

HOW DID THESE ASSESSMENTS COME ABOUT?

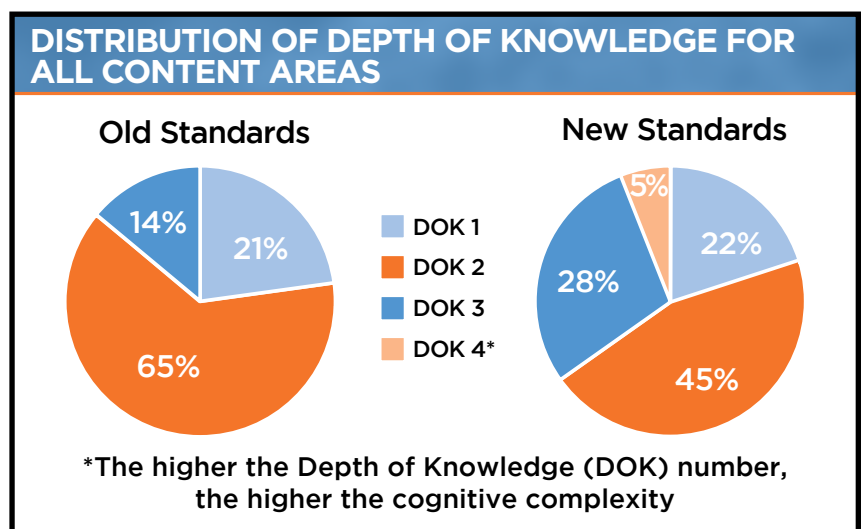
After Oklahoma rewrote its science, English language arts (ELA) and mathematics standards, new assessments had to be developed to measure those standards. HB 3218 (2016) eliminated the End of Instruction exams (EOIs) and required the State Board of Education to review the system of assessments, with input from stakeholders, and make recommendations to the Legislature for approval. The bill required the assessments to include a measure of comparability among other states. The recommendations to utilize standards-based, state-developed assessments in grades 3-8 and a nationally recognized college- and career-ready assessment (ACT or SAT) in high school were adopted by the Legislature in the 2017 legislative session.

WHO WAS INVOLVED IN THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPING THE ASSESSMENTS?

Educators have been leading this work every step of the way. First, the ELA and math academic standards were developed with input from more than 3,000 educators. Subsequently, a 95-member Assessment and Accountability Task Force, representing educators, business and community, was assembled to provide input into the recommendations for the assessment system. This process was coupled with broad stakeholder feedback on the ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act) State Plan – Oklahoma’s 8-year plan for education – and encompassed more than 5,000 points of contact across the state. Finally, Oklahoma educators met in summer 2017 to set performance levels for the new assessments. More than 400 applied to participate, and 121 were selected.

HOW ARE OKLAHOMA’S ACADEMIC STANDARDS DIFFERENT FROM WHAT WE’VE HAD IN THE PAST?

The state’s repeal of Common Core necessitated the development of new ELA and math standards to ensure that our students are prepared for the college or career paths of their choice and an evolving workforce. Oklahoma had previously revised its science standards in 2014 based on college- and career-readiness expectations. The spring 2017 assessments were the first to be aligned to these more comprehensive standards. The Depth of Knowledge (DOK) of the new standards-aligned assessments is much more complex than it was for the old Priority Academic Student Skills (PASS) assessments.





WHY ARE OUR ACADEMIC STANDARDS EMPHASIZING COLLEGE AND CAREER PREPARATION?

In 2015, 46 percent of jobs in Oklahoma were available to those with only a high school diploma. That percentage is projected to shrink to 23 percent by 2025 – a 50-percent reduction in available jobs for students who do not pursue education beyond high school. Of the new jobs created since 2008, **only 1 percent** went to those with a high school diploma or less. We must prepare our students for their future, not our past.

WHY DO WE NEED TO COMPARE OKLAHOMA STUDENT PERFORMANCE TO NATIONAL ASSESSMENTS LIKE NAEP, ACT AND SAT?

For many years, our state has only compared Oklahoma students to Oklahoma students. To ensure that our students are nationally and regionally competitive, our assessments must be measured against a national yardstick. As a result, we will now have a clear-eyed view of the status of Oklahoma students compared against national criteria, which will better position them for postsecondary success. Additionally, a more meaningful and aligned assessment and accountability system will better focus school efforts toward growth and improvement.

HAS SOMETHING ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE-LEVEL DESCRIPTORS CHANGED?

Previous assessments and performance-level descriptors did not accurately reflect student progress. Some families accustomed to seeing their children in the *Proficient* or *Advanced* categories may find it difficult to understand why they now appear in a lower performance band. It is important for a child's knowledge and skills to be a clear reflection of learning that positions him or her for success beyond high school.

While current law requires using the descriptors *Advanced*, *Proficient*, *Limited Knowledge* and *Unsatisfactory* for student assessment results, terms such as **BASIC** for *Limited Knowledge* and **BELOW BASIC** for *Unsatisfactory* better describe the performance bands. *Basic* is an indication that students have basic skills but are still working toward being on track for college and career readiness. Their skills are still developing. Students in the traditional *Unsatisfactory* category have beginning or emerging skills, better understood as *Below Basic*. The *Proficient* performance band now indicates a student as early as third grade is on track to being college and career ready. These descriptors, which correspond to those used by NAEP, acknowledge students' progress and indicate that they are able to achieve growth.

The new accountability system builds from the belief that all schools can improve and all children can grow. To give our students a competitive edge, we must not be satisfied with *Basic*; the goal remains to help all students grow and move toward *Proficient*. Now that Oklahoma has strengthened its academic standards and aligned its assessments to national benchmarks like ACT, SAT and NAEP, this year represents **a total reset, and scores cannot be compared to those in previous years.**



WHY DID PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS CHANGE?

These revised performance levels may feel like a big change, but in reality, our students' performance hasn't changed – our expectations of them have changed now that we have aligned our standards and assessments with SAT, ACT and NAEP to ensure that proficiency indicates college and career readiness.

HOW CAN I HELP FAMILIES IN MY DISTRICT UNDERSTAND THEIR CHILD'S PERFORMANCE?

Oklahoma has reset its assessments for two reasons: first, to develop great thinkers, problem-solvers and innovators so that our students can succeed in college or career and compete for the best jobs of the future, and second, to save families college tuition dollars (\$22 million a year) by reducing remediation rates.

We cannot afford to delay academic conversations about college and career readiness until a student's junior or senior year. With this new, nationally comparable system of assessments, we will have an understanding of whether students are on track for college and career as early as elementary and middle school and will have time to adjust their trajectory as needed.

These scores do **not** indicate that students are less smart or that teachers, districts or schools are less effective. They **do** reflect student performance against a national yardstick and the job market's increased expectations. Our children, teachers, schools and communities must pull together to support and encourage each other as we work together to give our students a competitive edge.

WHAT ARE THE FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS ON TESTING?

The federal Every Student Succeeds Act requires annual assessments in English language arts and math in grades 3-8 and once in high school. Science must also be assessed once in elementary, middle and high school.

HOW COULD A STUDENT SCORE *UNSATISFACTORY/BELOW BASIC* ON THE 3RD-GRADE ELA ASSESSMENT AND STILL MEET RSA CRITERIA?

It is important to clarify that the end goal for the 3rd-grade Reading Sufficiency Act (RSA) is different than the end goal for the 3rd-grade English language arts assessment. To meet RSA criteria, students must be able to demonstrate basic 3rd-grade reading skills. However, achieving *Proficient* on the 3rd-grade ELA assessment means a student is "on track" to be college and career ready without need for remediation after high school.

To determine if a student met RSA criteria, only the reading portion of the 3rd-grade ELA assessment is used. The reading portion is defined by state law as reading comprehension and vocabulary, which refers to Standards 2 and 4 of the Oklahoma Academic Standards (see 3rd-grade standards here: <http://bit.ly/2j3o881>). The 3rd-grade ELA state assessment measures five standards altogether. Therefore, a student may have scored well on Standards 2 and 4 for RSA but had lower scores on the remaining three standards, resulting in a lower overall score. Students might also be able to meet RSA criteria by demonstrating basic reading skills on Standards 2 and 4 but not be able to show that they are on track to be college and career ready on the complete 3rd-grade ELA assessment in those areas.



HOW DOES THE NEW ASSESSMENT SYSTEM AFFECT THE 8TH-GRADE DRIVEN TO READ LAW?

State law requires that a student demonstrate a satisfactory reading ability at the 8th-grade level to apply for a driver permit or license. Considering the complexity of the new assessments, scores of *Limited Knowledge/Basic* or above meet this requirement. Although students scoring *Limited Knowledge/Basic* are not on track for college and career readiness, this score indicates that students have attained basic comprehension, thereby meeting the legal requirement of satisfactory reading ability at the 8th-grade level.

WILL STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES TAKE THE COLLEGE- AND CAREER-READINESS ASSESSMENTS?

All students enrolled in the 11th grade will participate in the College and Career Readiness Assessment (CCRA) for the 2017-18 school year, which includes either the SAT or ACT plus writing, except students participating in the Oklahoma Alternate Assessment Program (OAAP). Both the SAT and ACT require schools to request appropriate accommodations for students with a documented need. Accommodation needs should be addressed during the development of the grade 11 student's Individualized Education Program (IEP)/Section 504 or through the amendment process as necessary.

WHY IS SCIENCE ASSESSED SEPARATELY?

The SAT does not offer a science component. Federal regulations require that we assess science in high school once in grades 10-12. Because the ACT assesses only science reasoning skills, it does not meet the federal accountability requirement. As a result, we must administer an independent science test, but it will be taken within the same April testing window as the SAT or ACT. For more information about the grade 11 science assessment, visit <http://tinyurl.com/oksciupdate>.

DOES THAT MEAN STUDENTS WILL BE EXEMPT FROM THE SCIENCE PORTION OF THE ACT?

No. If a district chooses ACT, then students must take the entire ACT for their scores to be valid for postsecondary purposes.

WHY DO STUDENTS WHO DO NOT PLAN TO GO TO COLLEGE NEED TO TAKE THE SAT OR ACT IN GRADE 11?

These assessments provide valuable indicators of career readiness. The definition of career readiness has shifted as entry-level careers continue to evolve to include greater expectations of technical skills. Students who do not plan to attend college immediately after graduation still need to be prepared for a career, internship, trade or technical school. For more information about how Oklahoma is rethinking the role of assessment and the needs of 21st-century students as they transition out of high school, visit <http://engage.ok.gov/transitioning-to-oas/>.



WILL THESE CHANGES AFFECT STUDENTS' ABILITY TO ENROLL IN CAREERTECH?

No. These assessments will be used to take a snapshot of what students are retaining in math, ELA and science and should in no way inhibit or change students' CareerTech course pathways. Remember, a physical science course is now a graduation requirement (Senate Bill 1380, 2016) that must be considered.

WHAT IS THE STATUS OF THE A-F SCHOOL REPORT CARD THIS YEAR?

The new multi-measures school report card is a true growth model. As such, it will be impossible to release a full report card absent growth data, which will be available after the Oklahoma School Testing Program assessments in spring 2018. **The first full report card will be released in fall 2018.** OSDE is developing a separate set of FAQs on the school report card to be available later this fall.

WHAT IS THE ESSENTIAL DIFFERENCE IN THIS TOTAL RESET IN ASSESSMENTS?

The high-stakes nature of the EOI assessments added significant pressure on teachers, students and administrators without producing academic gains. By decoupling high school assessment from graduation requirements, these assessments will provide districts feedback on the areas where students need growth and improvement, better directing instructional resources toward what is best for students' education and postsecondary success. EOI tests measured outdated PASS academic standards, which had significantly lower learning expectations than Oklahoma's new academic standards.

HOW WILL THIS SHIFT HELP MOVE OKLAHOMA FORWARD?

The new standards and assessments will ensure that our students are ready for and able to compete for high-skill, high-demand jobs. Too often, our students' dreams don't match their skill sets. By changing what we expect of students, we can close this gap. This change will also reduce the financial burden on families paying for non-credit bearing, remedial college courses – a cost of \$22 million annually for Oklahoma families.

The new standards and assessments also shift schools' focus to comprehensive, complex and deep learning for students. By moving away from test-prep classrooms that are heavy in recall-based learning and focusing instead on teaching content for long-term retention, understanding and application of learning, students will be better prepared for the demands of the college classroom and the workforce.

WHEN WILL FAMILIES IN OUR DISTRICT RECEIVE THEIR CHILDREN'S RESULTS?

Families will begin receiving individual student reports in late November.