



How to Use 2023-24 Forward Exam Assessment Data

Statewide assessment results provide valuable data and can be used to modify improvement plans, deploy resources, and establish professional development planning. These large-scale assessments are only one measure of student achievement and should be used in conjunction with multiple measures, such as interim and formative assessment data, classroom observations, and student grades to gauge student learning.

Considerations When Interpreting 2023-24 Statewide Assessment Data

An [updated English language arts \(ELA\) and mathematics Forward Exam](#) aligned to updated [Wisconsin Academic Standards](#) for ELA (adopted in 2020) and mathematics (adopted in 2021) was administered during spring 2024. Student results for ELA and mathematics are reported on a new 4-digit scale to distinguish them from results reported for the 2016-23 exams, which were reported on a 3-digit scale.

Due to revisions in ELA and mathematics academic standards, test designs (including addition of more questions assessing reading to produce a reading score), blueprints, scales, and [performance level cut scores](#) for those subject areas, many of the simple methods used to compare current-year student performance to prior years, are unavailable. For example, average scale scores cannot be used due to changes in the scale, and the percent in each category cannot be used due to the new performance-level cut scores. It is recommended data users consider spring 2024 the first year of a new trend when comparing student performance in the future.

Complex statistical models, such as value-added and Student Growth Percentiles (SGPs) can still be used to [evaluate academic growth](#) because they do not rely on performance-level data and are not dependent on specific test scales. Value-added models, which are used on school and district report cards, take into consideration variables that are out of the control of the school or district, such as previous academic performance and student demographics. SGPs compare a student's growth to the growth made by students with similar score histories and can be found on [WISEdash for Districts](#).

Appropriate Use of Statewide Assessment Data

When used with multiple measures of student performance, statewide assessment data may be used for:

- evaluating the effectiveness of programs
- school improvement planning and goal setting
- establishing professional development
- alignment of curriculum and deployment of resources

Avoid using assessment results as the sole data point in high-stakes decision making, such as teacher/administrator effectiveness and grade level advancement.

Forward Data Comparisons

Comparable Forward Data:

- Forward Exam science and social studies scales have not changed and therefore results can be compared with prior years.
- Within-year comparisons of student groups, schools and districts in ELA and mathematics.
- [Percentile Rank](#) - Within a given year, percentile ranks compare a student's performance with others who took the same test. For example, a percentile rank of "80" means a student did as well or better than 80 percent of the students who took the same test that year.
- Growth measures such as SGP or value-added.

Not Comparable Forward Data:

- Forward Exam ELA and mathematics scale scores (test scores) and performance levels - Due to changes in test content and scale, ELA and mathematics scale scores cannot be directly compared between 2024 and prior years.

Questions to Consider When Interpreting Data

- What were my participation rates for all groups and years?
- Were the tested students representative of my school/district population as a whole?
- Can I make valid inferences when comparing current results with other administrations, other districts, or the state?

Example of How Participation Can Affect Proficiency Rates

Yearly changes in the makeup of student groups or large differences in test participation rates can be important to consider when interpreting performance data. The proficiency rate will increase or decrease as a result of differences in test participation. Each scenario below shows how participation can determine proficiency rates. Proficiency rates in WISEdash are based on the number of students enrolled.

Hypothetical School	Students Enrolled in Tested Grades	Students Participated in Testing	Meeting or Advanced Students	Developing or Approaching Students	Proficiency Rate in WISEdash
Scenario A	100	100	70	30	70%
Scenario B	100	80	70	10	70%
Scenario C	100	80	56	24	56%

Looking Ahead

Consider the spring 2024 ELA and mathematics exam to be year one in new trend analysis.

- [Wisconsin Academic Standards](#) are reviewed every seven years.
- [Performance-level cut scores](#) may be updated on a similar cycle.
- Comparisons of performance before and after the updates are always difficult as academic standards and interpretation of the performance level categories change.

Accessing Wisconsin State Assessment System (WSAS) Data

- **Where can I access data for my district, school, and students?**
[WISEdash for Districts](#) is a secure platform that provides dashboards for district-wide use of student data including specific detail inquiry, topic-specific current and trend data, and advanced analysis dashboards to compare data and demographics over time.
- **How do I get a WISEdash for Districts login?**
Log into [WISEhome](#) with a personal WAMS ID or an approved district email account and request to have your agency's administrator grant you access to an application through the WISEsecure system.
- **How do I navigate WISEdash for Districts?**
Several [learning resources](#) are available including: WISEdash for Districts guides, videos, and other resources.
- **Where can I access data about Wisconsin schools and districts?**
[WISEdash Public](#) is a data portal that uses dashboards, or visual collections of graphs and tables, to provide multi-year education data about Wisconsin schools. Data on the portal are redacted and available by school, district, or state. Users can disaggregate data by student subgroups and make district or school side-by-side comparisons.
- **Where can I find support in analyzing student assessment data?**
The [WISExplore](#) group builds capacity with educators to engage in data inquiry processes and culturally responsive continuous improvement practices utilizing WISEdash portals and many other data sources. The [Using Assessment Dashboards](#) presentation created by the WISExplore team in collaboration with the Office of Educational Accountability, is a guide to interacting with various dashboards and useful tools to analyze assessment data.