

Long-Term Recommendations

1. Provide pre-service and ongoing training for teachers and administrators on the appropriate use of different kinds of assessments.
2. Identify processes to ensure that the state's goals and objectives for the overall system and for students, as well as the assessments developed to measure progress for both, are not culturally biased.

Short-Term Recommendations

1. Suspend the graduation requirement until the assessment instrument serves as a valid and reliable tool for achieving the desired outcomes.

Explanation: The WASL is being used as an *instrument* for measuring student and system performance, but it is not capable of being a *tool* for improving teaching. Whether singular or plural, we need assessment(s) that are tools for improving teaching if we are going to also use assessment(s) as instruments to measure performance.

2. Reframe the language of assessments and performance expectations and clarify our goals (aka "balanced assessment").

Explanation: Reframing the language of assessments refers to gaining an understanding of the difference between an "instrument" that measures and a "tool" that helps improve instruction. Reframing the language of performance expectations means defining "on whom or what" we are basing the performance expectations. Are we measuring students in order to change student behavior or in order to change teacher behavior?

With regard to clarifying goals: we know we must have an instrument that is NCLB compliant. That is one goal of the assessment instrument. But another goal is to have students meet the state learning standards (EALRs and GLEs) and to provide some assurance to taxpayers and the community that students who receive a diploma have accomplished a threshold of core reading, writing, and computational skills. This is a different goal that presumes a different kind of assessment. And finally (or next) there is a goal of ensuring that the education system in fact does not leave any child behind. These goals must be balanced.

3. Suspend new spending on current assessment products until we reach consensus on the goals and expectations of a balanced assessment system.