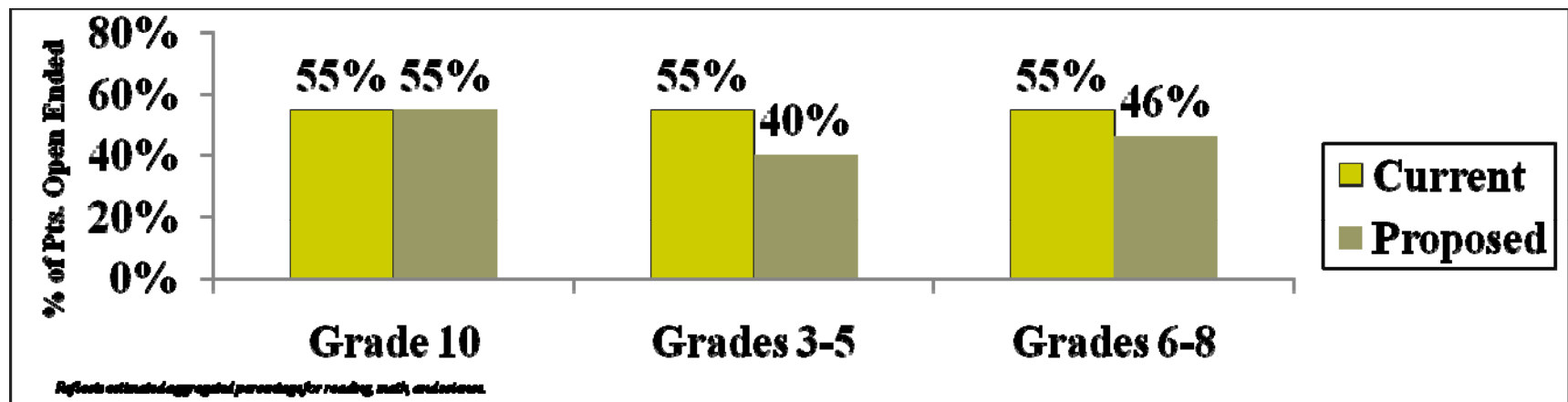




Background for Discussion of Multiple Choice and Open Ended Questions in an Assessment System

*By Legislative Staff
September 22, 2008
WASL Workgroup*

In grades 3-8, the proportion of the WASL comprised of open-ended questions is expected to decrease in the coming year



- Due to the graduation requirement being tied to the 10th grade WASL and other factors, there is no plan to change the proportion of open-ended questions in that grade level.
- The changes in grades 3-8 are expected to reduce the number sessions and number of testing days.



Cost Issues

- In 2008, the estimated WASL cost was about \$18 per test per content area.
- Even with the reduction in open-ended questions, due to other factors, the estimated cost is expected to dramatically increase in 2009 and subsequent years.
- The per test cost in other states that use little or no open-ended questions in their assessment are significantly lower...with some less than \$10 per test per content area.



Potential Key Questions

- How much do and should the standards matter in determining the composition of an assessment?
- If the state were to further decrease the proportion of the open-ended questions, what is lost in terms of the assessment schools and students?
- Are there particular types of students that do better or worse on multiple choice versus open-ended questions?
- How should any changes in the composition of the annual assessment be coupled with other more periodic gauges of student and schools (e.g. diagnostics, classroom based assessments)?