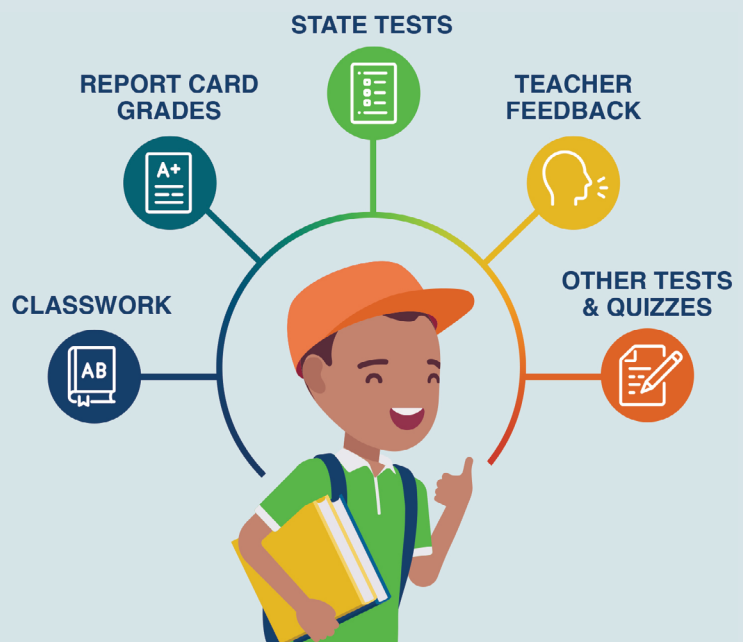# A FAMILY GUIDE TO ANNUAL STATE TESTS IN WYOMING:
One of Many Measures of Student Learning

There are many ways to measure academic performance, and annual state tests are only one of them. These tests are not meant to tell the whole story. They are meant to be combined with other measures, including teacher feedback, classwork and projects, and report card grades. Together, these measures can give families a more complete picture of a student's performance so they can better support learning at home and advocate for their child.

STATE TESTS

REPORT CARD GRADES

TEACHER FEEDBACK

CLASSWORK

OTHER TESTS & QUIZZES

State Assessments 101

The Every Student Succeeds Act or ESSA, requires students to take state tests in reading and math every year in third through eighth grade and once in high school. In Wyoming, students in third through 10th grade take the Wyoming Test of Proficiency and Progress (WY-TOPP) in English language arts and math. Students in fourth, eighth and 10th grade also take a WY-TOPP test in science.

A Focus on Grade Level Skills

Unlike other tests, WY-TOPP is focused on grade level material and is aligned to the state standards. The test questions match what students do and learn in the classroom every day throughout the year, which are the grade level skills that are most important for students to learn in order to move on to more challenging content.

WY-TOPP is taken online and is computer adaptive, which means it adjusts the difficulty of the questions based on the student's responses. The test includes a variety of different types of questions, including traditional multiple choice, as well as real world questions that ask students to analyze text and write well developed essays.

Grade 6: Math

Max builds a model of his house. He spends $48.86 on materials for the model as shown:

- 3 packages of wood at $5.99 each
- 10 miniature windows at $1.79 each
- a roofing packade for r dollars

Create an equation that could be used to solve for the cost, r, in dollars, of the roofing package.

Grade 3: ELA

In Passage 2, what is the author's point of view about viewing the Milky Way?

A   The Milky Way has a long, interesting history.

B   The Milky Way should be photographed more.

C   The Milky Way is easy to find if you know how to look for it.

D   The Milky Way has been ruined over the years by light pollution.

Useful Information for All

FAMILIES: **Understanding Grade Level Performance**

The WY-TOPP report gives families information on how well their child performed on different sets of skills in each subject. Families can use this information to identify where their child is doing well and where they may need support or practice. This helps families better support learning at home. It can also help them start meaningful conversations with teachers, to set goals for each student's areas of improvement and to identify resources and strategies that can be used at home and in school to help students make progress.

Questions to Ask the Teacher about Your Child's WY-TOPP Report:

• **What does this mean about my child's learning?**

• **Is my child on grade level?**

• **Where does my child need more support or improvement?**

• **What short-term learning goals should my child meet to show progress?**

• **How can I support learning at home?**

TEACHERS: **Informing Instruction**

Students take different types of tests throughout the school year. Some students take benchmark or diagnostic tests, such as MAP Growth, i-Ready or STAR. These are taken several times a year and measure mastery of important concepts and skills in reading and math. Students take a test at the beginning of the year to identify their "starting point" and again throughout the year to measure their progress. Benchmark tests help teachers identify and address learning gaps early on so students can stay on track to meet grade level expectations. While WY-TOPP is only given at the end of the school year, it is one way of showing how much progress students made from the beginning of the year and how well they met grade level expectations.

While teachers use WY-TOPP results to understand each student's unique needs and support them in the areas where they need extra help, they also help teachers to improve their instruction. Teachers can use the results to look for trends in their students' learning to see what skills or concepts students learned and what content they struggled with. This helps teachers identify what they taught effectively and where they need to improve or change their instructional strategies.

SCHOOL & DISTRICT LEADERS: Informing Decisions

WY-TOPP results are critical for school and district leaders to make informed decisions about schools and students. School and district level WY-TOPP scores show leaders how students across a school or district are performing and indicate if a certain group of students or schools need more support. This allows them to target additional support or resources to help those schools improve. District leaders can also use WY-TOPP scores to understand what strategies and changes are working.

STATE LEADERS: Helping Schools Improve

State leaders use WY-TOPP results to identify schools and districts that need more support and resources. They identify the schools with the lowest performance in the state, as well as schools with certain groups of students that performed much lower on the test than the rest of the students in that school. These schools receive additional funding and resources from the state to support students and teachers. For example, schools may hire more teachers or tutors or they may purchase additional instructional materials and programs, depending on the needs of their students.

Where Can I Go for More Information?

- For more information, visit EDU.Wyoming.gov/For-District-Leadership/State-Assessment/
- For answers to frequently asked questions, visit EDU.Wyoming.gov/Downloads/Assessments/2019/AssessmentFAQ.pdf
- To see a practice test, visit WYOassessment.org/training-tests.stml
- For ideas on how to support your child's learning at home, visit PTA.org/FamilyGuides
- For more information about the Wyoming PTA visit Sites.Google.com/view/WyomingstatePTA/home