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SBA State Assessment Report

A CASE STUDY

Addressing the issues

When the state of Washington made changes in how they provided score reports for the Smarter Balanced assessment, districts suddenly needed new ways to get scores into the hands of parents and guardians.

The state upgraded their report delivery to send results to districts electronically, as opposed to the previous physical reports, which arrived printed and ready for districts to stuff and mail.

This new solution promised increased efficiency, but was complicated by a technological mismatch. "The format that the electronic copies came in was not easily upload-able to our Student Information System," notes Brian Loffer, director of assessment at Bethel School District.

A projected delay in the release of the final, reconciled scores also meant that the results would be essentially "meaningless when they came out nine months later," Loffer says.

On-time delivery of data

Rather than keep parents in the dark, Bethel decided to share the preliminary scores, which the state typically provides to districts within days of the assessments. Using preliminary scores meant families could know right away whether their child was meeting grade-level expectations.

It was a calculated risk on Bethel's part. Online assessments have taken much of the guesswork out of scoring, so while interim scores are not final and confirmed, they tend to be highly accurate. "There's a very small chance that we have a score that we'd have to invalidate because of a test irregularity," an event Loffer says has happened "once in 15 years."

Early delivery of the results can provide important reinforcement at home for educators' intervention efforts. Jeff Gutfeld, Bethel's assistant director of assessment, says teachers and counselors often "print the assessment data for use in parent conferences, so it's nice when the scores are not a surprise" for families.

Student Name: *, Aaron A.
State Student ID: 1234567890
Current Grade Level: 12th Grade
Test Year: 2020/21

School: Anacortes High School
District: School Data Solutions School District
Date Report Generated: 03/09/2022

ANACORTES SCHOOL DISTRICT
Passion. Purpose. Possibility.

English Language Arts — This test result meets ELA state test pathway requirement. — Level 3
Mathematics — Level 2
Science — Level 4

SBA Summative ELA/Literacy Graduation Requirement Gr 10
SBA Summative Mathematics Graduation Requirement Gr 10
Washington Comprehensive Assessment of Science Gr 11

Level 4
Level 3
Level 2
Level 1
Meets State Expectations
Does Not Meet State Expectations

The primary purpose of the these state tests was a brief check-in on how schools and students are doing after school year 2020-21.

The level your student earned is an estimate of their performance on some of the skills and knowledge in English Language Arts and Math. Grades 6, 9, and 12 also took a test in Science.

On this test, students whose performance was a level 3 or level 4 demonstrated most of the skills and knowledge required to meet state expectations on a typical end-of-year test. For high school testing, students with a level 3 or level 4 as well as some higher level 2 scores meet the ELA or Math state test pathway requirements. Pathway status is indicated on the top of the subject bar graph.

State test results are only one way to know how students are doing in English language arts, math, or science. Consider having a conversation with your student's teacher about your student's learning. This may include performance on district benchmark assessments, teacher observations, classroom work, and other school activities.

FAQs

How was the Fall 2021 test different from prior years' tests?

These tests were different from prior year state subject area tests in many ways. It was given in the fall instead of the spring. There were fewer questions overall so less amount of content in ELA, Math, or Science was measured.

For these reasons, we recommend that these fall results not be compared to other year's test results. Also, these test results will not be used by themselves to make any instructional or program decisions for students.

Why did testing happen in Fall 2021

The United States Department of Education requires tests each year, but allowed flexible timing for last spring's 2020-21 tests.

During the 2020-21 school year, students had limited in-person learning opportunities. To maximize time for instruction and support in spring 2021, the tests were moved to the fall.

What grade level test did my student take?

In the fall, your student took the prior year grade level test. For example, a current 9th grade student would have taken the 8th grade test. The test covered skills and content your student would have been taught last year.

Why was the test shorter?

Shorter tests allowed students and teachers to focus on social, emotional, and academic supports as students returned to school this fall.

Does this test count for high school state testing pathway requirements in ELA or Math?

Yes, if students earn a level 3 or level 4 as well as some higher level 2 scores, they can meet the ELA or Math state test pathway requirements. Pathway status is indicated on the top of the subject bar graph.

How do I learn more about my student's skills in English/Language Arts, Mathematics, or Science?

As the school year progresses, your student's teacher will be able to provide more information about your student's skills. Your student's teacher can also provide more information about what your student is learning during this school year and will be tested on in the coming spring of 2022

Formatting for understanding

Bethel hewed closely to the format and language of the existing state report to help parents interpret the results. “The one alteration we did make,” Loffer says, “was to put all subjects on the same report,” instead of separating scores for ELA and math.

The original assessment report created by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) in Washington state was already designed for easy understanding. But by housing the assessment report in SchoolData.net’s highly configurable system, more opportunities for customization were introduced. Each report includes the district’s logo, and the contents can be further personalized to provide district-specific messaging about the results or planned next steps for students’ growth.

“SchoolData.net understands our world and what we're trying to do.”

The development process

Loffer calls the report's development "a pretty easy, quick process," spanning just a few weeks of investigation, review, and approvals before being applied to assessments taken in late 2021.

SchoolData.net also runs the files from the state through a conversion process to make them sync with the district's Student Information System.

"That was a big time saver," says Loffer, "making it do-able for us — and easy."

SchoolData.net's team members, he says, are valued collaborators who "understand our world and what we're trying to do."

Collaborative enhancements

Because the report was developed to answer a statewide need, other districts were quick to inquire about using it in their schools..

When Wenatchee School District got involved, their staff contributed an additional feature: a Spanish translation of all the standardized language on the report. With the benefit of the full "network of SchoolData.net districts," Loffer says, schools are now able to "identify the parents who request Spanish communication and upload the Spanish version for them."

While the formal development phase is finished, the report remains a living document that can adapt to the evolving concerns of educators. Loffer says future enhancements may include the addition of claim scores in ELA and math, if the state opts to make those available again in next year's assessments. The claim scores detail the learnings in specific subtopics, but have not been assessed since fall of 2019.

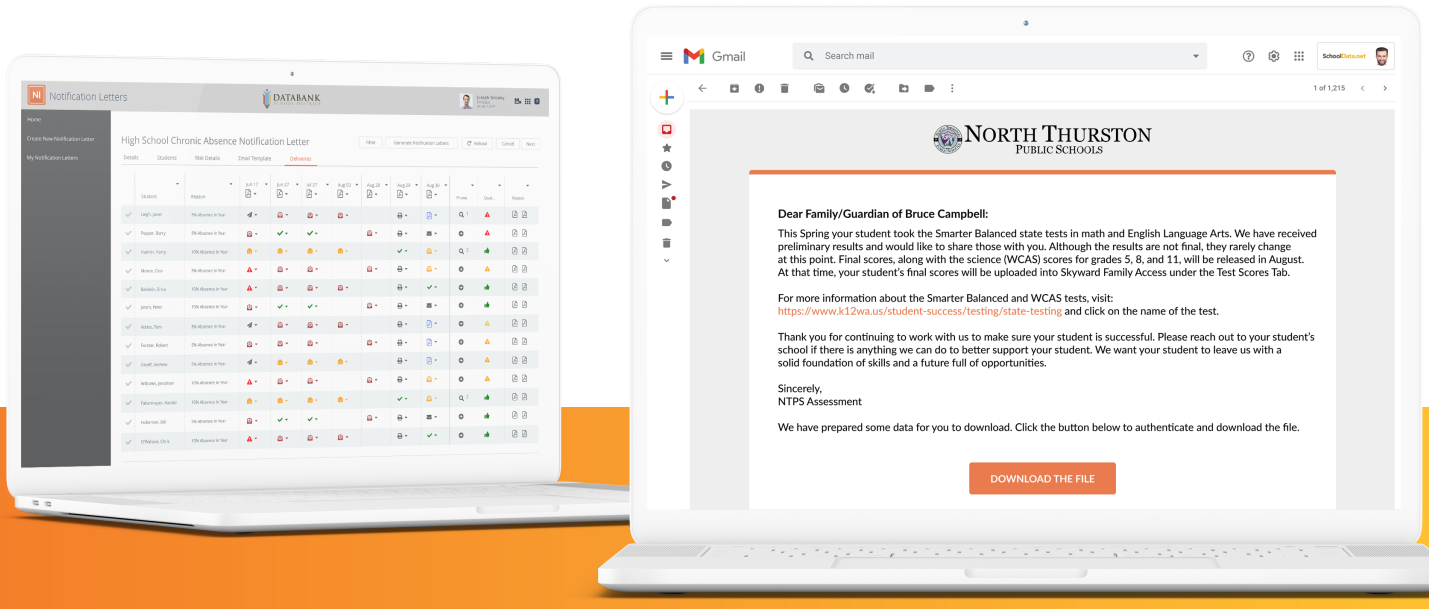
Diverse distribution options

When it came time to release the completed reports generated with preliminary scores from the state, Bethel posted them in the parent portal of their Student Information System, or SIS. Because Bethel is trying to train parents to reference the SIS for school communications, assessment reports for their families were made available in a designated document area. Families were notified through email and other means that the assessment reports were available for download, and physical copies could be printed at a family's request.

Other districts chose a more direct delivery solution. North Thurston School District in Lacey, Wash., worked with SchoolData.net to program a batch email send to affected families.

Using the Notification Letters functionality, each student's assessment report was automatically associated with their guardian's email address. Becky Cottrell, the district's NTSD assessment coordinator, likes that "for parents who don't go into the Family Access portal, it comes straight to their email."

North Thurston "used it as a plug" at the end of the year for families whose students might require extra support. Cottrell says, "It was a great visual for them to be able to see how their students have done and whether they'd be a good candidate for summer school."



Saving staff time and effort

For Cottrell, preparing and sending the reports was “super easy. I think it literally took me a minute to set up the email send.”

Loffer also appreciates that the reports’ delivery is “on my schedule.” For the spring 2022 assessment, Bethel arranged to “print it this summer, at a time when we can get it ready.”

Gutfeld notes, “If we didn’t have SchoolData.net to work with, we’d kind of be in a bind. We knew some of the resources they had to help translate between the users — us — and the programmers and find a way to make it work.”

Districts choose whether to post the report to a parent portal or deliver directly to families via email.

Relationships that yield results

Bethel's long experience with SchoolData.net smoothed the way for this custom development project. Gutfeld knew, "SchoolData is already doing something like this," and wondered: "Can they adapt it for us without a huge cost so we can get something back in a timely fashion and other districts across the state can benefit from it? Could it be a win-win-win?"

> *"Cost-effective development, timely results, and statewide application makes a win-win-win."*

Whether it's a one-page report or a brand-new application, Loffer affirms that projects with SchoolData.net always reflect a "partnership with the user," resulting in software that is laser-targeted to the district's need. "When I see the different products coming out" from the company, he says, "I realize, 'Wow, you're in touch with the districts and the things we're dealing with in Washington state.'"

He feels this attention was clear throughout the assessment report's creation: "The users are leading the way, and SchoolData is listening."

About SchoolData.net

With SchoolData.net, districts can aggregate a wide range of data inputs, integrate them into a single platform, and inform data-driven decisions at every level.

The configurable applications and time-saving automations help educators get quickly to actionable data that improves student success.

Districts can even develop personalized learning plans and streamline communication with families, all while protecting student privacy.

Discover the complete suite of applications, developed hand in hand with educators, at SchoolData.net.

When districts develop new solutions with SchoolData.net, you reap the benefits.

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