

Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL)

- Origins
- Requirements
- Recent changes
- Costs

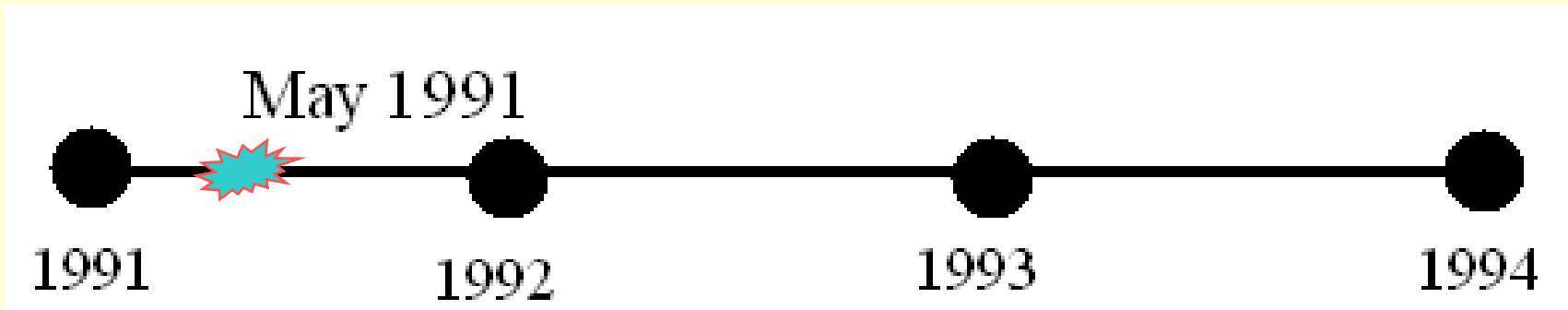
Origins of the WASL

- Source of information:
 - Legislative history
 - Governor's Council on Education Reform and Funding (GCERF) report



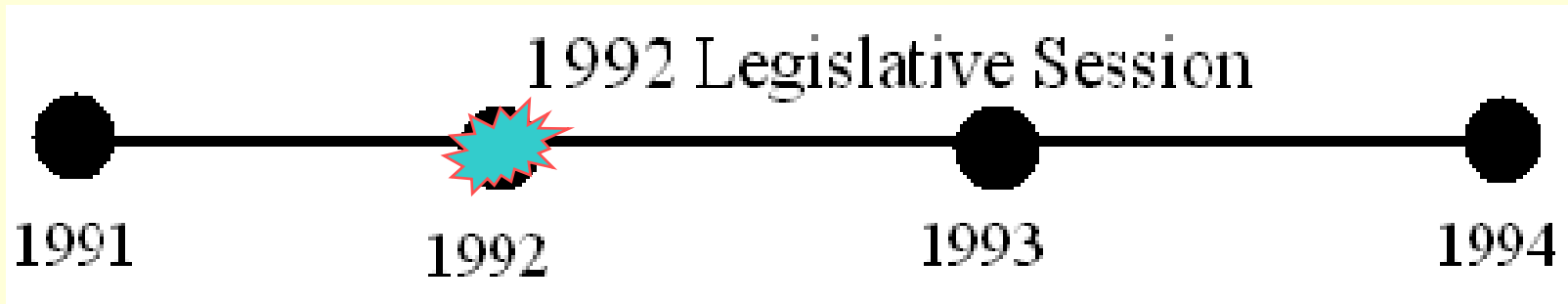
HB 1023/SB 5279 introduced but did not pass.

- Proposed a Commission on Student Learning:
 - Identified knowledge and skills (essential learnings) expected to be achieved by students;
 - Develop a statewide assessment system;
 - Develop strategies (including the time, support, & resources that will assist schools in ensuring mastery of the essential learnings by students.
 - Recommend repeal/amendment of federal, state, and local laws and rules that inhibit to student success.



GCERF created by Executive Order of Governor Gardner.

- To develop a long-term action plan to reform the state's public schools and significantly improve student performance. The plan must be:
 - Flexible and allow each individual to achieve at high levels.
 - Performance-oriented and emphasize results rather than the maintenance of existing policies & procedures.
 - Prioritize existing funds and use them efficiently, and address methods to obtain necessary additional funds.



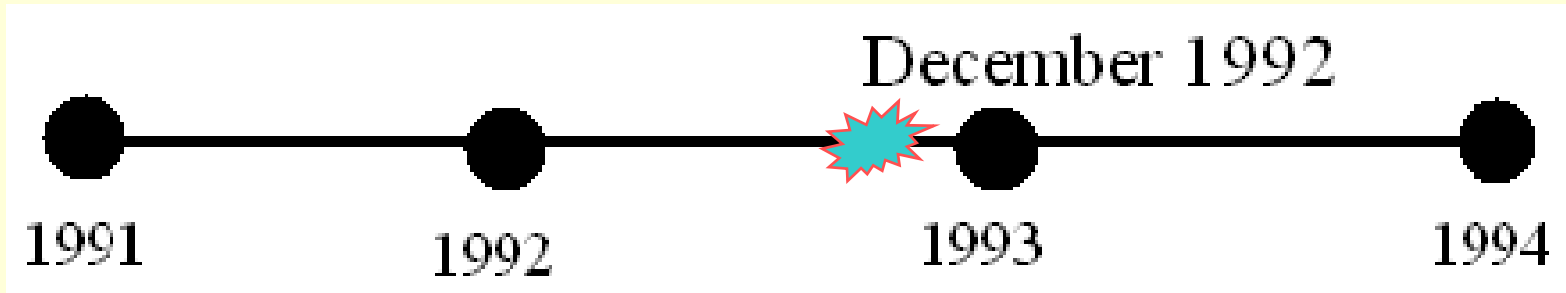
Legislature passes SSB 5953

- Created the Commission on Student Learning
 - Identify essential academic learning requirements (EALRs) based on the GCERF student learning goals.
 - **Develop statewide student assessment system.**
 - Develop strategies to assist educators in helping students master the EALRs.
 - Establish a center to plan implement and evaluate high quality professional development.
 - Recommend repeal or amendment of federal, state & local laws & rules that inhibit student success.
 - Recommend the time, support, resources & assistance needed by schools & districts to help students achieve the EALRs.
 - Recommend for entry requirements to higher education institutions.
 - Recommend a statewide accountability system to accurately and fairly evaluate the level of learning occurring in schools & districts, including steps that should be taken to assist schools & districts where student performance on the assessments are below expected levels.



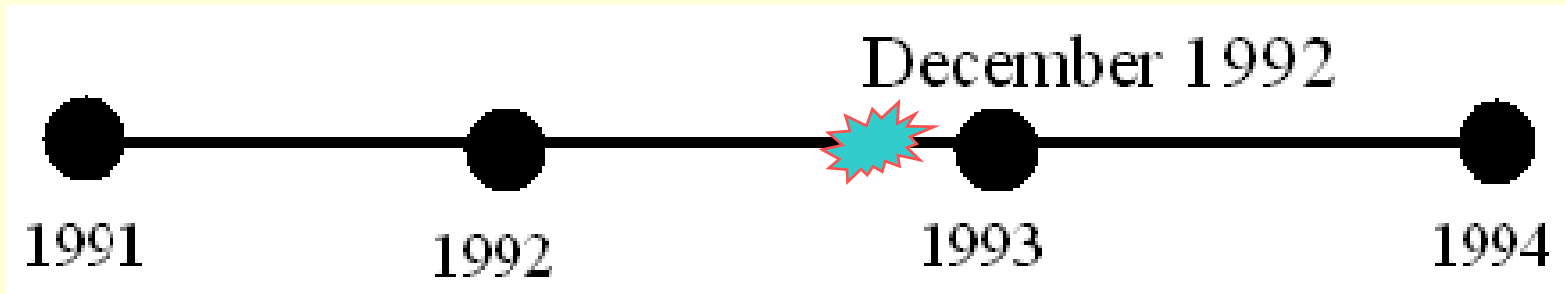
Legislature passes SSB 5953

- CSL to develop Statewide Student Assessment System
 - “a series of academic examinations and performance-based assessments to determine if students have mastered the essential academic learning requirements.”
 - “Mastery of each component of the EALRs shall be required before students progress in subsequent components of the EALRs. . . [and at the secondary level] shall lead to a certificate of mastery. . .required for graduation.”
 - “shall include a variety of methodologies, including performance-based measures.”
 - “designed so that the results under the assessment system are used by educators as tools to evaluate instructional practices, and to initiate appropriate educational support for students who do not master the EALRs.”
 - “shall consider methods to address the unique needs of special education students when developing the assessments.”



GCERF final report:

- 4 student learning goals
 - (1) Communicate effectively and responsibly in a variety of ways and settings;
 - (2) Know and apply the core concepts and principles of mathematics; social, physical, and life sciences; arts; humanities; and healthful living;
 - (3) Think critically and creatively, and integrate experience and knowledge to form reasoned judgments and solve problems; and
 - (4) Function as caring and responsible individuals and contributing members of families, work groups and communities.
- Commission on Student Learning
 - For students:
 - Establish essential academic learning requirements (EALRs)
 - Establish statewide performance-based student assessments to replace the current standardized achievement tests.
 - Develop a certificate of mastery to serve as cumulative evidence of what students know and are able to do –earned before receiving a high school diploma.
 - For educators:
 - Develop standards for all certificated school staff of what they should know and be able to do to help all students meet the EALRs.
 - Develop a performance-based assessment system as a foundation for certifying new teachers.
 - Coordinate, plan, and implement a professional development and mentor program.
 - For schools
 - Develop a rewards program to provide incentive awards to schools meeting performance goals & a consequences program for schools & districts that persistently or dramatically do not meet performance goals.
 - Other
 - Repeal of laws & rules that inhibit increased student performance.
 - Asks the Legislature to design, enact and implement a funding system oriented toward student achievement rather than inputs.



GCERF final report:

- Found that the current state standardized achievement tests had shortcomings:
 - Multiple choice
 - Machine-readable
 - Do little to encourage complex thinking on the part of students.
 - Do not require that students demonstrate their ability to write and reason, or display the mathematical and scientific thinking behind their answers.
 - Test students “on a curve” – against each other; rather than against the material to be mastered.



GCERF recommendations introduced in HB 1209 and passes the Legislature.

- **Assessment system** (modifies & supplements language from SSB 5953)
 - Must be criterion-referenced.
 - Phase-in of the assessments
 - Goal 1 and math first
 - Optional then mandatory
 - Not biased toward persons with different learning styles, racial or ethnic background, or on the basis of gender.
 - Consider methods to address the unique needs of highly capable

Subsequent Assessment History

1997:

- Transferred development and modification of the assessment system from the Commission on Student Learning to the Superintendent of Public Instruction. The Commission expiring.

1999:

- Additionally transfer language added.
- Science delayed (at middle & high school)
- Social studies, arts, and health & fitness delayed (at elementary, middle & high school)

2001:

- Science delayed (at middle & high school)
- Social studies, arts, and health & fitness delayed (at elementary, middle & high school)

2004:

- SPI directed to report on classroom-based assessment models & other options or strategies for social studies, arts, and health & fitness to be in place in schools by 2008.
- SPI to report on results of independent research on the alignment & technical review of the reading, writing, & science WASLs.
- The results for the reading & math WASL must be reported in a format that will allow parents & teachers to determine the academic gain a student has acquired in those content areas from one school year to the next.
- SPI directed to provide a collection of diagnostic tools that educators may use to evaluate students.