



WDE STANDARDS & ASSESSMENTS

How to Use Statewide Summative Assessment Data



DATA

Data should never be used in isolation! The statewide assessment is a single point in time. It should ALWAYS be combined with local and classroom data and context to make decisions.



Data Uses for which Statewide Assessment Data alone is NOT appropriate:


- Instructional adjustments for individuals.
- Student advancement decisions.
- Design and narrow focus of interventions.
- Student class placement.

“Standardized tests work best when they serve as a flashlight on what works and what needs our attention—not as hammers to drive the outcomes we want in education...”

—US Secretary of Education,
Miguel Cordona,
January 24, 2023

Appropriate Uses For Assessment Data

(usually involving multiple years of data)



Making building and cohort comparisons (for improvement efforts).	BUILDING IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS
Direction for School Improvement Plans.	
Identification of building intervention areas.	
Large-scale investigation of statewide concerns.	
Adjustments to Scope and Sequence at the district, building, or classroom level.	DISTRICT CURRICULUM REVIEW & ADJUSTMENTS
Adjustments to Tier 1 instructional strategies at the district, building, or classroom level.	

QUESTIONS

All of these questions should be followed up with additional local data & context before decisions are made.

- How is the State education system doing?
- Which content area should our district/building focus on for...
 - Curriculum review,
 - Interventions,
 - Professional Development,
 - Instructional Strategy Adjustments.
- Are recent curricular adjustments having an impact?
- Which districts or buildings need the most support? In which content areas?
- Are there discrepancies between student population groups?

FAQS

How Do I Know if Growth is Happening in the K-12 Education System?

- Start by comparing multiple years of data against each other, looking at the trends.
- Statewide Assessments are designed to measure systems. Looking at assessment data over time can help identify areas of growth or a need for change. This data can also identify if newly adopted programs are making the expected impacts.

What Does it Mean if 55% of Students are Proficient in a Content Area?

- Based on one day of testing, 55% of students who participated in a content area assessment met the proficiency standard for the content area.
- Statewide summative assessments are criterion-referenced assessments and measure students' proficiency based on their enrolled grade-level standards. Although each standard is assessed, not enough information is collected on any single standard to provide meaningful information about a student's mastery of that standard. Additional information should be considered when trying to target additional learning needed for individual students.
- Content proficiency is an aggregation of a student's performance on all of the standards in that content area. Refer to the [Assessment Blueprints](#) to better understand what content is assessed for each grade level (Resources: Blueprints found at edu.wyoming.gov/blueprints; Wyoming Content and Performance Standards found at [here](#).)

Does 55% Proficiency Mean that 45% of Students are Failing in a Content Area?

- No. Growth MUST be considered when measuring student success.
- Assessment results show four levels of performance (Below Basic, Basic, Proficient, Advanced), which are a measure of students' understanding and application of the Knowledge & Skills within the standards, based on their opportunity to learn.
- A student growth percentile (SGP) describes a student's growth compared to their peers with similar prior test scores. A median growth percentile (MGP) summarizes a group of students' SGPs. The MGP is one indicator of the effectiveness of an education program. See the Growth and Achievement Report found on the WDE [webpage](#).
- Assessment results show a single point in time, and there are many variables that can impact the outcome on that particular day. Statewide assessment data should always be considered alongside school and classroom data (e.g., grades, assessments, etc.) and contextual information from the local district.

Does 48% Proficiency in Grade 3 ELA Mean 52% of our Students Cannot Read?

- The full set of grade 3 standards are assessed on the WY-TOPP test which includes standards around reading literature, reading informational texts, language, writing, and speaking & listening. Students engage with text, reading one or even two passages, and are asked to use the information provided to answer related questions.
- The reading skills that are evidence-based to be predictive of grade 3 reading proficiency are phonemic awareness, phonics, decoding words and nonwords, oral reading fluency, and reading comprehension. These skills are only partially assessed through the grade 3 WY-TOPP assessment.
- Many of these evidence-based reading skills can be found in the K-2 English/Language Arts standards and should be measured through local assessments.

What Questions Can I Answer Using Statewide Assessment Data?

- Which curricular areas need attention in the coming years?
- What progress did we make towards our school improvement plan objectives and/or strategic plan objectives?
- In conjunction with our district assessment data, is our newly adopted (ELA/Math/Science) curriculum effective? Is there other data we need in order to determine this?
- Which grade levels need additional support or development in the coming year?
- Are there areas highlighted by statewide assessment data that we can address in next year's school improvement plan?
- Which areas are highlighted in the statewide assessment data that we could provide additional professional development to support those teachers?
- Are there additional ways that the non-tested subject could incorporate the knowledge and skills seen on the statewide assessments?
- How effective is our _____ initiative based on this year's data (statewide and district)? OR What progress have we seen from our _____ initiative based on this year's data (statewide and district)?
- What teachers can I pair together to share instructional strategies based on complementary data?

For more information, visit our State Assessment System [webpage](#) or contact the WDE Assessment Team at 307-777-7675.