us/dataadmin — This site includes specific data such as dropout rates and on-time graduation rates
- www.k12.wa.us/assessment/resources.aspx — Site for information about Adequate Yearly Progress
- www.just4kids.org/en/washington/ — Site sponsored by the Center for Educational Accountability that provides comparisons of similar schools
- www.schoolmatters.com/ — Site provided by the National Education Data Partnership which is a collaborative effort of the Council of Chief State School Officers, the CELT Corporation, Standards and Poor's, the Broad Foundation, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
- www.effectiveness.org — The Center for Educational Effectiveness focuses on action research, data analysis and support for the school improvement planning process. CEE helps districts create a comprehensive, visual data portfolio that is friendly and useful, meaningful to school populations and pinpoints student needs to indicate intervention steps. CEE provides districts and boards with data that will inform appropriate changes in curriculum, instructional practice, assessment and the systems to increase student learning and achieve second order changes.

Data dashboards for school directors Review/feedback form

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1. [Click here to use our online evaluation form](#)

OR

2. Print this page, complete, and mail to Cindy Sands, WSSDA, 221 College Street NE, Olympia, WA 98516 or fax to 360/493-9247.

Name (optional):

District:

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The following ratings and questions will help us determine the usefulness of the content available in this document.

Check one of the following boxes to indicate your role in education:

School director	<input type="checkbox"/>	Principal	<input type="checkbox"/>
Superintendent	<input type="checkbox"/>	Teacher or support staff member	<input type="checkbox"/>
District administrator	<input type="checkbox"/>	Community member	<input type="checkbox"/>

KEY: 1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree	1	2	3	4	5
1. The data dashboard guide is clearly and concisely written.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. The data dashboard guide was easy to read and understand.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. The information was useful.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. The data dashboard provided enough information and direction to assist our board in creating our own data dashboard.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Our board currently uses a data dashboard in our role of improving student achievement.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

What information, if any, would you like to see added to the guide?

What information was most useful to you? How will this guide help you?

If you have suggestions/feedback on specific content, please include your comments below.

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here

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For more information

Founded in 1922, the Washington State School Directors' Association (WSSDA) is comprised of all 1,477 school board members from the state's 295 school districts. The districts they lead serve more than one million students, have a combined annual budget of \$6 billion, and employ nearly 100,000 people. WSSDA's core mission is focused on promoting student learning by ensuring that school directors have the knowledge, tools and services they need to effectively govern their districts and champion public education. For more information, visit the association's Web site at wssda.org.

Center for Educational Effectiveness (CEE) provides data-centric tools, services, consulting, and research and is dedicated to the mission of partnering with K-12 schools and districts to increase student learning by improving the effectiveness of educational institutions. CEE is actively involved in assisting schools and districts in the western United States with research and tools to enhance school improvement efforts. CEE's tools and services are currently being used by over 500 schools and districts in the western United States. For more information about CEE data-centered solutions for schools or districts, see www.effectiveness.org.