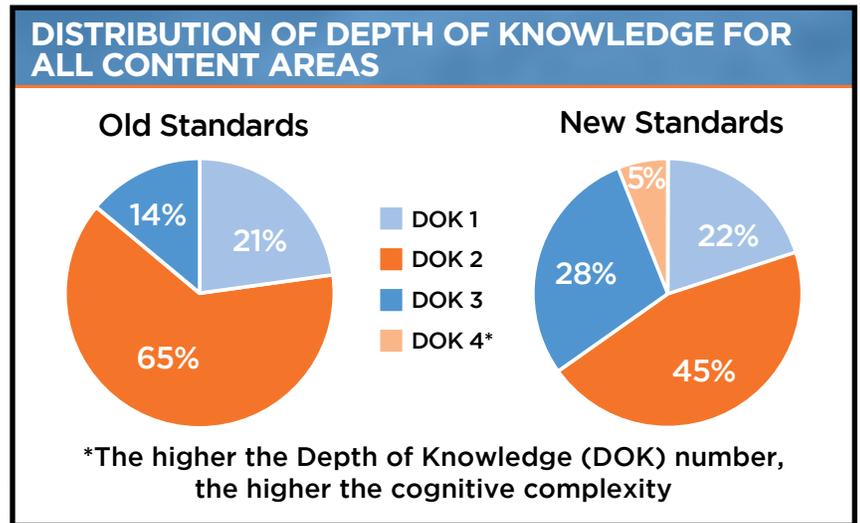


HOW ARE OKLAHOMA'S ACADEMIC STANDARDS DIFFERENT FROM WHAT WE'VE HAD IN THE PAST?

The state's repeal of Common Core necessitated the development of new English language arts and mathematics 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. As the chart indicates, 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?

To ensure that our students are nationally and regionally competitive, our assessments are now measured against a national yardstick for comparability. As a result, Oklahoma 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. For more information about NAEP (the National Assessment of Educational Progress), including results, sample questions and more, please visit The Nation's Report Card (NAEP) at <https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/>. To find resources for teachers, including toolkits for math, visit <https://bit.ly/okmathtoolkit>, for English language arts (ELA), visit <https://bit.ly/elaoktoolkit> and for science, visit <https://bit.ly/okscitoolkit>.



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. We encourage you to stress the importance of a child's knowledge and skills being a clear reflection of learning that positions him or her for success beyond high school.

Although we are currently required by law to use the descriptors *Advanced*, *Proficient*, *Limited Knowledge* and *Unsatisfactory* for student assessment results, we recommend schools use **BASIC** for *Limited Knowledge* and **BELOW BASIC** for *Unsatisfactory* to help better explain the bands to parents and students. *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 could be termed *Below Basic* due to their beginning or emerging skills. These descriptors, which correspond to those used by NAEP, can acknowledge their 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*.

Comprehensive changes involve a learning curve for everyone. Consistent explanations of the new assessment system and its emphasis on preparing Oklahoma students for the future will provide valuable support to families.

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.

WHY ARE FEWER STUDENTS IN THE *PROFICIENT* OR *ADVANCED* CATEGORIES ON THE 2016-2017 ASSESSMENTS?

The new academic standards determine proficiency that reflects college and career readiness. In the past, students were deemed proficient if they demonstrated basic grade-level skills. Under the new definitions, students are considered proficient if they are on track to be college and career ready. The number of students who perform at the *Proficient* and *Advanced* levels declined because scores prior to spring 2017 were determined without a national comparison and were therefore useful only to compare students within Oklahoma. 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.**



WHAT SHOULD I SAY TO A FAMILY WHOSE CHILD’S PERFORMANCE SEEMS TO HAVE CHANGED SIGNIFICANTLY?

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 you college tuition dollars (\$22 million a year) by reducing remediation rates.

We cannot afford to delay academic conversations about college and career readiness until your child’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. Your child, teachers, school and community will need your support and encouragement as we work together to give our students a competitive edge. As your child’s superintendent/principal/counselor/teacher, I hope you will stay engaged with me and with our school to ensure that we develop a productive learning partnership.

WHAT ARE THE FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS ON TESTING?

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

OKLAHOMA SCHOOL TESTING PROGRAM 2017-2018 ASSESSMENTS			
	MATH	ELA	SCIENCE
Grade 3	✓	✓	
Grade 4	✓	✓	
Grade 5	✓	✓	✓
Grade 6	✓	✓	
Grade 7	✓	✓	
Grade 8	✓	✓	✓
COLLEGE- AND CAREER-READY ASSESSMENT			
	ACT or SAT		SCIENCE CONTENT
Grade 11	✓		✓



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.

WHY MUST STUDENTS TAKE THE SAT OR ACT?

House Bill 3218 eliminated End of Instruction exams (EOIs) in high school and called for the Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE) to consult with specific stakeholders. A 95-member Assessment and Accountability Task Force and OSDE agreed with a recommendation from Oklahoma educators and administrators to use a nationally recognized assessment in high school. To meet state and federal assessment requirements, individual districts will now choose the SAT or the ACT as Part One of the college- and career-readiness assessment (CCRA). A science content assessment will be Part Two of the CCRA to meet federal requirements.

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.



WILL THE ACT/SAT ALIGN WITH OUR STATE'S EXPECTATIONS FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS?

Yes, Oklahoma intends for all students to be prepared for success after graduation. To ensure that our students are competitive and to reduce the financial burden on families paying for non-credit bearing college courses, Oklahoma has aligned its definition of Proficient with the SAT and ACT national benchmarks. Students are required to take the SAT or ACT, but individual student scores have been decoupled from graduation requirements. Districts will be able to use the scores to obtain general information about how students are performing in different subject areas and modify curriculum and instruction as necessary. By using the SAT or ACT, we ensure that our students are prepared for the changing demands of our workforce.

WHY ARE THE HIGH SCHOOL ASSESSMENTS ALL IN GRADE 11?

The assessments are in grade 11 as a checkpoint for gauging students' college and career readiness and to provide guidance for coursework needed in the senior year.

CAN SCHOOLS TEST STUDENTS EARLIER THAN GRADE 11?

All grade 11 students are required to take the state college- and career-readiness assessment in April to meet state and federal accountability requirements. This test administration is at no cost to students or districts. Students may be provided the opportunity to take the SAT/ACT on other dates at district or student expense. ACT/SAT results may be used for college admission requirements.

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

All students enrolled in the grade 11 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 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.

CCRA accommodation requests must be submitted to SAT or ACT during the designated window and approved before students can be provided their SAT- or ACT-specific accommodations. Assessment accommodations requested on behalf of the student must be regularly used in classroom instruction and documented in the student's IEP/504. If an accommodation request is denied, the student may either take the SAT or ACT with state-approved OSTP Accommodations (not a college reportable score) or take the SAT/ACT (college reportable score) without accommodations, per SAT/ACT policy.



WHY IS SCIENCE ASSESSED SEPARATELY?

The SAT does not offer a science component. Federal regulations require that we assess science in high school 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 CCRA 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, English language arts and science and should in no way inhibit or change your student's CareerTech course pathways. Remember, a physical science course is now a graduation requirement (Senate Bill 1380, 2016) that must be considered.

HOW WILL STUDENTS WHO SELF-SELECT INTO THE CORE CURRICULUM AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE COLLEGE PREPARATORY/WORK-READY CURRICULUM (70 O.S. §11-103.6) BE AFFECTED BY THE SHIFT TO COLLEGE- AND CAREER-READINESS ASSESSMENTS?

Students who enroll in the Core Curriculum are not required to take geometry, literature, Algebra II or a class from the physical sciences (chemistry, physics or physical science). Content from these classes will be assessed on the CCR assessments. The CCRA are designed to assess readiness to enter college or career after high school. Choosing the core curriculum option is a decision parents and students should consider carefully and with the guidance of a high school counselor or administrator. Career opportunities are changing dramatically nationwide, and those who do not pursue the College Preparatory/Work-Ready Curriculum will face a shrinking job market upon graduation.



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.

WHEN WILL WE SEE THE STATE AVERAGE SCORES ON THE OSTP ASSESSMENTS?

On or before December 1, 2017.