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Everett special education WASL scores are among the top in the state

Everett Special Education students at all grade levels who took the WAAS-Port assessment last spring had a passing rate at least 20% higher in reading, writing, and math than the statewide percentage scores for all other Washington state special education students who took the same assessment. Moreover, each of the seven high school special education students who took the test did well enough on the math, reading, and writing sections to meet that graduation requirement.

The state WAAS-PORT scores for reading were 63% compared to 83% in Everett. Writing scores were 62% for the state and 90% for Everett. State WAAS-Port math scores were 63% while in Everett, they were 84%. Even Everett's WAAS-Port science scores were higher than the state's — 79% compared to 61%.

This is a clear demonstration of what can happen when everyone understands that all students can learn to a higher standard and when everyone sets about making that learning possible, said district Special Services Executive Director, Kris McDowell. Our more involved portfolio students now have the opportunity to demonstrate their educational skills in the general education environment and create new social relationships with their peers and other school staff. They are also gaining the ability to monitor, evaluate and/or set their own continued learning goals.

We are so pleased that every one of our high school students passed the WAAS Portfolio in the three areas they need to meet that graduation requirement, McDowell noted, commenting on the impressive success of the district's seven special education students who took the WAAS-Port, the acronym for Washington Alternative Assessment Portfolio.

All together, 33 students in grades three through 10 took the reading WAAS-Port; 63 took the writing section of the test, and 32 took the math section.

Families of special education students who took alternative WASL exams last spring have just received those test results. It took a bit longer to score these adjusted assessments than it did the other WASL tests. But this good news about our students' performance made the wait well worth it, said McDowell.

Special education students have three alternative WASL tests available to them. A decision about the most appropriate test for each student in each subject area is reached in consultation with parents, counselors and teachers.

1. WASL-MO stands for a WASL Modified. WASL-MO special education students take the same WASL tests as other students enrolled in that grade at school. The requirements for meeting standard on the WASL-MO are different, however, for special needs students.
2. WAAS-DAW stands for Developmentally Appropriate WASL. Students taking the WAAS-DAW take a WASL test for a grade level that is different than their enrolled grade level. A fifth-grade student might take a fourth-grade WASL, for example.
3. WAAS-Port stands for Washington Alternative Assessment Portfolio — a collection of evidence that illustrates a student's learning. The collection is evaluated to determine the extent of student progress and generalization of a learned skill over time.

Some students may have been given a WASL-MO for one subject and a WAAS-DAW for another. Any combination was possible, said McDowell. The system is flexible enough to be an accurate and appropriate measure of how special needs students have progressed at school. I'm so happy to see that the system in place to support their learning seems to be working and that these students and their families can have a sense of accomplishment when the test scores arrive at home. These just-arrived scores give us a stronger foundation for planning how to improve what we are doing with students and to duplicate what is working best.