

Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills

1. **Purpose:** 2SSB 5427 (Full-day Kindergarten – Assessment, 2011 Session) states that beginning with the 2011-12 school year on a voluntary basis, schools must identify the skills, knowledge, and characteristics of kindergarten students at the start of the school year in order to support social-emotional, physical, and cognitive growth and development of individual children; support early learning provider and parent involvement; and inform instruction.

Kindergarten teachers shall administer the Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (WaKIDS) at the beginning of the school year to all students enrolled in state-funded full-day kindergarten programs under RCW 28A.150.315, as directed by the Superintendent of Public Instruction, in consultation with the Department of Children, Youth and Families, and report the results to the superintendent. The superintendent shall share the results with the director of the Department of Children, Youth and Families. School districts shall provide an opportunity for parents and guardians to excuse their children from participation in WaKIDS.

A second piece of legislation, ESHB 2586, requires that WaKIDS replace administration of other assessments being required by school districts or that other assessments only be administered if they seek to obtain information not covered by WaKIDS.

2. **Description of services provided:** OSPI provides leadership and administration of the WaKIDS kindergarten entry transition process, which includes three components: Family Connection, Whole Child Assessment and Early Learning Collaboration. OSPI coordinates a regional network of Educational Service Districts (ESDs) to provide training and technical assistance to teachers and administrators in schools implementing WaKIDS.
3. **Criteria for receiving services and/or grants:** WaKIDS is legislatively mandated to be part of state-funded, full-day kindergarten. Schools accepting state funding for full-day kindergarten are required to administer WaKIDS, among other requirements, according to RCW 28A.150.315 and RCW 28A.655.080.

Beneficiaries in 2018-19 School Year:

| | |
|------------------------|--------|
| # of School Districts: | 282 |
| # of Schools: | 1,143 |
| # of Students: | 82,196 |

| | |
|--|---|
| # of OSPI staff associated with this funding (FTEs): | 3 |
| # of contractors/other staff associated with this funding: | 1 |

| | | |
|---------------|------------------------|----------------|
| FY19 Funding: | State Appropriation: | \$2.59 million |
| | Federal Appropriation: | \$0 |
| | Other fund sources: | \$0 |

TOTAL (FY19) \$2.59 million

4. Are federal or other funds contingent on state funding? If yes, explain. No
5. State funding history:

| Fiscal Year | Amount Funded | Actual Expenditures |
|-------------|---------------|---------------------|
| FY19 | \$2,590,000 | \$2,184,654 |
| FY18 | \$2,984,000 | \$2,597,389 |
| FY17 | \$2,984,000 | \$2,275,994 |
| FY16 | \$2,654,000 | \$2,228,246 |
| FY15 | \$1,400,000 | \$1,374,366 |
| FY14 | \$2,112,000 | \$1,278,917 |
| FY13 (PV*) | \$400,000 | \$399,859 |

This year, we underspent the contract costs for the assessment vendor because we received a rebate from them to correct for challenges with the function of the online assessment tool.

6. Number of beneficiaries (e.g., schools, students, districts) history:

| Fiscal Year | # of school districts | # of students | # of ESDs |
|-------------|-----------------------|---------------|-----------|
| FY19 | 282 | 82,196 | 9 |
| FY18 | 293 | 80,956 | 9 |
| FY 17 | 266 | 77,314 | 9 |
| FY 16 | 257 | 58,656 | 9 |
| FY 15 | 193 | 43,298 | 9 |
| FY 14 | 187 | 38,443 | 9 |
| FY 13 | 102 | 18,766 | 9 |

7. Programmatic changes since inception (if any): WaKIDS was piloted in 2010-2011 and implemented in volunteer schools in 2011-2012. Beginning in 2012-2013, WaKIDS was required in all state-funded full-day kindergarten schools that fell within a designated poverty level, unless the district received a waiver from the Superintendent of Public Instruction. Each succeeding year, WaKIDS was scaled up, based on the poverty levels of the schools. Schools with the highest percentages of students on free and reduced lunch were given access to state-funded, full-day kindergarten first. Full funding was provided to support full-day kindergarten in 2016-17. As of 2017-18, all schools in Washington State were expected to provide state-funded, full-day kindergarten.

In 2014, changes were made to the objectives assessed to be in better alignment with Washington Learning Standards.

During 2016-17, OSPI renegotiated a new five-year contract with Teaching Strategies, the vendor that provides the tool for the whole-child assessment component of WaKIDS.

On July 1, 2017, Teaching Strategies GOLD®, the tool used for the whole-child assessment component of WaKIDS, converted to a new, upgraded platform. In preparation, considerable program resources were expended coordinating with the vendor, Teaching Strategies, in preparation. Training and other support materials had to be revised to reflect changes to the user interface and expanded progressions of development. Updated materials had to be printed and disseminated to all kindergarten teachers and principals who had been using the tool prior to the upgrade.

In June 2019, the contact with the assessment vendor, Teaching Strategies, was amended to address the increase in students being assessed. The initial contract was based on an estimate of 80,000 kindergarten students. In the fall of 2018, 80,356 students were assessed. The contract was revised to 81,000 students, to allow more fluctuation from year to year without triggering a contract revision. The amount paid to the vendor is based on the actual number of students assessed.

8. **Evaluations of program/major findings:** WaKIDS data is showing that children enter kindergarten with a wide span of readiness across all six domains assessed. Overall, fewer than half (45.7%) of the children entering kindergarten in the fall of 2018 demonstrated the skills and abilities expected. Math was the lowest area of readiness, with only 64.4% of incoming kindergartners demonstrating age-appropriate skills in mathematics. Math has consistently been the lowest area of readiness since WaKIDS began. In addition to overall readiness, WaKIDS allows us to see the range of skills children are entering with. For instance, more than a quarter began kindergarten with skills in social-emotional development (following direction, managing feelings, persisting) more typical of children ages three or younger.

This gap in readiness persist beyond kindergarten, as indicated by a recent analysis of WaKIDS data compared to Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBA) results, which showed a strong positive correlation between the number of domains ready for kindergarten and percent meeting standard on 3rd grade SBA English Language Arts and Math tests.

9. **Major challenges faced by the program:** Beginning in fiscal year 2019, funding for WaKIDS was reduced by \$394,000. Continued funding has been essential to provide adequate training and technical assistance for quality implementation of all three components of WaKIDS and strengthen the linkage of full-day kindergarten with other state Pre K–3rd grade efforts. This includes continuing to increase the reliability of WaKIDS data, especially for English Learners and students with disabilities; increasing the number of school districts actively engaging early learning providers in collaboration for improved alignment and smoother transitions into the K-12 system; and increasing the number of school districts actively engaging families of pre-kindergarten children in activities designed to prepare children to be ready for kindergarten.

It is important to note that the whole-child assessment component of WaKIDS is unique in that, unlike other state assessments, it is conducted by individual teachers with the students in their classrooms through observation-based assessment. Every teacher must be

trained. No other individuals (fellow teachers or administrators) can step in and assess the students. As a result, when teachers turn over, their replacements must be trained. As documented in previous provisos, teacher turnover remains high at 24% between 2017 and 2018.

10. **Future opportunities:** Given that WaKIDS occurs at the beginning of kindergarten, it represents the first formal opportunity to assess the strengths and needs of K-12 students. Consistently low WaKIDS scores and the correlation between WaKIDS and SBA data underscore the value of kindergarten entry data as a means to address the opportunity gap early on.

In the future, we have the opportunity of continuing to increase the reliability of WaKIDS data, especially for English learners and students with disabilities, and to expand the use of the data to monitor academic and social-emotional growth

11. **Statutory and/or Budget language:**

Budget Proviso: ESSB 6032 Section 501(28) - \$2,984,000 of the general fund--state appropriation for fiscal year 2018 and \$2,590,000 of the general fund-state appropriation for fiscal year 2019 are provided solely for the Washington kindergarten inventory of developing skills. State funding shall support statewide administration and district implementation of the inventory under RCW 28A.655.080.

12. **Other relevant information:**

13. **List of schools/districts receiving assistance:** See OSPI [website](#).

14. **Program Contact Information:** Karma Hugo
Director of Early Learning, OSPI
karma.hugo@k12.wa.us
360-725-6153.