

March 2005

Dear Parent or Guardian of a Grade 8 Student,

This spring marks the third year that all students in grade 8 will be taking the Science portion of the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL). The assessment will be given during the period April 18–May 6, although testing is not every day during that period. You will receive scores on your child’s performance on the Grade 8 Science test next September.

Your child will also be taking a district assessment in reading, writing, and math this spring, during the same period of time. The district assessments measure state standards in similar ways as the WASL. The district assessments will be scored by teachers in our district this summer and returned to the students next fall by their Grade 9 teachers.

We will send you the testing schedule for your child as we near that time.

In Edmonds, we use many assessments to help guide your child’s learning from kindergarten through graduation. We strongly believe in the importance of multiple ways to measure learning, including classroom assessments, assignments, homework, presentations and projects, in addition to formal assessments such as our district assessments and the WASL.

The Science WASL and our district assessments are aligned to state standards taught by teachers in our district. Therefore, these tests are simply assessing some of the skills that students have been learning in school. It is important for your child to understand that the information will help their teacher know what they need to work on in school next year.

It is important for parents to set a good balance of encouraging their children to do their best without putting undue pressure or anxiety on them. As long as students “show what they know,” teachers can then plan instruction to best help students learn. Being well rested with a good breakfast also helps students do their best.

An excellent source of information about the WASL is the free publication *Reaching Higher: Improving Learning and Teaching for Washington Students*, available in Chinese, English, Korean, Russian, and Spanish. If you do not yet have a copy, ask at your child’s school or call the district Assessment Office at 670-7303. You may also obtain copies of this publication, along with a great deal of information about the WASL, from the state website [www.k12.wa.us](http://www.k12.wa.us), or by calling toll-free 1-888-59-LEARN.

We appreciate all you do to help your child achieve high standards. Thank you for making learning a priority in your home.

Sincerely,

Principal