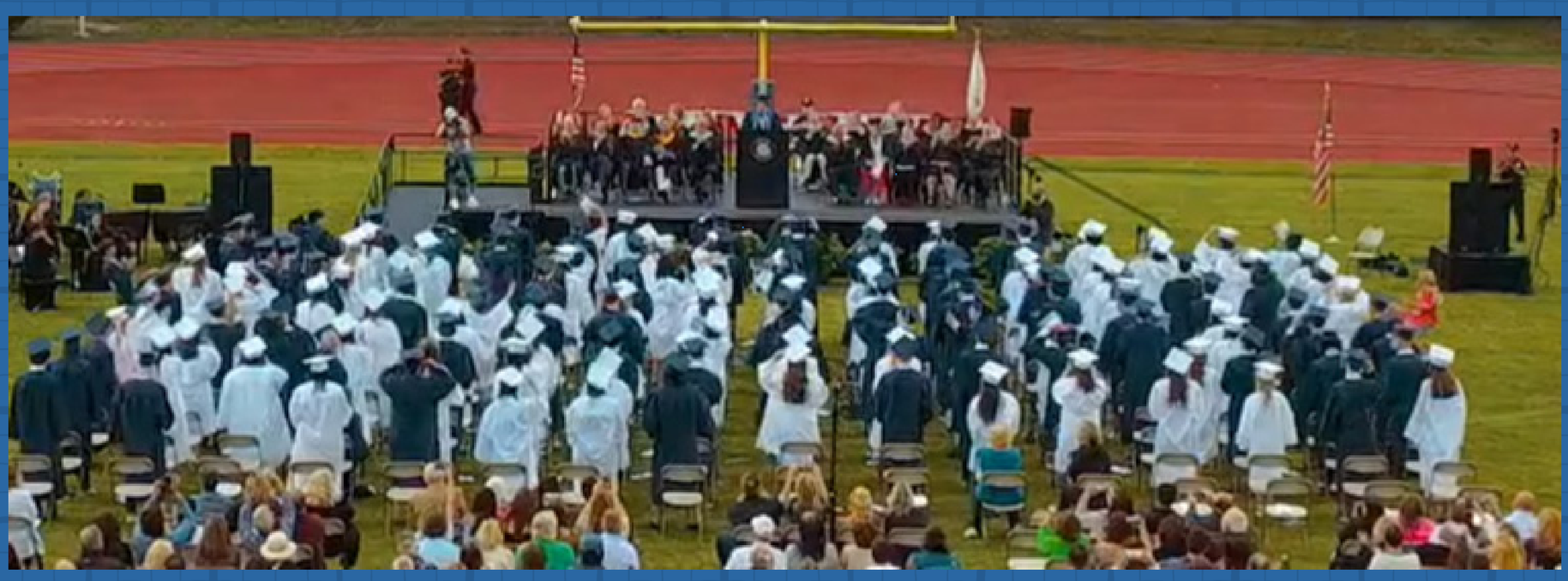
# The Pathway to College and Career Readiness

Where we create an inspiring, challenging, and supportive environment where students are encouraged and assisted in reaching their highest potential.



Family Guidebook 2025-2026

# CONNECTING YOU TO YOUR CHILD'S EDUCATION

**This guide is to help WPS families, students and teachers work together to ensure student success.**

**The Pathway to College and Career Readiness helps identify students' strengths and areas of improvement to ensure each student receives the support they need.**

**Here's how it works:**

- **The milestones described in this guide will be used to address any learning gaps before students transition to a new grade level, college, or the workforce. The data and information collected will be used to address any learning gaps. This work will be addressed through MTSS at all levels, which begins with strong Tier One instruction.**

- **Data reflecting a variety of classroom, local, and state assessments will be collected, reviewed, and shared out through multiple modes of communications from newsletters to school committee presentations.**

- **Families will receive information about whether their child is meeting or not meeting standards through our report card system or if requested by the family. Families at the secondary level have access to student grades in PowerSchool.**

- **School staff, students, and families should work together to ensure student success.**

- **In addition to academic benchmarks, schools will also provide opportunities for students to cultivate core competencies and skills to prepare them for life after high school.**

# PRESCHOOL: Milestone: Kindergarten Readiness

## Why is this important?

A high-quality preschool experience allows children to develop essential social and emotional skills and early learning skills to create a strong foundation for continued success in school and beyond.

## How is this measured?

Teachers assess phonological awareness using Heggarty.

Teachers assess early childhood development and kindergarten readiness using the Brigance Early Childhood screen, and Teaching Strategies Gold assessment.

Teachers assess math skills, using Teaching Strategies Gold assessment.

Teachers assess preschool development across all areas of development and learning using Teaching Strategies Gold assessment.

Teachers monitor social and emotional development using a checklist aligned to the Rhode Island Learning and Development Standards and Teaching Strategies Gold.

## What questions can you ask your teacher?

What does a typical day in preschool look like for my child?

What areas of the classroom and day does my child enjoy?

What strategies are used to support classroom social and emotional development?

What are some fun ways to support my child's development at home?

What activities can we do at home to support early learning skills?

What activities can we do at home to support literacy and math skills?

# Kindergarten, 1st, & 2nd Grades:

# Milestone: Early Literacy and Early Numeracy Skills

## Why is this important?

Understanding early literacy skills is crucial for your child's reading and writing success. "According to Dr. Linnea Ehri's Phase Theory, children develop in stages, as they learn to connect letters with their sounds. With emphasis on explicit phonological awareness and phonics instruction, we help your child become more confident and fluent readers, making it easier for them to read words accurately and automatically."

Understanding early numeracy skills such as counting and comparing numbers in Kindergarten will ensure they are successful in addition and subtraction, place value, shapes, and length measurement by the end of grade 2.

## How is this measured?

Teachers measure reading and math skills through the universal screener STAR Early Literary up to three times a year. Students are expected to score within the normative average range band in all subtests.. Additional diagnostics may be collected to determine if additional instruction is needed.

Teachers assess phonological awareness using Heggerty up to three times a year in K and Grade 1.

Teachers assess foundational reading skills through decoding and encoding Cycle Assessments (phases of reading).

Teachers assess math skills throughout the math unit as checkpoints for learning. Each student completes an end-of-unit assessment.

## What questions can you ask your teacher?

What area of reading or math does my child need additional support or improvement based on their data/ information?

What can I do at home to support my child's reading or math skills?

What strategies are being used to address any reading or math difficulties?

What are some ways I can help my child practice reading and math at home?

# 3rd, 4th, & 5th Grades:

# Milestone: Proficient in ELA and Math

## Why is this important?

Independently reading by the end of Grade 3 is an essential educational benchmark. Students transition from learning to read to reading to learn.

Students in Grades 3, 4, and 5 are expected to apply reading and writing skills across various subject areas. Writing multi-paragraph responses is an expectation.

In Math, Grade 3 students focus on multiplication, fractions, and area.

In Math, Grade 4 students focus on multiplication and division with multi-digit numbers, fractions, and geometry.

In Math, Grade 5 students focus on computing with fractions, dividing with larger numbers, calculating with decimal numbers, and finding the volume of rectangular prisms.

## How is this measured?

Teachers measure grade-level math and literacy skills through the universal screener STAR up to three times a year. Students are expected to score within the normative average range band in all subtests. Additional diagnostics may be collected to determine if additional instruction is needed.

Teachers assess reading comprehension and writing skills. ELA teachers assess with curriculum-based common assessments up to six times a quarter.

Teachers assess math skills formatively throughout the math unit. Each student completes an end-of-unit assessment.

Students in Grades 3-5 take the state assessment RICAS and are expected to score a 3 or higher in ELA and Math.

Grade 5 students also take the science state assessment RINGSA and are expected to score a 3 or higher.

## What questions can you ask your teacher?

What specific literacy and math skills are expected of my child at their grade level?

What texts are appropriate for my child to read?

What area of reading or math does my child need additional support or improvement based on their data/ information?

What can I do at home to support my child's reading, writing, or math skills?

What strategies are being used to address any reading or math difficulties?

# 6th, 7th, & 8th Grades:

# Milestone: Proficient in ELA and Math

## Why is this important?

In middle school, students extend the skills they learned in Grades K-5. The focus is to examine the breadth and depth of their knowledge and skills in literacy and mathematics to ensure students are prepared for high school.

## How is this measured?

Teachers measure vocabulary, reading fluency, reading comprehension, math problem solving, and math fluency through the universal screener STAR up to three times a year. Students are expected to score within the normative average range band in all subtests. Additional diagnostics may be collected to determine if additional instruction is needed.

Teachers assess reading comprehension and writing skills. ELA teachers evaluate with curriculum-based common assessments up to six times a quarter.

Teachers assess math skills formatively throughout the math unit. Each student completes an end-of-unit assessment.

Students in Grades 6-8 take the state assessment RICAS and are expected to score a 3 or higher in ELA and Math.

Grade 8 students also take the science state assessment RINGSA and are expected to score a 3 or higher.

## What questions can you ask your teacher or school counselor?

What specific literacy and math skills are expected of my child at their grade level?

What extra support can the school offer?

How can I support my child's literacy and math development at home to ensure they meet or exceed standards?

My child is in Grade 8. What should I know about him or her enrolling in a Westerly High School Career and Technical Education pathway?

My child is in Grade 8. What should I know about him or her enrolling in Honors/Advanced Placement courses at WHS?

# 9th, 10th, & 11th Grades:

# Milestone: On Track for Graduation

## Why is this important?

These benchmarks are important so students stay on track to graduate and earn a diploma with credentials.

Students who obtain the required credits in Grade 9 courses are three and one-half times more likely to graduate from high school on time.

## How is this measured?

**Class of 2025, 2026, & 2027**

Students need 23 credits to graduate. Students earn credits for each course they take. **See the Grade 12 section for graduation requirements.**

In order for students to advance in the Year of Graduation, they must obtain the following credits:

- Sophomores must have earned at least 5 credits
- Juniors must have earned at least 10 credits
- Seniors must have earned at least 16 credits

Students in Algebra I, Algebra II, and Geometry will complete at least three ALEKS Knowledge Checks annually to assess their math skills and monitor progress, with the goal of meeting personalized growth targets and quarterly benchmarks aligned with curriculum standards.

In October, all Grade 9-11 students take a PSAT assessment. Grade 9 takes the PSAT 8/9, Grade 10 takes the PSAT, and Grade 11 takes the PSAT NMSQT. To meet the English, Reading, and Writing (ERW) expectations your child must score a 410 in Grade 9, 430 in Grade 10, and 460 in Grade 11. To meet Math expectations your child must score a 450 in Grade 9, 480 in Grade 10, and 510 in Grade 11.

All teachers assess specific content knowledge through curriculum based end of unit assessment or performance tasks.

In April, Grade 10 students take the PSAT10 (state assessment). To meet the English, Reading, and Writing (ERW) expectations your child must score a 430. To meet Math expectations your child must score a 480.

# Continued 9th, 10th, & 11th Grades:

# Milestone: On Track for Graduation

## How is this measured?

In April, the Grade 11 students take the SAT (state assessment). To meet the English, Reading, and Writing (ERW) expectations your child must score a 480. To meet Math expectations your child must score a 530.

Grade 11 students also take the science state assessment RINGSA and are expected to score a 3 or higher.

In May, Students in AP courses are expected to take their AP exam. To meet the expectation of proficiency, students must score 3 or higher.

Class of 2028 and beyond:

In addition to the above, students must successfully complete two consecutive years of a world language and Algebra II.

## What questions can you ask your teacher or school counselor?

Has my child earned the appropriate number of credits this school year to be on track to graduate?
What strategies are used at the school to support my child in successfully passing their coursework and common assessments?

What can I do to support my child at home to ensure they are on track to graduate?

Can you provide examples of activities, projects, or experiences that assist my child in developing the skills needed for college and career readiness?

My child began courses but is now interested in enrolling in a CTE program. What should I do to help them inquire and enroll?

# 12th Grade:

# Milestone: High School Diploma with a Crendential

## Why is this important?

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, high school graduates earn up to $290,000 more in their lifetime than those without a high school diploma.

The goal is for students to graduate from Westerly High School with a diploma and an additional credential, such as:

- Advanced Placement
- Early Entrance Programs
- Industry Credentials
- Commissioner's Seal
- Seal of Bi-literacy

## How is this measured?

Students must earn 23 credits by attending school, passing course-work, and common curriculum-based assessments.

Students are required to complete four years of English and four years of Math, including Algebra I, Algebra II(beginning w/ Class of 2028), and Geometry. Additional requirements include Physical Science, Biology, Chemistry, World History, U.S. History, Civics, Physical Education each year, two consecutive years in a Foreign Language (beginning w/ Class of 2028), and one course each in Health, Fine Arts, Computer Competency, and Financial Literacy. Elective credits contribute to the minimum of 23 credits needed for graduation.

All teachers assess specific content knowledge through curriculum based end of unit assessment or performance tasks.

Students must complete 30 hours of community service in a pre-approved setting before graduation. Successfully complete an exhibition of student work through a major applied learning project (i.e. Senior Project).

Demonstrate proficiency in school-wide academic learner outcomes: Effective Communication, Critical Thinking, Problem-Solving, Research, and Self-Reflection.

## What questions can you ask your teacher or school counselor?

Where can I view course syllabi or curriculum details?
Where can my student find community service opportunities?
Is my child on track to graduate?
How can I review my child's transcript with their counselor?
How can I support my child in earning credits and graduating?
Who can clarify requirements for the Senior Project?

# Glossary

- ALEKS - An adaptive math program that provides each student with a personalized learning path. Using engaging answer tools, immediate feedback, and automatic assessments, ALEKS helps students review and master the skills needed to be successful in their math class.

- Brigance Early Childhood Screen - The Brigance Early Childhood Screen is a developmental screening tool used to evaluate young children's skills in areas like motor development, language, cognitive abilities, and social-emotional growth. It helps identify children who may need extra support or further evaluation to reach developmental milestones.

- Career and Technical Education - The Career & Technology Pathways Program at Westerly High School offers nine RIDE certified pathways. Art Designer, Construction, Cosmetology, Criminal Justice, Culinary Arts, Entry Level Software/Web Developer, Information Technology, Medical, and P-Tech offer classes for students interested in experiencing these career fields. With each course, students have the opportunity to earn their high school diploma while also earning industry certification, and college credits.

- Curriculum-Based Common Assessments - These are the common grade-level measurements used to evaluate all students' knowledge and skills based on the curriculum they are learning regardless of teacher.

- Fluency - The ability to read text accurately, quickly, and with proper expression.

- Heggerty - Is a phonemic awareness curriculum designed to help young children develop the skills needed to recognize and manipulate sounds in spoken words. It focuses on building foundational skills for reading and spelling by using daily, engaging, and interactive lessons.

- Normative Average Band - A range of scores or values that represent typical or average performance in a specific population. It is based on data collected from a large, representative group, often from standardized assessments or measurements. This band helps to show where an individual's score falls in comparison to the broader population. Aimsweb uses national norms.

- Phonics - The relationship between letters (or groups of letters) and the sounds they represent. It helps children decode written words by understanding how sounds correspond to letters and letter patterns.

- Phonological Awareness - The ability to recognize and manipulate the sounds of spoken language. It's an essential early literacy skill that helps children learn to read and spell.

- Rhode Island Comprehensive Assessment Program - State Assessments (Federal Requirement)
  - RICAS - The Rhode Island version of the Massachusetts MCAS for Grades 3-8 in English Language Arts (ELA) and math assessment. Focuses on students' critical thinking abilities, application of knowledge, and ability to make connections between reading and writing. This assessment gives a signal of student readiness for the next grade level. *Computer-based with multiple choice, short-constructed, and extended essay responses.

  - RINGSA - The Rhode Island Next Generation Science Assessment measures students' science knowledge and their ability to think critically, analyze information, and apply science practices in Grades 5, 8, & 11. *Computer-based with multiple choice and short-constructed responses.

  - PSAT, PSAT/NMSQT®, PSAT™ 10, and PSAT™ 8/9 - These assessments examine reading, writing, and math skills at a level appropriate for the various grade levels taking the test. The SAT Suite of Assessments is designed for students, parents, and teachers to understand and track student progress toward college and career readiness. *Computer-based

- STAR - It is a short, computer-based assessment used in reading and math to measure what students know and are ready to learn next. It is a **norm-referenced** tool, meaning it compares a student's performance to that of other students nationwide, helping teachers track growth and tailor instruction (replaced Aimsweb).

- Teaching Strategies GOLD Assessment - GOLD is an ongoing observational assessment system used in early childhood settings. Teachers gather information about your child's development and learning across areas such as language, math, social skills, and physical growth. The goal is to tailor instruction to meet each child's unique needs and track their progress over time.

#BULLDOGNATION