

Frequently Asked Questions

Certificate of Academic Achievement Options

OSPI DRAFT

June 2006

What does the term “CAA Options” mean?

After a student has taken the WASL twice but not met standard in one or more content areas, he/she has additional options he/she may attempt to achieve the Certificate of Academic Achievement (CAA) for the purposes of high school graduation.

What is the connection between HB 2195 passed in 2004 and the CAA Options?

House Bill 2195 gave OSPI permission to explore other means to achieving an equal but alternative path to a CAA. For two years OSPI used a contractor to study various options. A feasibility study was conducted on four options. Educators from all over Washington participated in discussions, and, in September 2006, OSPI presented two options to the State Legislature: the Grade Point Average/Washington Assessment of Student Learning (GPA/WASL) Comparison and the Collection of Evidence (COE).

What was approved in SB 6475 in 2006?

The Alternative Assessment (as it was called then) was the top educational bill facing the Washington State Legislature during the 2006 session. Both the House of Representatives and the Senate exchanged several versions before it was finally passed in the last days of the legislative session. Senate Bill 6745 passed the following: “1) comparing the student’s grades with the grades of other students who took the same courses and who met standard on the WASL; 2) a collection of work samples created by a student (Collection of Evidence), which also is to include specific collections designed for students in programs leading to a national or state industry certificate, and 3) obtaining a score on the mathematics component of the PSAT, ACT, or SAT that is equivalent to passing the WASL.”

In OSPI language, what are the three “options” approved for earning a Certificate of Academic Achievement (CAA)?

The three options are: the Grade Point Average/Washington Assessment of Student Learning (GPA/WASL) Comparison, the Collection of Evidence (COE), and the PSAT/SAT/ACT Mathematics Equivalent.

What does the State Board of Education have to approve?

The State Board of Education must approve the guidelines, administrative protocols, the scoring process, and the scoring criteria for Collection of Evidence (COE) by December 1, 2006. Additionally, OSPI must demonstrate that the scoring process includes professionally accepted standards for reliability and validity and that it is comparable in rigor to the skills demonstrated on the WASL.

What does “comparable in rigor, skills, and knowledge to the WASL” mean?

The three options must demonstrate a difficulty level (rigor) that matches or exceeds the high school state standards Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRs) in each content area, and the three options must demonstrate that they match or exceed the same skills and knowledge necessary to pass the WASL in all of the content areas.

How does a student qualify to attempt one or more of the CAA Options?

Students qualify to attempt one or more of the CAA options by meeting two criteria: one, they make a good faith effort to pass the WASL two different times and not meet standard, and two, the district will determine their eligibility for the CAA Options based on the recommendations for their Student Learning Plans including attendance, participation in extended learning opportunities or other assistance programs.

What are the requirements for Career and Technical Education (CTE) students to earn a Certificate of Academic Achievement (CAA)?

The requirements for CTE students to earn a CAA are the same as all students. They may pass the WASL, or if they take the WASL two times and do not meet standard, may use the GPA/WASL Comparison, or earn an equivalent score on the PSAT/SAT/ACT. If they choose to create a Collection of Evidence (COE) they may develop work samples from traditional academic classes, CTE work samples, and/or work samples representing skills from a state or nationally approved industry certificates.

What is the Grade Point Average/Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL/GPA) Comparison?

The WASL/GPA Comparison is an option by which building and/or district staff identifies students who have not met standard in one or more content areas of the WASL and compares those students' GPAs to the GPAs of students who have met or slightly exceeded the standard in those content areas. This cohort of students—who have met the standard—must be at least six students and they must have taken at least two of the same courses together. If the student's GPA who has not met standard is greater than the mean GPA of the students who did meet standard, the student will then receive a CAA.

How will schools/districts compute the numbers?

The manner by which the grade comparison will be computed is still under discussion at OSPI. A decision will be reached by January 2007.

When can schools/districts submit a student's grades comparison for review?

OSPI will have a date and a process determined by January 2007.

How will OSPI ensure that courses across schools and districts are ensuring alignment with state standards?

OSPI will have a date and a process determined by January 2007.

What is the PSAT/SAT/ACT Mathematics Only option?

The PSAT/SAT/ACT Mathematics Only option is where a student takes the WASL twice and does not meet standard, and then decides to take one of the above mathematics assessments for the purpose of using that score as a CAA option. The State Board of Education is working with OSPI and national experts to determine the appropriate "cut score" that is most closely aligned with the cut score on the Mathematics WASL.

When should a district submit a student's scores for review?

OSPI will have a date and a process determined by October 2006.

How will a student be reimbursed for the cost of taking the PSAT/SAT/ACT assessment for the CAA purpose?

OSPI will have a process determined by October 2006.

What is the Collection of Evidence (COE)?

A Collection of Evidence is a selection of student work in a specific content area that the student has gathered over the course of several months. It clearly demonstrates a breadth and depth of the WASL skills and knowledge in the content area. The student work is referred to as a set of "work samples" and each work sample is accompanied by a signed affidavit that it is the student's work. The work samples are always written products in all of the content areas. They may be on-demand samples, independent samples, or classroom samples with limited teacher direction.

Can a student submit a collection for more than one content area in the Collection of Evidence (COE)?

Absolutely. A student may submit three individual collections, one for each content area if they choose. Each collection must meet the sufficiency guidelines for each content area and teacher signatures must be collected for each work sample. If each of the collections is sufficient, they will be scored separately, and the student will receive three separate Individual Student Report Forms indicating whether or not the student has met standard in that content area.

When can students begin collecting work samples for the Collection of Evidence (COE)?

Students can retain work from all high school classes for potential inclusion in a COE. Work from middle school or junior high school will not be considered as evidence of ability as it is not high school level equivalent work. One exception to the rule is if students have taken high school level mathematics while at middle school or junior high school.

Who is responsible for supervising a student during their collection process for the Collection of Evidence (COE)?

A "Collection Coordinator" is responsible for supervising a student during the collection process. This coordinator may be the student's language arts or mathematics teacher, or it may be the counselor or the principal. The coordinator is responsible for registering the student for the scoring deadline, maintaining the file of the student's work, making sure that all forms are signed appropriately, and the notebook is put together correctly and sent to OSPI.

What are the Content Guidelines for the Collection of Evidence (COE)?

The content guidelines are the "rules" for the submission of work samples and the coverage of the WASL skills and knowledge in each content area. Each content area has determined the number of work samples necessary for sufficiency in the collections. For writing it is 5-8 samples, for reading it is 8-12 samples, and for mathematics it is 8-12 samples. Each of these work samples must also adhere to the rigor of the knowledge and skills of the WASL. For writing, the work samples must demonstrate examples of persuasive and expository writing as on the Writing WASL; for reading, the work samples must demonstrate skills represented in the literary and informational learning strands on the Reading WASL, and for mathematics, the work samples must demonstrate the skills represented in the content and process strands on the

Mathematics WASL. In each content area the guidelines stipulate that at least one work sample was produced in an “on-demand” setting; this allows scorers to see a baseline example of student work.

What are the Administrative Forms for the Collection of Evidence (COE)?

The administrative forms are the documentation that ensures that students have taken the WASL twice and not met standard, have in fact completed all of the work samples in the collection, and describe the level of teacher involvement in supervising students as they create the work samples. All of the administrative forms must be completed correctly with the appropriate signatures for a collection to be considered sufficient.

What is a sufficient collection for the Collection of Evidence (COE)?

A sufficient collection contains the appropriate number of work samples that address the required rigor, knowledge and skills of the WASL in each content area. Also, a sufficient collection includes all official OSPI administrative forms filled out correctly with all original signatures on all of the forms. An insufficient collection is missing one or more of the elements of a sufficient collection.

Will schools be provided funds to supplement the additional workload for the Collection of Evidence (COE)?

The Legislature appropriated \$250,000 to offset the cost of the additional work load of implementing collections in schools. Funds will be provided for each building submitting collections. OSPI will make further information available following the close of the registration period for the COE’s spring scoring.

How will schools/districts indicate they want to register a student to have his/her Collection of Evidence (COE) scored?

The registration window will be open from late Fall 2006 to early winter 2007. Registration forms will be available on the CAA Options website. Once the number of student collections has been determined, OSPI will provide information regarding both content level training as well as administrative training for buildings and teachers in early 2007.

When will the scoring take place?

The CAA Options scoring will take place in three stages in early spring 2007. An administrative form sufficiency check will take place first. Rangefinding for the collections will take place the second. Scoring of the collections will take place third. Analysis of the data will take place last. The scoring process will follow a similar schedule in October 2007.

Is there a standard setting process?

Yes, there is a standard setting process for the COE. Following the data analysis process after scoring, OSPI will convene standard setting committees for each of the content areas. A common system will be used to set the standards for each content area. OSPI will use national experts as well as professionally accepted standards for reliability and validity to lead the process. After setting the standards, the cut scores will be applied to the April 2007 collections and Individual Student Reports (ISR) will be issued to the districts, buildings, and schools stating whether students have or have not met standard.

How many times can a student submit a collection for a Collection of Evidence (COE)?

A student may submit a collection up to four times. There are two submission windows in a student's junior year and two submission windows in the senior year. For the class of 2008, however, there are only three submission windows.

Will students have to submit a brand new collection each time?

No. Scorers will provide feedback for each collection regarding weaknesses in particular learning strands in the case of mathematics and reading and persuasive or expository elements for writing. Students may submit work samples that address improvement in identified learning strands.

Who will score the collections?

Washington state teachers will score the COEs in each content area. Teachers will have an opportunity to apply for the scoring panel in each content area. Teachers who have experience scoring the WASL will be recruited as well. Scorers must be high school teachers due to the need to recognize "high school level rigor" in the work samples.

Can my teachers apply to score the Collections of Evidence (COE)?

Absolutely. All high school teachers across the state are encouraged to apply to serve as scorers. OSPI will also seek to select scorers who represent all parts of the state, ethnic diversity, and rural and urban backgrounds.

Where will the scoring take place?

The scoring will take place in the state of Washington. A location has yet to be determined.

What is the process used to score?

All scorers will be trained using the training materials developed by the rangefinding committee in each content area. They will be trained on anchor and practice sets both in work samples and across several collections. They will also be trained on content guidelines and scoring guides. Every collection will be scored twice and non-adjacent scores will be given a third and final score to determine proficiency. Reliability and validity checks will take place on a pre-determined schedule and data will be analyzed daily. After the completion of scoring, Individual Student Report (ISR) Forms will be sent to each student, school, and district. Students will receive feedback on each of the required areas in the content guidelines.

Can a student/parent appeal the score of the Collections of Evidence (COE)?

Yes, students and parents can appeal the result of the COE scoring. The protocols will follow those established by the WASL appeal process. A COE score may be appealed in two different ways: one, the student/parent believes the COE was scored incorrectly, or two, the student/parent believes the COE administrative process was not followed appropriately.

In addition to the content guidelines, what are some important messages to convey about the Writing Collections of Evidence (COE)?

In the Writing COE, there are several important messages. One, the work samples must consist of "connected text," which means complete sentences and paragraphs. COEs should NOT contain work samples that consist of bullets or phrases (such as resumes, lists of instructions, or poetry). Second, all work samples should be accompanied by all drafts including brainstorming (if possible). Thirdly, the work samples must indicate clearly which samples are expository and which samples are persuasive.

In addition to the content guidelines, what are some important messages to convey about the Mathematics COE?

In the Mathematics COE there are several important messages. One, the work samples must be “rich problems.” They must be more than a simple math problem from a text book or even more than an open-ended problem that is similar to a WASL problem. They should involve days of work both in the classroom and independently. Second, each “rich problem” must clearly demonstrate—at a minimum—both a content and a process strand. Third, the “rich problems” must demonstrate the rigor of high school mathematics as described in the state standards, the Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRs).

In addition to the content guidelines, what are some important messages to convey about the Reading COE?

In the Reading COE there are several important messages. First, the work samples must come from both the language arts classroom and other content area classrooms that use informational texts (social studies and/or science, for example). Second, all work samples are written in response to reading a text and must contain text-based evidence as support. The type of texts must be considered “high school level” in rigor. Third, the work samples must clearly demonstrate what skill—WASL reading learning strands—are being demonstrated as opposed to mastery of content in a particular literary or informational field.

Like the WASL, are there sample items, scoring guides, and other assistance documents available from OSPI?

Absolutely. OSPI is rolling out new material on the CAA Options as it is both developed and approved by the State Board of Education. By September 1, 2006 the Educator Handbook for the CAA Options will be available in a downloadable format. Joining it will be content guidelines, administrative forms, scoring guides and scored work samples from the 2005-2006 Pilot. By December 1, 2007 a performance task bank will be available as well. Reading, writing, and mathematics will have content-specific instructional materials to assist teachers in developing work samples for the COE.

Will there be professional development opportunities available so teachers can be trained to help students put together a COE?

Yes. The OSPI CAA Options staff will be traveling to nine ESD sites in late October to deliver both administrative and content-specific training on the COE. Further, once we get exact registration numbers, we will be offering west side and east side of the state training for the specific teachers who are working on collections with their students.

Who is the lead contact person for OSPI if we have more questions?

Please contact Lesley Klenk, CAA Options Administrator, at 360-725-6330 and/or lklenk@ospi.wednet.edu.