

18.13 Student Assessment and Testing

Board position 1991; resolution passed 2006; amended 2013; amended 2021

Whereas, Washington State PTA finds that children develop at vastly different rates and have different learning styles, exhibiting differing strengths and weaknesses and thus must be allowed to demonstrate their knowledge in more than one way; and

Whereas, several well-respected education organizations including, the American Educational Research Association, urge that, “Decisions that affect individual students’ life chances or educational opportunities should not be made based on test scores alone. Other relevant information should be taken into account to enhance the overall validity of such decisions”; and

Whereas, policymakers must understand that no one test gives a complete picture of a student’s knowledge, ability, or aptitude. Each type of assessment can provide important information to students, families, teachers, and administration about student achievement, program effectiveness, and alignment of instruction to identified goals and objectives as each type of assessment looks at achievement from a different perspective and for a different purpose; and

Whereas, state-wide tests have a disproportionate influence on classroom practices. Many teachers believe that state assessments are forcing them to concentrate too much on the limited standards covered by the test to the detriment of other important standards and areas of learning; and


Whereas, according to the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), the intent of state and federal standardized tests is to assess student learning growth and to test the progress of the educational system as a whole. However, testing often includes bias, which can create inequitable outcomes for certain demographics, including but not limited to gender, race, ethnicity, English as a second language, socioeconomic/community status, high-mobility, culture, and students with disabilities; and

Whereas, the four-year public baccalaureate institutions in Washington state are “test-optional” and will not require students to submit test scores during admissions or to be eligible for institutional supported scholarships, course placement, or admissions to honors programs; and

Whereas, the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted two years of state testing and increased stress for students, parents/guardians, teachers, and the public schools community as they wrestled with testing requirements.

Therefore, be it

Resolved, that Washington State PTA and its local PTAs and councils will advocate for culturally relevant and responsive state and district-level policies that create an equitable assessment system with high standards and multiple ways for students to demonstrate learning proficiency, providing students with wide access to multiple forms of state-wide assessments; and be it further



Resolved, that Washington State PTA and its local PTAs and councils will oppose any efforts to use a single indicator for making decisions about individual student opportunities such as grade promotion, high school graduation, or entrance into specific educational programs; and be it further

Resolved, that Washington State PTA and its local PTAs and councils advocate for all Washington colleges and universities to use test-optional approaches for admissions, scholarships, course placement, and admissions to honors programs; and be it further

Resolved, that Washington State PTA and its local PTAs and councils advocate for flexibility in the requirements and delivery, or temporary suspension of, national and statewide assessments in the event of a national or state emergency/crisis that disrupts the public education system.