

A Message from the Department of Teaching and Learning

Dear tenth and eleventh grade families,

This spring, Bellingham Public Schools will again be giving the annual state assessments to students in high school. Tenth grade students take the Smarter Balanced tests for English language arts (ELA) and math. Eleventh grade students take the Washington Comprehensive Assessment of Science (WCAS), which is a comprehensive science test that replaces the Biology End-of-Course exam.

These tests measure if students are meeting or exceeding grade-level standards, meet our state and federal requirements, and strive to gage college and career readiness by high school graduation. For high school graduation, students must have passing scores in English language arts and math, or meet standard with state-approved alternatives in those subjects.

The Smarter Balanced tests include performance tasks that allow students to demonstrate critical-thinking and problem-solving skills. They also include a computer-adaptive test component to provide more accurate scores for students across a wide range of achievement. Practice tests are available for students to ensure they are comfortable with the software. To view these, see the state practice test link at <http://bellingshamschools.org/families/academics/assessments/>.

Preliminary results from the Smarter Balanced English language arts and mathematics tests will be available to schools electronically within three to four weeks after a student completes testing. Results from the science test will be available later this fall. In the fall, the state will provide the official state score reports that we will mail to families.

The Bellingham Promise, the district’s strategic plan, guides everything we do for our students, families, community and staff. One of BPS’ core beliefs is to focus on the *whole* child. State tests are only one benchmark; other measures and evidence are just as important in assessing the development of our kids. We encourage you to keep these tests in perspective of our overall goals.

Don’t forget a good night’s sleep and healthy breakfast are an essential part of every school day. For additional information about state testing and our state learning standards, please visit the state’s website at k12.wa.us/Resources. Your child(ren)’s school(s) will be sending follow-up information about upcoming testing dates.

HIGH SCHOOLS			
Smarter Balanced			WCAS
Grade	ELA	Math	Science

9			
10	●	●	
11	▲	▲	
12	▲	▲	●

● Testing all students

▲ Additional opportunities to retake the test