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A student hurries past rows of lockers at Mountain View Middle School in Bremerton last fall. State assessment scores were recently released for all Washington schools, and while Bremerton made improvements year-over-year, the district still lags behind peers in Kitsap County. MEEGAN M. REID/KITSAP SUN

Data shows improvements, areas of concern for schools

Jeff Graham
Kitsap Sun
USA TODAY NETWORK

When the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction released 2025 state assessment scores in September, OSPI chief Chris Reykdal expressed both optimism and caution when citing the gains made by students across the state in the areas of in English language arts (ELA), math and science.

“Washington students continue to perform on par with or better than their peers across the nation,” Reykdal said.

“Among the 11 other states using the same state test vendor as we do, our students have the second-highest performance in ELA and the fourth-highest performance in math. At the same time, we have gaps to close.”

Of the roughly 1.1 million students enrolled in state public schools, 70.9% showed “foundational” grade-level knowledge in ELA, 63.3% in math and 62.6% in science. Those numbers are up slightly from 2024, when 70.8% of students achieved foundational knowledge in ELA, 62.7% in math and 62% in science. The 2025 state numbers, how-

ever, are well behind pre-pandemic levels (in 2018, the percentages were 79% in ELA, 73.4% in math and 65.7% in science, according to OSPI data).

Locally, the Bainbridge Island, Central Kitsap, North Kitsap and South Kitsap school districts surpassed the 2025 state average in all three assessment subjects, while Bremerton and North Mason achieved scores below the state average.

Reykdal admitted that measuring student learning is a “complex” issue

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Some burn bans lifted in Kitsap

Peiyu Lin
Kitsap Sun
USA TODAY NETWORK

As the cooler weather and rains have returned, Kitsap County will lift phase one and phase two burn bans on Friday, Oct. 3.

Phase 1 and Phase 2 outdoor burn bans will be lifted effective 8 a.m. on Friday, Oct. 3, meaning recreational fires and general outdoor burning may resume, subject to normal rules and regulations, the Kitsap County Fire Marshal announced.

Over the past week, the county has received between 0.3 and 1.25 inches of rain across most areas, temperatures are cooling, and fuel moisture conditions have improved, the county said.

“With the return of the normal fall weather patterns and rainfall, we can again have small recreational fires and general outdoor burning — subject to the normal permitting requirements,” said David Lynam, Kitsap County Fire Marshal of the Department of Community Development in a statement.

“The fuels are damp on the surface but still very dry inside, so extra caution when burning is needed,” Lynam said.

According to the county, only natural vegetation grown on the property may be burned. Burn piles must not exceed 10x10 feet in size. Land clearing debris may not be burned. Maintain at

See BURN BANS, Page 2A

Parties trade blame for federal shutdown

Protracted stalemate seems increasingly likely

Joey Garrison and Bart Jansen
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON – Democrats have no idea how long the government shutdown will last. Talk to Republicans, they say.

Ask Republicans, and they point the finger back at Democrats.

Vice President JD Vance said he thinks the shutdown could be over soon. But that’s a “pure guess.”

Only one fact was undisputed: The

federal government’s 15th shutdown since 1981 entered Day Two on Oct. 2.

Senators left town until Oct. 3 to observe the Jewish Yom Kippur holiday, meaning the first shutdown since 2019 would last one more day at minimum. Yet a drawn-out shutdown lasting several more days became an increasing possibility as President Donald Trump, his Republican allies in Congress and Democrats showed no signs of budging amid their impasse.

The main sticking point remains

changes to health care policy, which Democrats have demanded be part of legislation to fund the government. They want to reverse Medicaid cuts and extend Obamacare premium subsidies that will expire at the end of the year, raising health insurance prices for millions of Americans.

“Donald Trump and Republicans shut the federal government down because they don’t want to provide health care to working-class Americans,” said House Minority Leader Hakeem

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The entrance to Cabrillo National Monument in San Diego is closed Oct. 1, the first day of a partial government shutdown. MIKE BLAKE/REUTERS

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