

Washington Assessment of Student Learning

May 24, 2016

1 Introduction

WASL was the standardized educational assessment test administered by the state of Washington from 1997 to 200 from 1997 to 2009. It tested the students in Washington’s public schools in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Students in third through eighth grade took the WASL reading and mathematics sections. In addition, fifth and eighth graders were required to take the science section, and fourth and seventh graders also take the writing section. Tenth graders were tested in all four sections. For the Class of 2008 and 2009, the WASL was a graduation requirement. Private-school and home-schooled students were exempt from the WASL

A student’s performance on the reading, math and science sections is reported using “scale scores”. Scale scores are three-digit numbers that are used to place the student into one of four levels: Advanced (Level 4), Proficient (Level 3), Basic (Level 2) and Below Basic (Level 1). A scale score of 400 is assigned to a student who has just barely met the state standard; this score is at the lower end of Level 3. Students scoring in Level 4 are said to have exceeded the state standard. Students with scores in Level 1 or Level 2 have not met standard. Students generally have to achieve a score that represents approximately 60 to 65 percent of the points possible on each test to pass. That score or above means they have met the required standard for proficiency in that particular subject.

2 Data

2.1 Data source

The data are provided by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). The data file includes school-level demographic information and WASL results for fifth and tenth graders during the 2005-2006 school year, as reported by each school. This data represents information from 1362 schools, most of which have only fifth or tenth graders tested. These 1362 schools make up all schools in the state of Washington reporting WASL results for at least one student in either

the fifth or tenth grades. Roughly 300 small schools across the state are not represented here, as they either tested no one in these grades or failed to report the results.

2.2 Description of variables

- *County* - the county in which the school is located.
- *School* - the school reporting the results.
- *GradeTested* - the grade of the tested students.
- *MathMetStandard* - the number of students meeting the WASL mathematics standard.
- *ReadingMetStandard* - the number of students meeting the WASL reading standard.
- *WritingMetStandard* - the number of students meeting the WASL writing standard.
- *ScienceMetStandard* - the number of students meeting the WASL science standard.
- *MathTotalTested* - the total number of students tested in WASL mathematics section.
- *ReadingTotalTested* - the total number of students tested in WASL reading section.
- *WritingTotalTested* - the total number of students tested in WASL writing section.
- *ScienceTotalTested* - the total number of students tested in WASL science section.
- *TotalEnrollment* - the number of students in all grades of the school.
- *PercentWhite* - the percentage of White students in the school.
- *StudentsPerClassroomTeacher* - the number of students per classroom teacher. Classroom teachers are elementary, secondary teachers that instruct elementary and secondary students in classes or courses in a classroom situation for which daily attendance is kept. It also includes teachers that instruct students in ungraded classes, special education, gifted, disadvantaged, early childhood, home/hospital, and adult education.
- *FreeorReducedPricedMeals* - the percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price meals.
- *AvgYearsEducationalExperience* - average years of educational experience of teachers employed in the school.
- *PercentTeachersWithAtLeastMasterDegree* - the percentage of teachers with master's degree or higher employed in the school.