

THE SCHOOL REDESIGN NETWORK  
AT STANFORD UNIVERSITY

# Multiple Measures Approaches to High School Graduation



---

LINDA DARLING-HAMMOND, ELLE RUSTIQUE-FORRESTER & RAYMOND L. PECHEONE

WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF ALETHEA ANDREE

This report shows how the design of high school graduation policies can have important consequences for teaching, learning, and student attainment. It contrasts the results of single-test approaches to graduation with those of states using a broader range of measures to award a high school diploma. The report profiles the assessment systems of 27 states, describing policy strategies that have been developed to enhance rigor in the high school program while providing diverse means for students to demonstrate their learning. These assessment systems seek to evaluate the full range of state learning standards, including higher-order thinking and performance skills, and they provide teachers with useful and timely information about student learning, which is essential to classroom teaching and school improvement. In general, multiple measures approaches to high school graduation have helped to raise achievement without increasing dropout rates, thus improving education for more students and addressing one of the concerns about test-only approaches to determine eligibility for graduation.

© 2005 SCHOOL REDESIGN NETWORK

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

SCHOOL REDESIGN NETWORK

STANFORD UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

520 GALVEZ MALL

STANFORD, CA 94305-3084

PHONE: 650.725.0703

FAX: 650.736.0968

SRN@STANFORD.EDU

[HTTP://SCHOOLREDESIGN.NET](http://SCHOOLREDESIGN.NET)

*The School Redesign Network is funded by a generous grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation*

# CONTENTS

- Overview ..... 1
- Issues in Testing for High School Graduation ..... 8
- Multiple Measures Approaches to Graduation ..... 13
- Examples of Multiple Measures Approaches to Graduation ..... 17
  - States that Include Alternative State Assessments in their Assessment Systems ..... 18
  - States that Combine Local Performance Assessments with State Tests ..... 24
  - States that Rely on Local Performance Assessments ..... 30
- Components of a Multiple Measures System for High School Graduation ..... 35
- Endnotes ..... 44
- Appendix A: Overview of High School Graduation Policies in States with Multiple Measure Approaches ..... 48
- Appendix B: State Profiles of High School Graduation and Assessment Policies ..... 50



## OVERVIEW

Over the last decade, virtually all states have initiated standards-based reforms that have sought to define more clearly what students should know and be able to do as a result of their education. In many cases, these standards for learning have been linked to assessments, curriculum frameworks, teacher education, professional development, and other investments in an attempt to create coherence and momentum for school improvement. While state strategies and the outcomes of these efforts have varied, there is evidence that comprehensive systemic reforms have helped to improve instruction and student learning in some states.<sup>1</sup>

The testing systems that have resulted from these initiatives have become more elaborate in recent years, in part as a result of the federal No Child Left Behind legislation that requires annual testing in reading, mathematics, and (soon) science in grades 3 through 8 and in high school. Although the federal law does not demand a particular approach to testing, its requirements to test more students more frequently have required many states to rapidly add tests at various grade levels, without much opportunity to study the likely effects on teaching, learning, access, and attainment. The costs associated with the more extensive requirements have also caused some states to reduce or abandon performance-oriented assessments that evaluate higher order skills and provide more evidence of student reasoning and performance.<sup>2</sup>

State testing programs have become somewhat more similar because of this federal influence. However, a wide range of practices still exists, and these practices are associated with different outcomes for schools and students. One area in which policymakers are seeking greater information concerns the design and outcomes of high school graduation policies that include exit examinations, a policy strategy that has rapidly expanded in recent years.

According to the Center on Education Policy (CEP), by 2003, 19 states that educate 52 % of all public school students required exit exams.

With five additional states (Alaska, Arizona, California, Utah, and Washington) scheduled to phase in new exit exams over the next several years, such tests could affect as many as 7 in 10 public school students by 2008. The process of implementing these policies has been difficult. As the CEP noted of trends in 2003:

Public resistance to mandatory exit exams mounted as diplomas were withheld from thousands of students and as high initial failure rates set off alarms in states scheduled to begin withholding diplomas in the next few years. More evidence also emerged about impacts and costs of exit exams, making clearer to states — if they didn't know it already — that exit exams are no cheap or easy fix for education reform.<sup>3</sup>

Concerns raised about the use of exit exams include reduced graduation rates, especially for African American and Latino students, English language learners, and students with disabilities; reduced incentives for struggling students to stay in school rather than drop out or pursue a GED; narrowing of the curriculum and neglect of higher order performance skills where limited measures are used; and invalid judgments about student learning from reliance on a single set of test measures, a practice discouraged by professional testing experts.<sup>4</sup>

Exit exams are used very differently from state to state, however. Although about 25 states have passed legislation that includes an examination as a component of high school graduation, most have included a range of options and alternatives. Only eight states have implemented exit examinations as requirements that must be passed by all students who would receive a state diploma, without consideration of other information about performance. In a greater number of states, the state examination is used as one indicator of readiness to graduate along with alternative measures that provide a broader range of methods for students to demonstrate their learning. In these states, no single set of tests is used to deny a diploma: Instead, a combination of indicators is used by local districts to determine what

students know and can do and whether they have met graduation standards.

Most of these states (at least 19 of 25) offer alternative measures and sources of evidence for students with disabilities or for English language learners to receive a regular state diploma. A number of states offer alternatives that are available to all students, including performance tasks or portfolios; evaluation of courses, grades, attendance, teacher recommendations, and work samples; and the combined evaluation of local assessments with the state test.

Several states, in line with professional testing standards, require that the state high school examinations must be used only in conjunction with other performance measures, including local performance assessments, to make a graduation decision. These include Connecticut, Maine, Oregon, Pennsylvania, and Rhode Island. Some states use state tests or local performance assessments to offer as an endorsement on the diploma or place the scores on the transcript as information for colleges and employers, rather than as a requirement for graduation. In 25 states, graduation decisions are made locally on the basis of measures that assess performance without state tests. At least one state that enacted a state exit exam has since repealed it (Wisconsin), working instead with districts to develop local performance assessments scored according to state standards.

Table 1 illustrates the different ways that tests are used in states that seek to assemble evidence from multiple sources for graduation, including those that:

- 1) Use an exit exam but provide alternative assessments for all students;
- 2) Use an exit exam but provide alternatives for special needs students and English language learners;
- 3) Use a state test in conjunction with local performance measures;
- 4) Use local assessments that are mapped to state standards; and
- 5) Use state or local assessments to determine the type of diploma or to provide additional information on the transcript.

**TABLE 1 - USES OF STATE TESTS AND STANDARDS IN MULTIPLE MEASURES APPROACHES TO HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION**

STATE APPROACHES	EXAMPLES OF STATES THAT USE THIS APPROACH
<p>1. A statewide high school exit exam is required but alternative assessments or measures are available as a pathway to graduation. These alternatives may include state-developed performance assessments that are administered locally, or measures like attendance, course passage, and grades.</p>	<p>In <i>New Jersey</i>, the state supplemental assessment — which includes remedial coursework as well as locally administered performance assessments — is an option for students who have not succeeded on the exit exam. In <i>Washington</i>, the state is creating portfolios and performance assessments to be available for such students. In <i>Indiana</i>, students can graduate by attaining a passing score on the test OR completing state core course requirements with a score of C or higher OR completing local course requirements with a GPA of C or better, meeting an attendance target, and receiving recommendations from teachers. In many states, including <i>New York</i>, <i>North Carolina</i>, and <i>Maryland</i>, students can substitute scores on other tests (e.g., AP tests, SAT, ACT, IB, GED) for the state test.</p>
<p>2. Alternative assessments or measures are available for students with disabilities and English language learners.</p>	<p>Many states offer alternative assessments for students with special needs. In <i>Kansas</i>, <i>Michigan</i>, <i>Montana</i>, <i>Nebraska</i>, <i>Wisconsin</i>, and other states, modified assessments are available for students with disabilities and LEP students (generally, those who have been in public school for less than 3 years). In <i>Arkansas</i> and <i>Maine</i>, an Alternate Portfolio Assessment System evaluates the performance of students with disabilities and LEP students for whom state examinations are not appropriate. In Illinois, a special state-developed assessment called IMAGE measures reading and math progress of all students during their first 3 years of English learning and others with limited English proficiency thereafter. In some states (e.g., <i>Connecticut</i>, <i>Idaho</i>, <i>New Hampshire</i>, <i>Oklahoma</i>, <i>Pennsylvania</i>, and <i>South Dakota</i>), first-year English language learners are exempted from English tests and take an alternate language assessment. In <i>New Jersey</i> and <i>New York</i>, students can take specified tests in their native language.</p>
<p>3. Students take a state exam that is used for school/district accountability reporting or the identification of students for remediation. The exam may be considered in the graduation decision, but it is not used to deny a diploma. In some cases, districts use a combination of local performance assessments, along with grades, course records, and information from a state test in making the graduation decision.</p>	<p>More than 20 states require students to take a high school exam to provide information about school performance, curriculum improvement, or individual needs for remediation, but do not use the test for graduation. States like <i>Arkansas</i> and <i>Delaware</i> use the high school exam results to fund required remediation and personal assistance plans for students. Some states combine information from the state test with local criteria for the local graduation decision. In <i>Connecticut</i>, students must take the exit exam, but the exam cannot be used to deny a diploma. Local districts decide how to use the exam in combination with local performance assessments and coursework performance to make graduation decisions. In <i>Maine</i> and <i>Rhode Island</i>, districts will combine the results of local performance assessments with state assessment results for the graduation decision. Rhode Island provides that the state test can comprise no more than 10% of the total graduation decision. In <i>Pennsylvania</i>, students must demonstrate proficiency on either the state assessments or on local assessments aligned with the state standards.</p>



<p>4. State test results or local performance assessments tied to state standards are noted on the transcript, provide a diploma endorsement, or lead to a differentiated diploma.</p>	<p>In <b>Delaware</b>, scores on the high school reading, writing, and mathematics tests are combined into a graduation index. Students receive a basic, standard, or distinguished diploma based on their index score. Some states, including <b>Arkansas, Illinois, and Oklahoma</b> include the score from a state high school examination or from end-of-course tests on the students' transcript, but do not use the tests for the graduation decision. <b>Pennsylvania</b> and <b>Washington</b> award special certificates of achievement or distinction based on state test scores. <b>Oregon</b> uses locally scored student work samples and performance assessments tied to state standards to award Certificates of Initial Mastery and Certificates of Advanced Mastery to students.</p>
<p>5. Local performance assessments, scored according to state standards, are used to evaluate student learning. In some cases, these are a requirement for the diploma.</p>	<p>In <b>Nebraska</b>, all districts develop or select assessments to evaluate the content standards in reading, mathematics, science, and social studies. The state convenes a group of technical experts to approve local assessment systems, and districts use their results to inform decisions about students. In <b>Oregon</b>, students must complete work samples and performance assessments that demonstrate application of knowledge in multiple content areas in order to graduate. These are scored in specific dimensions according to state standards. In <b>Vermont</b>, students can receive a diploma by completing course requirements or by passing locally developed performance assessments tied to the state standards. In <b>Wyoming</b>, local assessments must demonstrate each student's proficiency in state standards, either through grades or competency-based assessments. Districts are encouraged to combine state and local assessments and to use curriculum-embedded student work in assembling a "body of evidence" to determine student proficiency.</p>

Most authorities argue that using a variety of measures to organize and assess student learning — including measures that represent real-life tasks rather than only multiple-choice and short-answer items — provides broader, more complete, and more accurate understanding of what students know than is possible with traditional tests alone. Students show different aspects of their understanding on different measures, and different measures reveal distinctive kinds of learning (e.g., recall and recognition, production, analysis and synthesis of information).

Furthermore, as is true of the assessments used in most other countries around the world, approaches that include essay examinations, research projects, scientific experiments, oral exhibitions and performances encourage students to master complex skills as they apply them in practice. Expectations that students will apply knowledge in authentic ways encourage ambitious teaching and learning, help teachers and students understand what constitutes good work, and ensure that

***As is true of the assessments used in most other countries around the world, approaches that include essay examinations, research projects, scientific experiments, oral exhibitions and performances encourage students to master complex skills as they apply them in practice.***

students will have opportunities to practice the skills they will need to use outside of school.

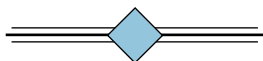
In addition, performance assessments that are administered and scored locally help teachers better understand students' strengths, needs, and approaches to learning, as well as the expectations of the tests. These goals are not well served by external testing programs that send secret, secured tests into the school and whisk them out again for machine scoring that produces numerical quotients many months later. Local performance assessments provide teachers with much more useful classroom information as

they engage teachers in evaluating how and what students know and can do in authentic situations. These kinds of assessment strategies create the possibility that teachers will not only develop curriculum aimed at challenging performance skills but that they will also be able to use the resulting information about student learning and performance to shape their teaching in ways that can prove more effective for individual students. When schools and districts wrestle with standard-setting and scoring these kinds of assessments, they are able to develop shared expectations and create an engine for school improvement around student work.

This report describes the assessment systems in 27 states that use a multiple measures approach to high school graduation, including many that combine state requirements with local performance assessments and other measures.

The systems we describe have developed state and local accountability strategies that provide multiple ways for students to demonstrate competence; incentives for engaging students

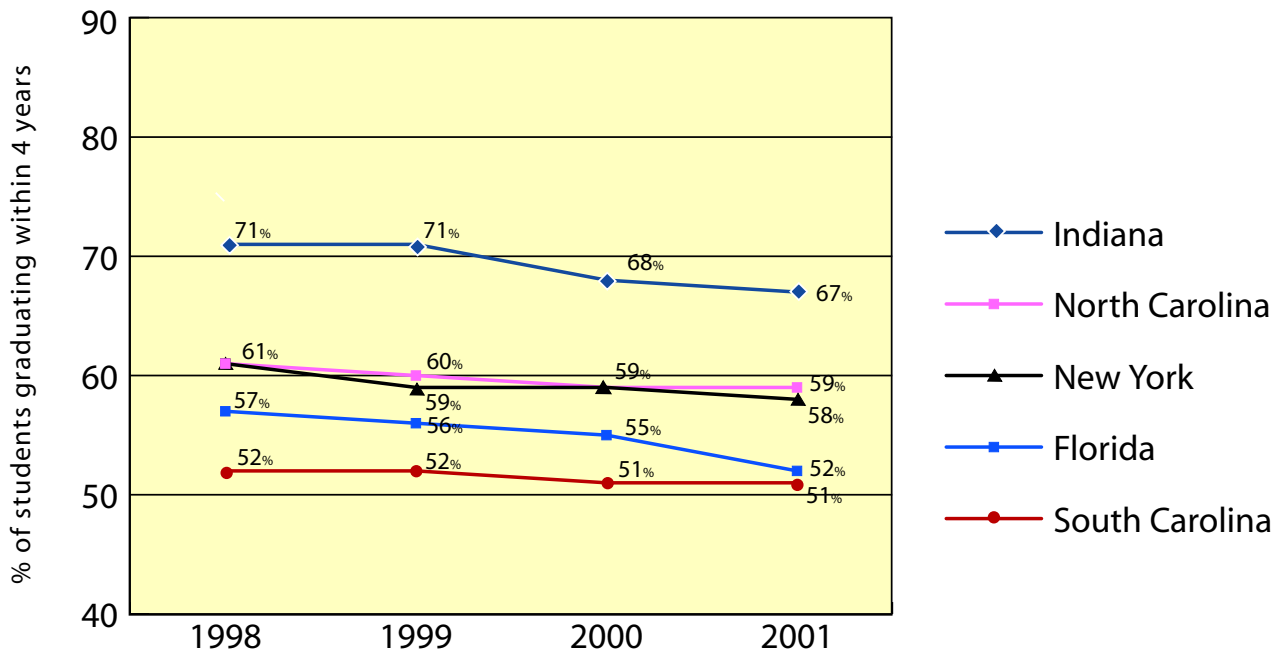
in more in-depth instruction around inquiry, problem-solving, and performance; and information about student learning that can be used to improve instruction. These systems, in varying ways and to varying degrees, address a number of the difficulties that have been identified in states with test-only graduation systems, including declining rates of high school graduation; a narrowed curriculum that fails to develop many of the skills needed for life, work, and college; and a lack of diagnostic and instructional information that can provide local leverage for educational improvement.



# ISSUES IN TESTING FOR HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION

A great deal of public attention has focused on the relatively small number of states that have required state examinations as the primary basis for graduation from high school. In part this attention resulted from accumulating evidence that a number of these states have experienced low or declining rates of graduation, educating a diminishing share of their populations to enter the contemporary knowledge-based economy and society. Figure 1 shows graduation rate trends for the five states that developed exit examinations in the 1990s and used them, without alternative performance measures or options, to withhold diplomas prior to 2001.<sup>5</sup>

**Figure 1: Graduation rates in states that required exit exams (without alternatives) prior to 2001**



Data from National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data. Graduation rates are calculated as the number of graduates divided by the size of the 9th grade cohort 3.5 years earlier.

The data in Figure 1 are from the National Center for Education Statistics, which we view as one of the more reliable sources of graduation rate data.<sup>6</sup> As of this writing, these are the most recent nationally available data on state graduation rates. In addition to these states, Massachusetts' exit exam was implemented in 2003, and graduation rates in Massachusetts have shown similar trends, declining from 76% in 1998 to 72% in 2003.<sup>7</sup>

In all of these states, there are large gaps between the graduation rates of white students and those of African American and Latino students. For example, in Massachusetts, the proportion of African American students graduating on-time in 2003 was 60%, as compared to 71% the year before the exit exam was instituted; Hispanic students' graduation rates dropped from 54% to 45%, while white students' graduation rates dropped less steeply, from 79% to 77%.<sup>8</sup> Because of these kinds of concerns, legislatures in at least two of these states (Florida and North Carolina) have recently required that non-test alternatives for demonstrating competency be developed.

Although students have always dropped out for a variety of reasons, ranging from personal considerations to poor educational quality, analysts have identified several test-related reasons for these declines in graduation rates, including:

- Student discouragement after repeated unsuccessful efforts to pass the exams;
- Policies that encourage grade retention of students who do not pass exams at benchmark grade levels — or who are low-achieving in the grade level prior to the one in which the high-stakes exam results are reported — which has been found to substantially increase dropout rates;
- Failure of students to pass the exams, including students who have received lower-quality education, students who do not demonstrate their learning well in on-demand tests, students

with disabilities, and students who are limited English proficient.

- Incentives for schools to push out students who do poorly in school, when school ratings are contingent on the average pass rates of students. This occurs through encouragements to transfer to other schools or GED programs as well as exclusions for tardiness, attendance or behavior. Some schools have increased their test scores by creating barriers to the enrollment or continuation of low-achieving students.<sup>9</sup>

A number of studies have found that high school graduation exams increase dropout rates. A large-scale study using individual-level data from the National Educational Longitudinal Survey found that graduation tests increased the probability of dropping out among the lowest achieving students.<sup>10</sup> Similarly, the Chicago Consortium for School Research found that, although some students' scores improved in response to a high-stakes testing policy tied to grade promotion, the scores of low-scoring students who were retained declined relative to similar achieving students who had been promoted, and their dropout rates increased substantially.<sup>11</sup>

The most recent large-scale study, published in January 2005, found that, after controlling for students' demographic characteristics (e.g., race, family education and income, GPA and class rank), states requiring graduation exams had lower graduation rates and lower SAT scores than states not using exit exams. Individually, students from states requiring a graduation exam also performed more poorly on the SAT than did students from states not requiring an exam.<sup>12</sup> One explanation for this is the narrowing of the curriculum that can occur with high-stakes testing.

The three national professional organizations of measurement experts have called attention to these problems in their joint *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing*, which note that:

Beyond any intended policy goals, it is important to consider potential unintended effects that may result from large-scale testing programs. Concerns have been raised, for instance, about narrowing the curriculum to focus only on the objectives tested, restricting the range of instructional approaches to correspond to the testing format, increasing the number of dropouts among students who do not pass the test, and encouraging other instructional or administrative practices that may raise test scores without affecting the quality of education. It is important for those who mandate tests to consider and monitor their consequences and to identify and minimize the potential of negative consequences.<sup>13</sup>

Professional testing standards emphasize that no test is sufficiently reliable and valid to be the sole source of important decisions about student placements, promotions, or graduation, but that such decisions should be made on the basis of several different kinds of evidence about student learning and performance in the classroom. For example, Standard 13.7 states:

In educational settings, a decision or characterization that will have major impact on a student should not be made on the basis of a single test score. Other relevant information should be taken into account if it will enhance the overall validity of the decision.<sup>14</sup>

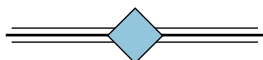
The *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* describe kinds of information that should be considered in making judgments about what a student knows and can do, including alternative assessments that provide other information about performance and evidence from samples of school work and other aspects of the school record, such as grades and classroom observations of performance.

These additional indicators are important not only for reasons of validity and fairness in making decisions, but also to assess important skills that tests cannot measure. Current accountability reforms are

based on the idea that standards can serve as a catalyst for states to be explicit about learning goals, and the act of measuring progress toward meeting these standards is an important force toward developing high levels of achievement for all students. However, an on-demand test taken in a limited period of time on a single day cannot measure all that is important for students to know and be able to do. A credible accountability system must rest on assessments that are balanced and comprehensive with respect to state standards. Multiple-choice and short-answer tests that are currently used to measure standards in many states do not adequately measure the complex thinking, communication, and problem solving skills that are represented in national and state content standards.

Research on high-stakes accountability systems shows that, “what is tested is what is taught,” and those standards that are not represented on the high-stakes assessment tend to be given short shrift in the curriculum.<sup>15</sup> Students are less likely to engage in extended research, writing, complex problem-solving, and experimentation when the accountability system emphasizes short-answer responses to formulaic problems. These higher order thinking skills are those very skills that often are cited as essential to maintaining America’s competitive edge and necessary for succeeding on the job, in college, and in life. As described by Achieve, a national organization of governors, business leaders, and education leaders, the problem with measures of traditional on-demand tests is that they cannot measure many of the skills that matter most for success in the worlds of work and higher education:

States. . . will need to move beyond large-scale assessments because, as critical as they are, they cannot measure everything that matters in a young person’s education. The ability to make effective oral arguments and conduct significant research projects are considered essential skills by both employers and postsecondary educators, but these skills are very difficult to assess on a paper-and-pencil test.<sup>16</sup>





# MULTIPLE MEASURES APPROACHES TO GRADUATION

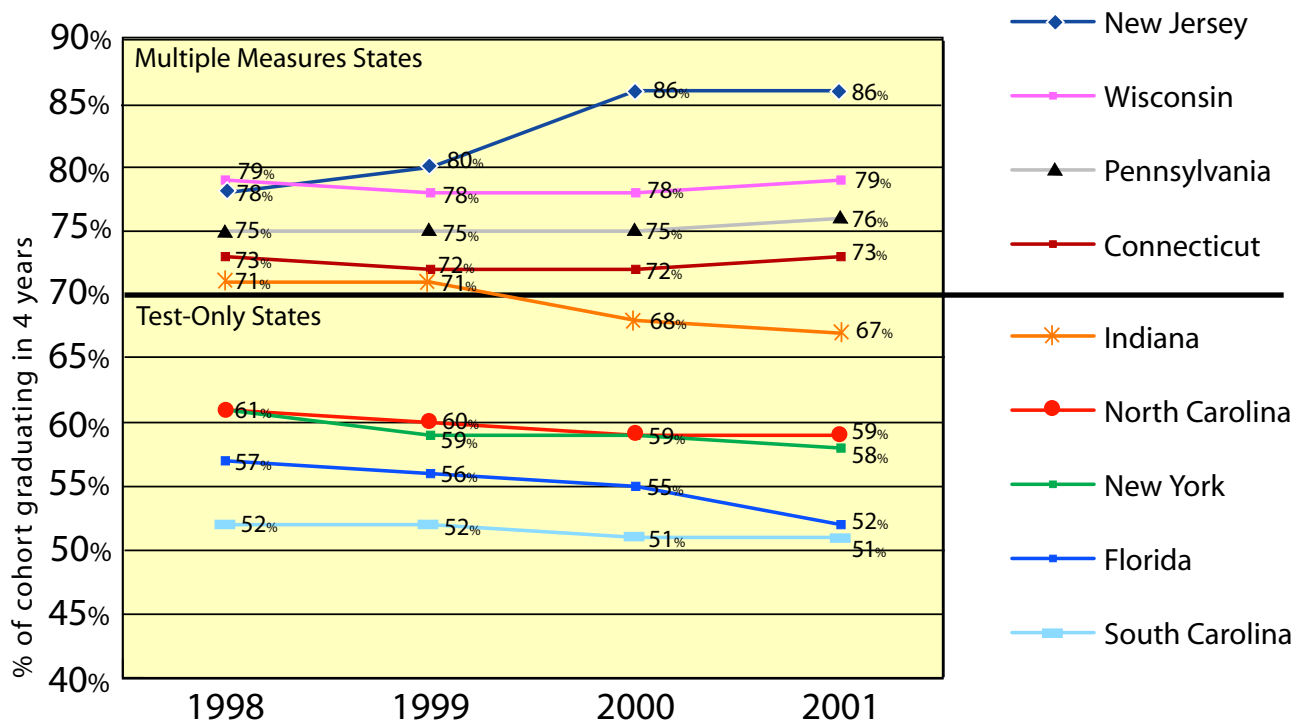
**M**ultiple measures approaches to graduation provide diverse opportunities for students to demonstrate what they have learned, including research papers, projects, exhibitions, and other performance assessments that evaluate a wide range of skills. The concept of multiple measures is routinely used by policymakers to make critical decisions about such matters as employment and economic forecasting (for example, the Dow Jones Index or the GNP), as well as admission to universities, where grades, essays, activities, and accomplishments are considered along with test scores. Successful businesses use a “dashboard” set of indicators to evaluate their health and progress, aware that no single indicator is sufficient to understand their operations. This concept was embraced in successive revisions of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, including the No Child Left Behind Act in 2002, which calls for multiple measures of student performance, extending beyond test scores.

Among states with high school examinations, more than half have developed or are in the process of developing multiple measures of performance as the basis for graduation.<sup>17</sup> In addition to traditional state tests, these measures include performance assessments developed at the local or state level based on state standards, as well as other indicators of student learning, such as grades in courses tied to state standards or student exhibitions of learning. These states take student performance on the state high school examination into account, but they do not rest the graduation decision on this one instrument alone. In a number of states, graduation decisions are based on a range of indicators that:

- encourage the teaching and evaluation of a more ambitious range of thinking and performance skills (including students’ abilities to conduct research and communicate effectively in many ways),

- consider different ways of demonstrating learning, which reduces the likelihood of inappropriate decisions for special needs students and English language learners,
- increase the validity and defensibility of the graduation decision,
- provide diagnostic information that guides improved instruction,
- reward student investment in school attendance and course performance, and
- maintain student engagement and increase the likelihood of students continuing in school through graduation.

**FIGURE 2: GRADUATION RATES IN STATES REQUIRING MULTIPLE MEASURES APPROACHES TO GRADUATION PRIOR TO 2001**



Data from National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data. Graduation rates are calculated as the number of graduates divided by the size of the 9th grade cohort 3.5 years earlier.

***States which include examinations in their systems, but also use state or local performance measures for the graduation decision, not only keep more students in school, they also show student achievement levels above the national average.***

While states with test-only graduation systems have typically experienced decreasing graduation rates, states that introduced multiple measures systems of assessment in the 1990s have tended to maintain higher and steadier rates of graduation (see Figure 2).

These states, which include examinations in their state systems but also use state or local performance measures for the graduation decision, not only keep more students in school, they also show student achievement levels above the national average. Advocates of these systems argue that the use of more

ambitious assessment strategies improves instruction by challenging students to engage in more intellectually rigorous work; providing teachers with rich, diagnostic feedback about student performance; and creating more useful, timely information for improving instruction.<sup>18</sup> In choosing to incorporate local assessments into their state assessment systems, districts and schools in these states are able to draw on high-quality classroom-based assessments to gather rich, reliable information about student learning that is more useful than secretive, externally scored, multiple choice tests.

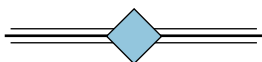
Studies have found that, in states like California,<sup>19</sup> Kentucky,<sup>20</sup> Maine,<sup>21</sup> Maryland,<sup>22</sup> Vermont,<sup>23</sup> and Washington,<sup>24</sup> where assessment systems have included extended writing and mathematics portfolios and performance tasks, teachers assigned more ambitious writing and mathematical problem solving, and student performance improved.

Teachers who have been involved in developing and scoring performance assessments with other colleagues have reported that the experience was extremely valuable in informing their practice. They report changes in both the curriculum and their instruction as a result of thinking through with colleagues how to better support student learning on specific kinds of tasks.<sup>25</sup> Teachers have also reported that

the process of building portfolios helps them understand different students' learning processes, promotes classroom dialogue about standards for good work, and helps students as well as teachers learn to evaluate work and revise it until it reaches high standards.

Researchers have found that assessment systems in which teachers look at student work with other teachers and discuss standards in very explicit ways help schools develop shared definitions of quality. Evaluating work collaboratively rather than grading students in isolation helps teachers make their standards explicit, gain multiple perspectives on learning, and think about how they can teach to produce the kinds of student work they want to see. Where teachers do this, studies find that changes in teaching and schooling practices tend to occur — especially for students who are not as often successful at schoolwork.<sup>26</sup>

The assessment policies of states using multiple measures approaches, in conjunction with other reforms to strengthen teaching, appear to have supported strong improvement in student achievement as measured by increases on local assessments and the National Assessment of Educational Progress. For example, research on the strong gains in achievement shown in Connecticut, Kentucky, and Vermont in the 1990s attributed these gains largely to investments in teaching quality and to assessment systems that supported diagnosis of student needs as well as curriculum reform and professional development.<sup>27</sup>



# EXAMPLES OF MULTIPLE MEASURES APPROACHES TO GRADUATION

In what follows, we profile states with several different kinds of multiple measures systems, including:

- 1) States that require an exit exam and offer state- or locally developed alternative assessments as an option for some or all students;
- 2) States that use local performance assessments as a major part of the graduation decision and use a high school exam as one source of information, sometimes resulting in a special diploma or an endorsement on the diploma;
- 3) States that rely on local districts to make graduation decisions based on assessments the districts have developed in response to state standards.

We provide profiles of 27 states' systems in the appendices and highlight selected prototypes in our discussion below. Appendix A outlines the type of graduation policy in each state, factors in the graduation decision, how tests are used to award differentiated diplomas, and alternative measures. In Appendix B, we outline in more detail: 1) what assessments the state uses; 2) how the assessments are used; and 3) options or requirements for districts to create or administer alternative assessments. In all of these states, high school tests cover reading, writing, and mathematics; in some, science and/or social studies are also included. All use constructed-response as well as multiple-choice items in their state assessment systems, and most also use performance assessments, such as samples of written work, exhibitions of performance, research papers, or projects that show how they apply knowledge to authentic situations and problems.

None of these states uses the high school tests as the sole basis

for graduation decisions. Instead, each requires the use of state or local alternative assessments and evidence from coursework as the foundation of the graduation decision, which, in most cases, is made by local school districts. Some states such as Connecticut, Oregon, and Pennsylvania offer an additional Certificate of Mastery to students who have passed the specific performance assessments or examinations. Finally, most states have put in place assessment options for special education students and English language learners to minimize adverse consequences.

### STATES THAT INCLUDE ALTERNATIVE MEASURES IN THEIR EXIT EXAM SYSTEMS

New Jersey and Washington are among those states that have state exit exams with provisions for state-developed alternative assessments for students who do not pass the exams, as well as for students with disabilities or English language learners. Both states are also in the process of incorporating performance assessments into their testing systems. Indiana has introduced alternatives that take into account student attendance, performance in courses, and other measures. A number of states use a range of alternative assessments for students with special education needs and those who are limited English proficient.

#### NEW JERSEY

New Jersey's system has been in operation since 2002, when its *High School Proficiency Assessment* (HSPA) was first required for graduation. The HSPA is a comprehensive assessment that is criterion-referenced, administered in the fall, and uses multiple methods, including multiple-choice, short- and extended-response, and open-ended items. Open response counts for about 60% of the score in writing and about 25% in reading and mathematics.

Since the introduction of the HSPA, all students who do not score “proficient” on one or more tests have been included in the Special

Review Assessment (SRA), which provides students with remedial coursework and the opportunity to complete alternative performance assessments developed by the state and administered and scored locally. Local scorers are trained in the use of rubrics for scoring. The SRA policy developed from the recognition that some students, including but not limited to those identified for special education or with limited English proficiency, have learning needs that require different treatment than the regular standardized assessment system and that not all students adequately demonstrate their proficiency on standardized tests. The SRA was designed to provide a way for those students to acquire and demonstrate proficiency.

The SRA has 2 components: 1) remedial coursework; and 2) the administration of Performance Assessment Tasks (PATs). The remedial coursework is to begin in a timely manner after receipt of the individual score report indicating the students' failure on the HSPA. The coursework focuses on the specific areas of weaknesses as identified by the scores attained on the various tests of the HSPA. Students can demonstrate attainment of knowledge through the completion of performance assessment tasks for each content area (reading, writing, mathematics). Upon successful completion of the required number of PATs, the student has been deemed to demonstrate the appropriate acquisition of skills.

Students who are in the SRA process continue to take subsequent administrations of the HSPA until they show proficiency by the score attained on the high school graduation test or by the successful completion of the SRA. About 75% of the nearly 9,500 SRAs submitted by districts and approved by county offices in 2002 were for general education students. Another 7,000 students received special education exemptions from the high school graduation requirement. In 2000-2001, New Jersey introduced an Alternate Proficiency Assessment for students with severe disabilities. The Offices of Assessment, Special Education, and Bilingual Education are working in close collaboration to identify and implement testing accommodations to better assess students with disabilities and

*[In New Jersey], the performance assessments will be based on scoring criteria known to students and teachers, initiating a more instructionally centered approach to assessing proficiency and providing students with multiple ways to express and exhibit what they know.*

students with limited English proficiency.

In addition, since 2002, state officials, teacher unions, school boards, and members of the business community have been collaborating to develop additional alternatives to standardized tests in the form of performance assessments to be administered for grades 3, 6, and 11. These assessments will be aligned with the state's standards and are intended to augment the standardized tests required by the state and federal governments.

However, unlike the standardized tests, the performance assessments will be based on scoring criteria known to students and teachers, initiating a more instructionally centered approach to assessing proficiency and providing students with multiple ways to express and exhibit what they know, extending beyond the limitations of standardized tests.

## WASHINGTON

Washington's State Assessment System includes statewide standardized testing, classroom-based assessments, and staff development. The statewide testing program focuses on the Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRs), which are Washington's content standards and provides indicators at the state, district, school, and student levels. The Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL), a set of standards-based tests, is at the center of the state testing program. The WASL is a series of criterion-reference tests in reading, writing, listening, and mathematics at grade 4, 7, and 10. These standards-based assessments incorporate multiple choice, short response, and extended constructed-response items.

The state also supports the development of classroom-based assessments, tied to the EALRs, which help guide day-to-day instruction. The state office of public instruction provides



teachers with classroom-based assessments for use throughout the school year. These prototype assessments can be tailored to the varying developmental needs and learning styles of students and enable teachers to measure student progress over time and in a greater number of ways than is feasible through large-scale tests. Under the leadership of curriculum specialists, prototypical tasks and items that model good assessments are developed and disseminated to local districts.

The final component of the system is an assessment staff development program. Through a network of regional assessment centers, training and materials are provided to teams of local assessment trainers to assist their own work in training classroom teachers and principals in sound assessment practices.

By 2008, Washington will require students to take an exit exam in three content areas (math, science, English). Students who pass the state tests receive a Certificate of Academic Achievement (CAA). The state will provide alternate assessments for students who do not pass the high school test. The legislature has charged the Office of Public Instruction with developing alternate assessments for each content area that will be comparable to the skills and knowledge that the student must demonstrate on the Washington Assessment of Student Learning for each content area. A task force will identify projects, portfolios, or tasks that represent sufficient evidence of mastery of the learning standards for each subject matter required for graduation. Once approved, a student may use the alternative assessments to demonstrate that he or she successfully meets the state standards for that content area provided that the student has retaken the state high school test at least once. If the student successfully meets the state standards on the objective alternative assessments then the student shall earn a Certificate of Academic Achievement.

Washington also requires an individualized culminating project and high school education plan for graduation. The culminating project is

***Washington requires an individualized culminating project and high school education plan for graduation. The culminating project... allows students to demonstrate their learning competencies and skills through writing, speaking, producing and/or performing.***

a senior project that allows students to demonstrate their learning competencies and skills through writing, speaking, producing and/or performing. Students construct their own culminating project and can choose the topic, delivery method and type of presentation, mentor, and evaluation to assess the effect of the project on their learning. The state also requires students to develop an education plan for their high school experience, including what they expect to do the year following graduation. For both the culminating

project and high school plan, districts can choose how to implement the process and whether to award credit for these requirements.

## **INDIANA**

Indiana has enacted a set of alternatives to its exit examination that rely on course performance in state-specified courses, as well as attendance and teacher recommendations. Indiana offers four types of diplomas, each associated with a set of state-required courses: a high school diploma, a “Core 40” diploma designed to prepare students for further education, a Core 40 diploma with Academic Honors (for those who meet a higher GPA standard and take Advanced Placement or college courses), and a Core 40 diploma with Technical Honors (for those who take additional courses in a career-technical program).

Students graduate by meeting all state and local requirements and by demonstrating mastery of the academic standards assessed by the state’s Graduation Qualifying Exam (GQE) through one of three pathways. They can:

- 1) Attain a passing score on both the mathematics and English/language arts portions of the GQE;

- 2) Complete all components of the Core 40 curriculum with a C or higher in each course; or
- 3) Meet the standards of an appeals process that takes into account course passage, attendance, and written recommendations from teachers in each subject.

Indiana also administers end-of-course exams in Algebra I and English and is developing exams in several other subjects. These are intended to provide guidance to local districts with respect to what is considered critical content in the state-required courses. Passing scores on these end-of-course exams are decided locally. Like some other states like Arkansas and Delaware, Indiana funds remediation services for students who have not achieved passing scores on the examinations.

### ALTERNATIVES FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Many states offer alternative assessments for students with special needs. For example, in **Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, Montana, Nebraska, New Jersey, Wisconsin**, and other states, modified assessments are available for students with disabilities and limited English proficient (LEP) students (generally, those who have been in public school for less than 3 years). In **Arkansas** and **Maine**, an Alternate Portfolio Assessment System is designed to evaluate the performance of students with disabilities and LEP students for whom the state examinations are not appropriate. In **Illinois**, a special state-developed assessment called IMAGE measures the reading and mathematics progress of all students during their first 3 years of English learning and others with limited English proficiency thereafter. In some states (e.g., **Connecticut, Idaho, New Hampshire, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania**, and **South Dakota**), first-year English language learners are exempted from English language arts exams and take an alternate language assessment instead.

## STATES THAT COMBINE LOCAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENTS WITH STATE TESTS

A number of states have designed a *system of state and local assessments* that complement one another. The assessment models — designed by Connecticut, Kentucky, Maine, Oregon, Rhode Island, Pennsylvania, and Vermont — balance state and local decision-making, embed standards-based assessments in local schools, and ensure that multiple indicators of performance are used. Here we describe three of these systems — Connecticut, Oregon, and Pennsylvania — which provide different kinds of prototypes for combining state and local assessment. We also briefly summarize variations used in Maine and Rhode Island.

### CONNECTICUT

Connecticut’s statewide testing program consists of two tests: The Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT), which is administered in Grades 4, 6, and 8 in the areas of mathematics, reading, and writing, and the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT), which is administered in 10th grade, and which reports on student performance in four areas: mathematics, reading across the disciplines (based on a “Response to Literature” and a “Reading for Information” section), writing across the disciplines (based on an interdisciplinary writing test and an editing and revising test) and science. The CAPT includes multiple choice and open-ended items, short essays, and performance tasks to measure how students can apply what they know.

The CAPT is required of all public high school students in Connecticut, and it is taken into account in graduation decisions, but it is not by itself a graduation requirement. The state’s legislation specifies that the test cannot be used as the sole basis for graduation or promotion, but that it will be the basis for awarding the Certification of Mastery in the various areas. The State Board of Education’s overview of the state’s testing program, written in 2000, included the following statement:

Connecticut Mastery Test and Connecticut Academic Performance Test results provide important information about student performance on a selected set of skills and competencies.... However, these results do not provide a comprehensive picture of student accomplishments. There is a danger that overemphasizing state test scores to evaluate a student's, school, or district performance can result in an inappropriate narrowing of the curriculum and inappropriate classroom instructional practices. Focused preparation for state tests should be a small fraction of a yearlong comprehensive curriculum that balances the competencies assessed on state tests with other critical skills and objectives. Teaching isolated skills for test preparation or using repetitive tasks that go far beyond reasonable practice do not represent good instruction. In addition, no one assessment — state or local — should be the sole basis for promotion, graduation, or other important decisions in the education of a student.

Districts must establish graduation requirements that include local performance assessments and a means to incorporate the results from state tests. Each local and regional board of education must:

- 1) specify the basic skills necessary for graduation;
- 2) include a process for assessing a student's level of competency in such skills, which includes local performance assessments; and
- 3) provide a course of study to assist students who have not successfully completed the assessment criteria to reach a satisfactory level of competency prior to graduation.

Connecticut reports CAPT results on each student's high school transcripts. Students who meet or exceed the state standard in each content area receive a "Certificate of Mastery" in that area. Many 11th and 12th grade students choose to retake portions of the test on which they have not reached the state goal in order to reach the Certificate of

***In Rhode Island, the state is developing a high school examination to determine up to 10% of the graduation decision, supplemented by local portfolios and performance assessment tasks that are being developed by districts and intermediaries with state assistance.***

Mastery level. Some 10th grade students are exempted from the testing due to limited English proficiency.

The CAPT also serves as an accountability measure, reported for each school and district and for the state as a whole. Connecticut has designed its assessments to guide curriculum and instruction, and to enable the measurement of progress toward the educational goals established through Connecticut's Common Core of Learning. Funding supports, technical assistance services, and professional

development initiatives are focused on improving education in low-performing districts. These contributed to steep increases in performance in the state as a whole and in most of the state's cities during the 1990s.<sup>28</sup>

## **RHODE ISLAND AND MAINE**

Rhode Island and Maine have adopted systems similar to Connecticut's, but with more participation on the part of the state in helping local districts develop strong performance assessments.

Maine's assessment system has both state and local components. The state component includes the standards-based Maine Educational Assessment (MEA) which is given to students in grades 4, 8, and 11. The local component includes a variety of assessments designed to measure the depth and breadth of each content area. Beginning with the class of 2007, diplomas will be awarded based on a combination of local and state assessments. With assistance from the state, local school districts are now designing plans that combine the MEA exams with classroom, school, district, and regional assessments. The local assessments can include classroom-based portfolios, observations and exhibitions, as well as district-administered exams and tasks. For example, the Bangor school district draws from classroom portfolios

and locally created writing and reading tests to evaluate students' language arts skills. Superintendents certify local assessments to meet state technical requirements, and the state reviews local assessments on an audit basis.

In Rhode Island, the state is developing a high school examination to determine up to 10% of the graduation decision, supplemented by local portfolios and performance assessment tasks that are being developed by districts and intermediaries with state assistance. These local assessments will be approved by the state based on statewide criteria.

## PENNSYLVANIA

Pennsylvania's System of School Assessment (PSSA) is a criterion-referenced assessment of reading, writing, speaking and listening and mathematics. Students are tested in 5th, 8th, and 11th grades in mathematics and reading and in 6th, 9th, and 11th grades in writing. Results for 11th grade are recorded on student transcripts. The state's policy on high school graduation states that, "the requirements for graduation shall include course completion and grades, completion of a culminating project, and results of local assessments aligned with academic standards." Students must demonstrate proficiency in reading, writing, and mathematics on either the state assessments administered in 11th or 12th grade, or on local standards-based assessments. The requirement that all students must complete a culminating project is intended "to assure that students are able to apply, analyze, synthesize and evaluate information and communicate significant knowledge and understanding."

In adopting this policy in 2000, the Pennsylvania State Board noted that it wanted to avoid over-reliance on a single instrument to make high-stakes decisions. Pennsylvania's testing program does not deny diplomas, but, like Connecticut's, it does reward those who do well on the state assessment by issuing differentiated certificates alongside the diploma. Students who attain a score at the proficient level on the state assessment administered in grades 10, 11 or 12 receive a Pennsylvania Certificate of Proficiency for that discipline. Students

*The Oregon system is built around the presumption that students should demonstrate their mastery of essential skills on authentic tasks rather than merely on multiple-choice tests.*

who attain a score at the advanced level of proficiency are granted a Pennsylvania Certificate of Distinction in that subject. Like New Jersey, Pennsylvania has also developed a specialized graduation option for students with disabilities. Students with disabilities take the state assessments; however, those who satisfactorily complete a special education program developed by an Individualized Education Program can be awarded a regular high school diploma by the school district.

## OREGON

Oregon's Statewide Assessment System is perhaps the most elaborate of these models. It includes state knowledge and skills tests, state performance assessments and classroom work samples in reading, mathematics, science, speaking, social sciences, and writing.

In order to graduate, students need to pass required courses and to complete specific work samples in English, mathematics, science and social science, evaluated using a state scoring guide. They also need to build a collection of evidence to demonstrate extended application; demonstrate career-related knowledge and skills in areas like problem solving, communication, and teamwork; and develop an education plan. If students meet benchmark levels they can earn a Certificate of Initial Mastery in specific subject areas or overall. Students can also earn a Certificate of Advanced Mastery by meeting higher standards.

The Oregon system is built around the presumption that students should demonstrate their mastery of essential skills on authentic tasks rather than merely on multiple choice tests. The system also presumes that students should show their learning in different ways. Students at the Certificate of Initial Mastery level must complete two work samples from different strands in mathematics problem solving and three samples in writing (one persuasive, one expository and one imaginative or narrative). In speaking, CIM students must complete



three samples (one persuasive, one informative, and one unrehearsed). For scientific inquiry and for social science analysis, students must complete one work sample in each, scored in a set of required dimensions.

A student in grades 9-12 may also request a juried assessment as an option to the statewide CIM Benchmark assessment procedures, when he or she has mastered the standards for one or more content areas of the CIM but is unable to demonstrate mastery through related statewide assessments. A juried assessment uses a collection of material to decide if a student has met the standards.

Similarly, there are several options for earning a Certificate of Advanced Mastery. To earn this certificate in each subject area, a student may:

- 1) Demonstrate mastery through the state reading test, provide three speaking work samples and either three writing work samples or the state writing test.
- 2) Demonstrate mastery through one of the mathematics tests or two math problem solving work samples, and either the science test or scientific inquiry work samples.
- 3) Develop an education plan and profile, and participate in career-related learning experiences as outlined in the education plan.
- 4) Demonstrate extended application through a collection of evidence and demonstrate career-related knowledge to meet standards adopted by the State Board.

Students who do not receive a Certificate of Initial Mastery receive from the school district a Certificate of Achievement that represents the student's progress toward achieving CIM performance standards in each applicable content area.

The state K-12 assessment system is articulated with the higher education admissions system. The Proficiency-based Admissions Standards System (PASS) links the Certificates of Initial and Advanced Mastery to college admissions and the requirements of college-level work, thus enabling students to move continuously through secondary school to higher education based on their performance.

## STATES THAT RELY ON LOCAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENTS

A number of states rely on locally administered performance assessments and other local evidence for the graduation decision. These include Nebraska, Wisconsin, and Vermont, described below.

### NEBRASKA

Instead of state tests, Nebraska has developed a sophisticated system of local performance assessments that are approved through a statewide review process. Districts make graduation decisions based on the results of these assessments and course requirements. Profiled in the January 2004 issue of *Phi Delta Kappan*, the School-based Teacher-led Assessment Reporting System (STARS) requires school districts to develop local assessment plans that are aligned with state learning standards or with equally rigorous local standards. STARS is unique in several ways:

- It is a system of local assessments, not a state test.
- It promotes a balanced approach to assessment, using multiple measures.
- It aims for equivalence without sameness.
- It involves both evaluation of achievement and evaluation of assessment quality.

- It uses classroom-based assessments for reporting.
- It includes no high-stakes testing.<sup>29</sup>

The state has created standards for local assessments, a means to evaluate them in light of the standards, and a structure for ensuring that each district's assessments improve. Districts must first adopt state or local standards in language arts, math, social studies, and science. The state has set a schedule requiring districts to report on one of these subject areas per year at grades 4, 8 and 11, using a combination of criterion-referenced and norm-referenced measures. Districts can develop their own criterion-referenced instruments (which may include classroom assessments such as observations, portfolios, or rubrics) or they can purchase them from commercial publishers. The norm-referenced tests must be selected from a state-determined list.

In addition, all students in grades 4, 8, and 11 participate in a statewide writing assessment

Districts must follow six criteria in designing their assessment plans and submit plans to the Nebraska Department of Education for review by an independent panel that rates their quality. The criteria include that:

- 1) assessments reflect the standards,
- 2) students have an opportunity to learn the content,
- 3) assessments are free from bias,
- 4) the level is appropriate for students,
- 5) there is consistency in scoring, and
- 6) mastery levels are appropriate.

***Although Wisconsin passed exit exam legislation in 1997 that envisioned a test-only system, it was amended in 1999, prior to implementation, to a multiple measures system like those adopted in Connecticut, Maine, Pennsylvania, and Rhode Island.***

To guide districts and provide examples of high quality, the state identifies and publicizes four models for each of the six criteria. Districts are encouraged either to adapt their assessments to be similar to the models, or to simply adopt a model component to meet a particular criterion. Districts submit their plans to an independent agency for review every five years.

Districts develop, administer, and score their local assessments throughout the school year. In June, they submit a District Assessment Portfolio, which includes information on student performance on the standards and on the assessments used to measure that performance, including sample assessments. These portfolios are reviewed and rated for both student performance and assessment quality by two groups of independent testing and measurement experts from the Buros Institute, using criteria that evaluate them against the six criteria noted above.

## **WISCONSIN**

Like the states profiled in the preceding section, Wisconsin has assisted districts in developing local assessments to supplement information from state tests. The state system includes both standardized tests in reading, language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies and state-approved, locally adopted and locally scored supplemental assessments in areas like oral communication. Alternate Assessments, available for students with disabilities or English language learners, use state-developed standards-based protocols and rubrics for the local collection and local scoring of student work, including performance activities, tasks, and projects that are embedded in the curriculum. Although Wisconsin passed exit exam legislation in 1997 that envisioned a test-only system, it was amended in 1999, prior to implementation, to a multiple measures system like

those adopted in Connecticut, Maine, Pennsylvania, and Rhode Island. Districts were asked to develop policies for granting the diploma taking into account coursework, consideration of the student's score on the High School Graduation Test, pupil academic performance as evaluated through local assessments, and teacher recommendations. The state department noted that:

Multiple measures allow a continuous record that documents student achievement, rather than depending on a point-in-time snapshot.... Assessment is not just testing. Assessment includes projects, performances, assignments, demonstrations, products, and presentations. By viewing assessment in a more panoramic fashion, an individual student showcases his/her learning in a variety of ways.”<sup>30</sup>

In 2003, the High School Graduation Test was repealed entirely, so the multiple measures system now relies on the state standards-based tests and alternatives in grades 3, 4, 8, and 10, and locally administered performance assessments, along with teacher recommendations and grades. Graduation decisions are now made based on local evidence that can include these assessments.

## VERMONT

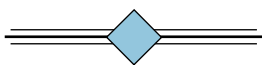
Vermont's Comprehensive Assessment System (CAS) includes statewide portfolios in writing and mathematics and locally developed assessments, as well as statewide reference exams in English/language arts, mathematics, and writing that feature multiple choice questions, open-ended responses, and hands-on performance tasks. Beginning in the fall of 2005, Vermont will participate in the New England Common Assessment Program, developed along with New Hampshire and Rhode Island, for evaluating reading, writing, and mathematics in grades 3-8.

To graduate from high school, students must demonstrate that they are attaining or meeting the Vermont standards as measured by results on performance-based assessments or that they have completed a set of specified course credits in the core academic subjects, the arts,

and physical education. Each district must develop a local assessment system consistent with the Vermont Comprehensive Assessment System (CAS) which assesses students in both classroom-based and school-wide assessments in the Vermont Fields of Knowledge (art, language, and literature; history and social sciences; science, mathematics, and technology) and Vital Results (communications, reasoning and problem solving; personal development; and civic responsibility).

All students enrolled in Vermont schools must be accounted for in the statewide assessment accountability system. Most students participate in regular statewide assessments using approved accommodations when necessary. Some students participate in the accountability system using one of three alternate assessment options: 1) modified assessments, 2) adapted assessments or 3) life skills assessments. In Vermont, use of assessment accommodations and alternate assessments is not limited to special-education students. Among those who may qualify for accommodations or alternate assessment are students who have been referred to a school's educational support team or students who have 504 plans.

The state assessments are used primarily for reporting performance and for supporting school improvement. "Priority schools" in which a large share of students are not meeting standards on state assessments are assisted by school improvement coordinators at the Department of Education to collect and analyze assessment data and other measures related to student performance. These data are then used for action planning.



# COMPONENTS OF A MULTIPLE MEASURES SYSTEM FOR HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION

Looking across the various states that are seeking to support valid assessment and ambitious instruction through multiple measures approaches, we find four components of a balanced assessment system that appear particularly productive for leveraging both high-quality assessment and high-quality instruction:

- 1) A range of assessments of student performance, extending beyond on-demand paper and pencil tests and including performance assessments;
- 2) Appropriate alternatives for students, including those with special needs and English language learners;
- 3) Support for the development of high-quality local performance assessments;
4. A process for reviewing and improving local assessment systems.

These elements are important to a sound system for various reasons: The presence of multiple measures heightens the validity of the system, while also providing incentives for teachers to teach a broader range of skills and content and for students to learn how to demonstrate their learning in many ways — including, where performance assessments are used, direct applications of knowledge to real-life problems and products like those expected in college, work, and life.

Appropriate alternatives for students with special needs and those

***Performance assessments, tied to standards-based scoring practices, increase the chances that teachers and students will develop shared conceptions of what constitutes good work and that teachers will develop curriculum that enables students to do this kind of work.***

who are learning English also heighten the validity of the system — making it more likely that students’ understanding will be evaluated in ways that reflect what they actually know and that the inferences drawn from the test about what students are capable of doing are accurate.

State supports for local districts to develop performance assessments encourage schools to embed challenging and informative assessments in their ongoing teaching, thus increasing the possibilities that students will be engaged in challenging, standards-based instruction and that teachers will pay close attention to how students are learning and will adjust instruction accordingly.

In addition, such assessments, tied to standards-based scoring practices, increase the chances that teachers and students will develop shared conceptions of what constitutes good work and that teachers will develop curriculum that enables students to do this kind of work. This strategy, then, is directly aimed at improving the quality of teaching and learning in a continuous way throughout each school year.

Finally, state processes for reviewing local assessment systems acknowledge that, if local assessments are important to drive teaching and learning in the classroom, it is equally important that the assessments be high-quality and good measures of the standards. Processes that evaluate the assessment systems of local districts and provide feedback about how to make them better create a statewide engine for continuous improvement that can leverage system learning as well as student learning. Table 2 shows how states have incorporated these elements of a comprehensive assessment system.



**TABLE 2 - ELEMENTS OF COMPREHENSIVE STATE ASSESSMENT SYSTEMS**

<b>Elements of State Assessment Systems</b>	<b>States Providing this Element</b>
<b>1. Multiple ways to show competence</b> <i>through performance assessments, exhibitions, samples of work, or course performance</i>	AR, CT, DE, HI, ID, IL, IN, KS, KY, ME, MD, MO, MT, NE, NH, NJ, ND, OK, OR, PA, RI, SD, VT, WA, WI, WV, WY
<b>2a. Alternative assessments for students with disabilities</b> <i>e.g., portfolios of work, scored work samples</i>	AK, AL, AR, AZ, CA, FL, GA, IN, KS, MA, ME, MI, MN, NJ, NM, NY, NC, OH, OK, SC, TX, UT, VT, WA, WI
<b>2b. Alternative assessments for English language learners</b> <i>e.g., exemptions from testing for new English learners, tests in native language, modified assessments, scored work samples</i>	AR, CT, IA, ID, IL, IN, KS, KY, MI, MT, ME, NE, NH, NJ, NY, OK, PA, SD, WA, WI
<b>3. State support for the development of local performance assessments</b> <i>states encourage or assist districts in using or developing performance assessments by providing technical assistance, state rubrics or scoring protocols, or models</i>	CT, HI, KY, ME, MO, NE, OR, PA, RI, VT, WI, WY
<b>4. A process for reviewing local assessment systems</b> <i>an approval process provides feedback to improve local assessments</i>	ME, NE, PA, RI, WY

## 1. A RANGE OF ASSESSMENTS OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE

As we have noted, the national *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* observe that a single test cannot adequately support high-stakes judgments regarding student achievement, and that for purposes of equity and validity students should have multiple opportunities to demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways. Furthermore, assessments that rely primarily on a multiple-choice format cannot address the full depth and breadth of the state content standards. Minimal competency examinations, by definition and design, do not tap all of the complex thinking and problem-solving

***Minimal competency examinations, by definition and design, do not tap all of the complex thinking and problem-solving skills that are represented in the standards and that are needed for work and college readiness.***

skills that are represented in the standards and that are needed for work and college readiness. To assess the depth and breadth of the standards, a number of assessment systems include other types of performance measures, such as extended essays, research projects, scientific experiments, portfolios of student work, and exhibitions of performance.

In addition to a state test, states with successful multiple measure approaches include performance assessments developed locally (e.g., Connecticut, Rhode Island, Nebraska) or by the state (e.g., Washington, Oregon, New Jersey) as elements in a graduation decision. These systems seek to address the full range of standards and provide multiple pathways to students to demonstrate competence. State policy is designed to help districts and schools balance attention to core academic skills and higher order cognitive abilities as well as to the developmental needs of the students. In addition, multiple measure approaches seek to respond to individual differences and diversity, allowing students to demonstrate proficiency in several ways.

In a balanced approach to assessment, high school examinations may serve as a common test across districts, producing information for the state accountability system. Curriculum-embedded performance assessments add critical value and balance to the graduation decision by evaluating a broader range of skills and providing multiple indicators of student competence. As we have noted, in a system like Connecticut's, all students take the state exam and aggregated scores are reported for districts and schools, but individual student graduation decisions must be made with information from students' long-term school record and from district-adopted performance assessments in key areas of mathematics and English language arts. In a system like Rhode Island's, the state exam counts for a portion of the graduation decision (up to 10%), while local performance

assessments that are state-approved (senior exhibitions, portfolios, and projects) count for the remainder. In a system like Pennsylvania's, districts are encouraged to use local standards-based measures, in addition to the state test, to inform the graduation decision; this includes grades in standards-based courses as well as local assessments such as a culminating senior project.

## 2. ASSESSMENT OPTIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Many states have developed alternative assessments — generally performance-based measures — for students who have attended school and passed their classes but who have not passed the exit exam. This approach responds to different learning styles and provides multiple indicators of competence.

States have developed several kinds of options, including alternative assessments and accommodations, for students who have difficulty showing their learning on specific on-demand tests. In addition to specially-designed assessments, options designed for special need students include adjustments to testing time, response formats, or use of assistive processes (e.g., providing Braille translations or providing special readers or writers). A number of states (e.g., Kentucky, New Hampshire, Vermont, and West Virginia) use portfolios of student work which document students' learning in relation to the standards. Options designed for English language learners include reading aloud, translating words, using glossaries or dictionaries, and, in some cases, taking tests created with modified language and graphics. A number of states exempt LEP students who have been in English instruction for less than three years and evaluate their learning through alternate means. Many states use English proficiency tests for new English language learners. Illinois has developed a special set of assessments for English language learners across content areas.

Some states restrict the development of options only to students with disabilities and/or English language learners. Other states provide a range of options to meet graduation requirements by including

*Improvements in teacher effectiveness have been attributed to teachers' involvement in developing and scoring assessments, looking closely at individual student answers, and taking those into account in planning instruction.*

all students in the group of those eligible to demonstrate their learning through alternative assessments (e.g., New Jersey, Rhode Island, Pennsylvania, and Washington). In these states, options include local assessments or the use of alternative performance assessments addressing state standards. Some states have processes for examining other specific data that demonstrate learning if a student does not pass the exit exam. Ohio, for example, has developed a detailed set of criteria based on attendance, GPA, participation in remediation, and personal references.

### 3. DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL ASSESSMENTS

Although tests aim to inform instruction, teachers are not much helped in their efforts to understand standards or to fine-tune their instruction for individual students by secret tests that arrive under heavy security and are whisked off for external scoring, yielding only aggregated scores many months later after students have finished the year. Improvements in teacher effectiveness have been attributed to teachers' involvement in developing and scoring assessments, looking closely at individual student answers, and taking those into account in planning instruction.

Policies that develop assessment capacity at the local level help develop an instructional focus on content standards and a diagnostic approach to teaching. Local curriculum-embedded assessments provide ongoing information about student learning and help teachers benchmark their teaching to student needs and state standards. Studies find strong improvements in learning and teaching and increased reliability and validity in decisions about student performance associated with local performance assessments. Some state assessments systems rely substantially on local or state-developed performance assessments — designed around state standards and specifications — for information

about student learning. These include portfolio systems (Vermont and Kentucky) and systems that incorporate performance tasks (Connecticut and Maine). Some state systems use (or are currently developing) several kinds of performance assessment tools, ranging from portfolios and performance tasks to exhibitions and on-line assessments (Oregon, Nebraska, Rhode Island and Washington).

To design a local accountability system that is aligned to state standards, local capacity needs to be built with technical assistance and other resources. States can play a vital role in recognizing, building upon, and disseminating rigorous locally developed assessment systems that are currently in use and aligned to standards. Both Nebraska's and Rhode Island's systems involve the state in such a role. Many districts, including large ones like New York, San Diego, and Los Angeles, as well as a large number of smaller districts, have developed performance assessments locally or through consortia that involve several districts working with universities or foundations (e.g., the Noyes Foundation's MARS assessments in mathematics and Every Child a Reader and Writer in English for language arts). By identifying effective locally developed assessment practices, states can leverage local resources to build district capacity. States can also develop models and options for assessments that local districts can use to monitor student learning and guide professional development.

In some states, such as Connecticut, Vermont, and Oregon, the state partners with districts in supporting diagnostic and performance assessments. For example, Connecticut and Vermont help districts access and learn to use a classroom-based Developmental Reading Assessment that complements other state and local tests. Oregon has created a diagnostic, standards-based system of adaptive computer-based testing that teachers can access at any time.

A state assessment bank can assemble existing performance assessments and develop technological tools to make them readily accessible to districts and schools. Both open source and commercially developed performance tasks (aligned to standards) can be evaluated

to identify a library of exemplars in every field that districts can draw on or modify to be included in the design of a locally developed accountability system. In addition, prototype assessments can be specifically developed in English/language arts, mathematics and science to reflect the “core” conceptual understandings that are highlighted in the standards. This approach to assessment development builds in considerable efficiencies for districts by saving development time, labor and expense and by avoiding the pitfalls of “reinventing the wheel” district by district. Additionally, such a system can provide districts with clear specifications and benchmarks for the development of assessment tasks that are aligned to the local curriculum and state standards.

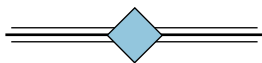
#### 4. A PROCESS FOR REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF LOCAL ASSESSMENT SYSTEMS

A well designed and implemented local accountability system can yield vital information about student learning — information that will guide instruction, shape curriculum and build teacher capacity to meet the needs of all students resulting in higher student achievement. To ensure that locally designed assessment systems are rigorous and aligned to state standards, some states like Nebraska have developed a formal review process to judge their quality. The review team includes nationally-known measurement experts and educators who have demonstrated expertise in curriculum, instruction and assessment to evaluate the district assessment systems of its 500 local districts. Using well-defined criteria to examine assessments, scoring systems, and scored student work, the review panel, 1) evaluates district assessment plans detailing each district’s assessments and plans for training teachers to effectively use and score the performance assessments and 2) certifies that the local assessment system is standards-based, meets technical standards of quality, and can be used to make defensible decisions for graduation or other purposes. The external reviewers also offer advice for improving each district’s assessment system and the state provides technical assistance to support these improvements.

## CONCLUSION

Multiple measures systems of high school graduation have the potential to strengthen curriculum and instruction by drawing attention to state standards, evaluating the full range of standards in valid and appropriate ways, providing rich information about student learning that is useful to classroom teachers, and providing diverse means for students to demonstrate their learning.

States have begun to develop thoughtful and creative approaches to the challenge of raising standards for graduation and assessing standards wisely. As they have developed new policy frameworks for assessment, several key elements of strong systems have begun to emerge. Together these four elements — diverse state and local assessments that include multiple measures of student performance; appropriate alternatives that allow all students to demonstrate their knowledge and encourage them to stay in school; local performance assessments that are developed with state support, and a process for review and improvement of local assessment systems — can stimulate more thoughtful teaching, an engine for ongoing improvement and professional development, and a commitment to standards that shape more powerful learning.



## ENDNOTES

1. See L. Darling-Hammond & E. Rustique-Forrester (in press). The consequences of student testing for teaching and teacher quality. In Ed Haertel and Joan Herman (eds.) NSSE Yearbook. Chicago: National Society for the Study of Education.

2. See L. Darling-Hammond (2004). Schools that work for all children. In Carl Glickman (ed.), Letters to the next president: What we can do about the real crisis in public education, pp. NY: Teachers College Press, 239-254.

3. Center on Education Policy (2003). State high school exit exams: Put to the test. Washington, DC: Center on Education Policy, 5.

4. Center on Education Policy (2004). State High School Exit Exams: A Maturing Reform, Washington, DC: Center on Education Policy.

5. States with exams that are part of a multiple measures system (i.e., are considered with a range of other evidence about learning) are not represented in this figure (they are described later in this publication), nor are states with exams that allow a local waiver or option to the test (e.g., Georgia, Idaho). Other states, like Alabama, Alaska, Louisiana, Massachusetts, and Texas enacted new exit exam policies that took effect in 2002 or later and are, thus, not represented on this figure. [Alabama and Texas previously had exams that allowed for waivers or options.]

6. The NCES graduation rate is calculated as the number of graduates in a given year divided by the number of 9th graders in the system 3.5 years earlier (i.e., those who were enrolled in middle of the 9th grade year). This produces a four-year graduation rate that assumes equilibrium in the numbers of students who may be transferring into and out of the state during their high school years. It also includes GED recipients. There are many ways of calculating graduation rates and dropout rates that have been discussed in the literature. For example, some estimates do not include recipients of GED diplomas as graduates and therefore produce lower estimates of graduation rates. Some adjust for estimates of student mobility. A recent analysis of six different methods of estimating graduation rates found that they show similar trends over time and similar gaps between majority and minority students, and that there is no evidence that more complex methods produce more accurate estimates. (See J. Miao & W. Haney (2004). High school graduation rates: Alternative methods and implications). Education Policy Analysis Archives, 12(55). Retrieved January 2, 2004, from <http://epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v12n55/>.) Dropout rate estimates tend to be far less reliable than graduation rate data, because they are determined from school personnel records of what happened to students who have left the school. Quite often, students recorded as “transferred” to other schools or GED programs have, in fact, dropped out. Typically, estimates of dropout rates appear to be much lower than estimates of non-graduation rates for this reason.

7. These rates are calculated by dividing the number of graduates by the number of 9th graders four years earlier. Enrollment and graduation data are from the Massachusetts Department of Education. State enrollment data by grade are found at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/reports/enroll/>. The number of graduates statewide is from the Massachusetts Department of Education, “Plans of High School Graduates,” available at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/reports/graduates/>.



doe.mass.edu/infoservices/reports/hsg/. See also Anne Wheelock (2003). School awards programs and accountability in Massachusetts: Misusing MCAS scores to assess school quality. Retrieved January 5, 2005, from <http://www.fairtest.org/arn/Alert%20June02/Alert%20Full%20Report.html>; & D. Bernstein (2004). Achievement gap: This is improvement? Boston Phoenix.com. Retrieved January 2, 2005, from: [http://www.bostonphoenix.com/boston/news\\_features/this\\_just\\_in/documents/03902591.asp](http://www.bostonphoenix.com/boston/news_features/this_just_in/documents/03902591.asp)

8. Ibid.

9. For recent studies examining the increases in dropout rates associated with high-stakes testing systems, see Advocates for Children (2002). Pushing out at-risk students: An analysis of high school discharge figures — a joint report by AFC and the Public Advocate. Retrieved March 7, 2005, from: <http://www.advocatesforchildren.org/pubs/pushout-11-20-02.html>. W. Haney (2002). Lake Wobegone guaranteed: Misuse of test scores in Massachusetts, Part 1. Education Policy Analysis Archives, 10(24). Retrieved September 3, 2004, from: <http://epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v10n24/>. J. Heubert & R. Hauser (eds.) (1999). High stakes: Testing for tracking, promotion, and graduation. A report of the National Research Council. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press. B.A. Jacob (2001). Getting tough? The impact of high school graduation exams. Education and Evaluation and Policy Analysis 23(2), 99-122. D. Lilliard, & P. DeCicca (2001). Higher standards, more dropouts? Evidence within and across time. Economics of Education Review, 20(5), 459-73. G. Orfield, D. Losen, J. Wald, & C.B. Swanson (2004). Losing our future: How minority youth are being left behind by the graduation rate crisis. Retrieved March 7, 2005, from: <http://www.urban.org/url.cfm?ID=410936>. M. Roderick, A.S. Bryk, B.A. Jacob, J.Q. Easton, & E. Allensworth (1999). Ending social promotion: Results from the first two years. Chicago: Consortium on Chicago School Research. R. Rumberger & K. Larson (1998). Student mobility and the increased risk of high school dropout. American Journal of Education, 107, 1-35. E. Rustique-Forrester (in press). Accountability and the pressures to exclude: A cautionary tale from England. Education Policy Analysis Archives. A. Wheelock (2003). School awards programs and accountability in Massachusetts.

10. B. A. Jacob (2001). Getting tough? The impact of high school graduation exams. Education and Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 23 (2), 99-122.

11. M. Roderick, A.S. Bryk, B.A. Jacob, J.Q. Easton, & E. Allensworth (1999). Ending social promotion: Results from the first two years. Chicago: Consortium on Chicago School Research.

12. G. J. Marchant, & S. E. Paulson (2005). The relationship of high school graduation exams to graduation rates and SAT scores. Education Policy Analysis Archives, 13(6). Retrieved February 22, 2005, from <http://epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v13n6/>.

13. American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association, & National Council on Measurement in Education (1999). Standards for educational and psychological testing, Washington, D.C.: American Educational Research Association, 142.

14. AERA, APA, NCME, (1999). Standards for educational and psychological testing, 146.

15. See for example, W. Haney (2000). The myth of the Texas miracle in education. Education Policy Analysis Archives, 8(41): Retrieved March 7, 2005, from: <http://epaa.asu.edu/>

## Endnotes

---

epaa/v8n41/; J.L. Herman & S. Golan (1993). Effects of standardized testing on teaching and schools. Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice, 12(4), 20-25, 41-42; B.D. Jones & R. J. Egley (2004). Voices from the frontlines: Teachers' perceptions of high-stakes testing. Education Policy Analysis Archives, 12 (39). Retrieved August 10, 2004, from <http://epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v12n39/>; M.G. Jones, B.D. Jones, B. Hardin, L. Chapman, & T. Yarbrough (1999). The impact of high-stakes testing on teachers and students in North Carolina. Phi Delta Kappan, 81(3), 199-203; S.P. Klein, L.S. Hamilton, D.F. McCaffrey, & B.M. Stetcher (2000). What do test scores in Texas tell us? Santa Monica: The RAND Corporation; D. Koretz & S. I. Barron (1998). The validity of gains on the Kentucky Instructional Results Information System (KIRIS). Santa Monica, CA: RAND, MR-1014-EDU; D. Koretz, R.L. Linn, S.B. Dunbar, & L.A. Shepard (1991, April). The effects of high-stakes testing: Preliminary evidence about generalization across tests, in R. L. Linn (chair), The effects of high stakes testing. Symposium presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association and the National Council on Measurement in Education, Chicago; R.L. Linn (2000). Assessments and accountability. Educational Researcher, 29 (2), 4-16; R.L. Linn, M.E. Graue, & N.M. Sanders (1990). Comparing state and district test results to national norms: The validity of claims that "everyone is above average." Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice, 9, 5-14; W. J. Popham (1999). Why standardized test scores don't measure educational quality. Educational Leadership, 56(6), 8-15; M.L. Smith (2001). Put to the test: The effects of external testing on teachers. Educational Researcher, 20(5), 8-11.

16. Achieve, Do graduation tests measure up? A closer look at state high school exit exams. Executive summary. Washington, D.C.: Achieve, Inc.

17. These states include Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Kentucky, Idaho, Indiana, Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Washington.

18. R. Glaser (1990). Testing and assessment: O tempora! O mores! Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh, Learning Research and Development Center; G. Wiggins (1991, February). Standards, not standardization: Evoking quality student work. Educational Leadership, 18-25.

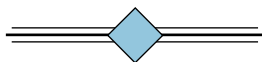
19. C. Chapman (1991, June). What have we learned from writing assessment that can be applied to performance assessment? Presentation at ECS/CDE Alternative Assessment Conference, Breckenridge, CO; J.L.Herman, D.C. Klein, T.M. Heath, S.T. Wakai (1995). A first look: Are claims for alternative assessment holding up? CSE Technical Report. Los Angeles: UCLA National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing.

20. D. Koretz, K., J. Mitchell, S.I. Barron, & S. Keith (1996). Final Report: Perceived effects of the Maryland school performance assessment program CSE Technical Report. Los Angeles: UCLA National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing; B.M. Stecher, S. Barron, T. Kaganoff, & J. Goodwin (1998). The effects of standards-based assessment on classroom practices: Results of the 1996-97 RAND survey of Kentucky teachers of mathematics and writing. CSE Technical Report. Los Angeles: UCLA National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing.

21. W.A. Firestone, D. Mayrowetz, & J. Fairman (1998, summer). Performance-based assessment and instructional change: The effects of testing in Maine and Maryland. Educational

Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 20, 95-113.

22. S. Lane, C.A. Stone, C.S. Parke, M.A. Hansen, & T.L. Cerrillo (2000, April). Consequential evidence for MSPAP from the teacher, principal and student perspective. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the National Council on Measurement in Education, New Orleans, LA.
23. D. Koretz, B. Stetcher & E. Deibert (1992). The Vermont portfolio program: Interim report on implementation and impact, 1991-92 school year. Santa Monica, CA: The RAND Corporation.
24. B. Stecher, S. Baron, T. Chun, T., K. Ross (2000) The effects of the Washington state education reform on schools and classroom. CSE Technical Report. Los Angeles: UCLA National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing.
25. L. Darling-Hammond & J. Aness (1994). Authentic assessment and school development. NY: National Center for Restructuring Education, Schools, and Teaching, Teachers College, Columbia University; B. Falk & S. Ort (1998, September). Sitting down to score: Teacher learning through assessment. Phi Delta Kappan, 80(1), 59-64. G.L. Goldberg & B.S. Rosewell (2000). From perception to practice: The impact of teachers' scoring experience on the performance based instruction and classroom practice. Educational Assessment, 6, 257-290; R. Murnane & F. Levy (1996). Teaching the new basic skills. NY: The Free Press.
26. L. Darling-Hammond, J. Aness, B. Falk (1995). Authentic assessment in action: Studies of schools and students at work. NY: Teachers College Press; M. Kornhaber & H. Gardner (1993). Varieties of student excellence. NY: National Center for Restructuring Education, Schools, and Teaching (NCREST), Teachers College, Columbia University.
27. J.B. Baron (1999). Exploring high and improving reading achievement in Connecticut. Washington: National Educational Goals Panel. Murnane & Levy (1996); Stecher et al. (1998); S. Wilson, L. Darling-Hammond, B. Berry (2001). A case of successful teaching policy: Connecticut's long-term efforts to improve teaching and learning. Seattle: Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy, University of Washington.
28. Baron (1999). Exploring high and improving reading achievement in Connecticut.
29. C.W. Gallagher (2004, January). Turning the accountability tables: Ten progressive lessons from one "backward" state. Phi Delta Kappan, 85(5), 352-360.
30. Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (2000, March 18). Suggestions for local school boards in approaching the development of high school graduation and fourth/eighth grade advancement policies: Implementing the provisions of 1999 Wisconsin Act 9. Madison, WI: WDPI, 5, 9.



Appendix A: Overview of High School Graduation Policies

APPENDIX A - OVERVIEW OF HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION POLICIES IN STATES WITH MULTIPLE MEASURE APPROACHES												
State	Type of graduation policy			Factors in graduation decision (✓ = State requirement; ✓* = Passage not required for graduation; Local option = School districts can decide whether to include and how to use)				Information used to award differentiated diploma or special certificate				
	Requires passage of exit exam (with alternative pathway)	Combination of locally developed criteria and state requirements	Test results appear on transcript but not used to withhold diploma	State test	Performance assessment and/or career-oriented demonstration	Locally determined evidence of proficiency in state standards	Required course credits	State test	Performance - oriented assessment	Courses	GPA or course grades	Other
AR		✓	✓	Local option	Local option	Local option	✓	✓				
CT		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				
DE		✓	✓	✓*	Local option	Local option	✓	✓				
HI		✓		Local option	Local option	✓ (2006)	✓	✓	✓		✓	
ID	✓ (2006)			✓ (2006)	Option in lieu of test		✓	✓				
IL		✓	✓	✓*	Local option	Local option	✓	✓				
IN	✓			✓	Local option	Local option	✓	✓			✓	SAT or ACT score or AP test (2010)
KS		✓		Local option	Local option	Local option	✓	✓				
KY		✓		Local option	Career Plan	Local option	✓	✓	✓		✓	AP or IB exams
ME		✓		✓*	Computer proficiency service learning	✓	✓	✓				
MD	✓ (2009)		✓	✓* (2009)	Local option	Local option	✓	✓			✓	SAT or ACT score
MO		✓		Local option	Local option	Local option	✓	✓				
MT		✓		Local option	Encouraged by state		✓	✓				
NE		✓		Local option	Encouraged by state		✓	✓				
NH		✓		Local option	Local option	District option in lieu of credits	✓	✓				
NJ	✓			✓	Option in lieu of test	Local option	✓	✓				
ND		✓		Local option	Local option	Local option	✓	✓				
OK		✓	✓	✓*	Local option	Local option	✓	✓				
OR		✓		Local option	✓ (2007) Plus career-related learning	Local option	✓	✓	✓			Education plan
PA		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				
RI		✓		✓* (2008)	✓ (2008)	✓ (2008)	✓	✓	✓			
SD		✓		Local option	Local option	Local option	✓	✓				
VT		✓		Local option	District option in lieu of credits		✓	✓		✓ (2006)		
WA	✓ (2008)			✓ (2008)	✓ Plus education plan	Local option	✓	✓				
WI		✓		Local option	Local option	Encouraged by state	✓	✓				
WV		✓		Local option	Work-based learning	Local option	✓	✓				
WY		✓		Local option	Local option	✓	✓	✓				District decision

APPENDIX A - OVERVIEW OF HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION POLICIES IN STATES WITH MULTIPLE MEASURE APPROACHES										
State	High School Testing Options & Alternate Pathways Allowed by State									
	Accommodations (e.g., test read aloud, extended time)			Alternative Criteria, Substitute or Alternative Assessment (e.g., individualized coursework, IEP objectives, portfolios, student work samples, school attendance, grades, checklist)				Exemption for English Language Learners in first year (reading, writing tests)		All Students who complete their IEP receive standard diplomas
	Special Education	Students with Severe Cognitive Disabilities	English Language Learners	General Education	Special Education	Students with Severe Cognitive Disabilities	English Language Learners	English Language Learners	English Language Learners	
AR	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	
CT	✓	✓	✓			✓			✓	✓
DE	✓	✓	✓			✓				✓
HI	✓	✓	✓			✓				✓
ID	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓
IL	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓		✓
IN	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓
KS	✓	✓	✓			✓			✓	✓
KY	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓	✓
ME	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓
MD	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓
MO	✓	✓	✓			✓				✓
MT	✓	✓	✓			✓			✓	✓
NE	✓	✓	✓			✓				✓
NH	✓	✓	✓			✓			✓	✓
NJ	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
ND	✓	✓	✓			✓				✓
OK	✓	✓	✓			✓			✓	✓
OR	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓	✓
PA	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓
RI	✓	✓	✓			✓				✓
SD	✓	✓	✓			✓			✓	✓
VT	✓	✓	✓			✓				✓
WA	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓	✓
WI	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓				✓
WV	✓	✓	✓			✓				✓
WY	✓	✓	✓			✓				✓

# Appendix B:

## State Profiles of High School Graduation and Assessment Policies

### ARKANSAS

#### HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION POLICY

In Arkansas, students must complete state-required course credits in the Common Core system and Career Focus areas and any additional local graduation requirements to receive a diploma. Student scores on Arkansas Benchmark tests and End-of-Course examinations in algebra 1, geometry, and literacy appear on the high school transcript.

#### GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Students must complete at least 21 units in common core and career focus areas.

A. Common Core System Requirements (15 units): English (4 units), oral communication (1/2 unit), social studies (3 units – 1 world history, 1 U.S. history, 1/2 civics or government), mathematics (3 units – 1 algebra, 1 geometry or equivalent. All math units must build on the base of algebra and geometry knowledge and skills), science (3 units – at least 1 biology or equivalent, 1 a physical science), physical education (1/2 unit), health and safety (1/2 unit), fine arts (1/2 unit).

B. Career Focus: All units in the career focus requirement are established through guidance and counseling at the local school district based on the students' interests or career goals. Career focus courses conform to local district policy and reflect state frameworks through course sequencing and career course concentrations.

In an effort to increase students' college-readiness, Arkansas will institute the Smart Core System Requirements beginning with the current 7th grade class (class of 2010). The Smart Core requires 22 units – with the same distribution as the current common core requirements except that the 3 units of science must include laboratory experience, and a total of 4 units of math (one more than the current requirement) are required (including algebra I, geometry, algebra II, and a higher math class, one of which must be taken in the 11th or 12th grade). The requirements are being phased in to accommodate students who may need to spread the algebra requirements over several years.

#### DESCRIPTION OF STATE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

To evaluate students and schools, Arkansas uses both state standards-based and national norm-referenced tests as part of the Arkansas Comprehensive Testing, Assessment and Accountability Program (ACTAAP). ACTAAP is a comprehensive system that focuses on high academic standards, professional development, student assessment, and accountability for schools. Standards for establishing the minimum requirement for every public school were accepted in 1984 and revised in 2000 and 2004.

Students in grades 3 - 8 take the Arkansas Benchmark Exams in reading, writing and mathematics, a standards-based, criterion-referenced test developed by Arkansas teachers and the state department of education. The math and reading tests contain both multiple choice and open-response items. The writing test consists of two extended-response items. The tests are scored based on four performance levels: below basic, basic, proficient and advanced.

Norm-referenced testing, presently the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS), which is a multiple-choice test, is administered in grades K-9 in reading comprehension and math problem solving. The Iowa Early Learning Inventory is administered to all kindergarten students at the beginning of the school year.

Students also take criterion-referenced End-of-Course exams. Students take the algebra 1, geometry and grade 11 literacy exams once they complete the respective courses. Each exam consists of multiple-choice and open-ended items. The tests are scored based on four performance levels: below basic, basic, proficient and advanced.

### TEST USES

**Students:** Students' Benchmark and End-of-Course test results appear on their high school transcripts, but do not affect promotion or graduation. Students who fail to perform at the proficient level on the Benchmark Exams are required to follow an academic improvement plan, which is a remedial plan that is constructed with the individual student in mind.

**Schools:** Test results are made public and used to identify strengths and weaknesses in curriculum and instruction. As required under NCLB, assessment results are one of the factors used to identify low-performing schools. These schools may be eligible for aid and/or subject to sanctions, including permitting student transfers, school closure, and reconstitution. The state provides schools in academic distress with funds and assistance to help them create and implement improvement plans to build instructional capacity. High-performing or improving schools are given cash rewards by the state.

### OPTIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities may take assessments with standard accommodations. The Arkansas Alternate Portfolio Assessment System is designed to evaluate the performance of students with disabilities and LEP students in grades 3-8 and 11 for whom the criterion-referenced examinations are not appropriate. All 9th grade students with disabilities who are not taking algebra I or geometry must be assessed with an alternate portfolio. Portfolios are scored centrally based on a four-point rubric. Students who complete their Individualized Education Plan (IEP) receive standard diplomas

### OPTIONS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELL)

Students with limited English proficiency (LEP) may take assessments with standard accommodations. LEP students for whom the criterion-referenced examinations are not appropriate may take part in the Arkansas Alternate Portfolio Assessment System. All eligible LEP students taking algebra I or geometry may be assessed with an alternate portfolio.

### SOURCES

Arkansas State Department of Education web site [http://arkedu.state.ar.us/actaap/student\\_assessment/student\\_assessment\\_p1.htm](http://arkedu.state.ar.us/actaap/student_assessment/student_assessment_p1.htm).

<http://arkedu.state.ar.us/administrators/071.html>

“Arkansas Department of Education Standards for Accreditation” (which includes the old and new graduation requirements) at: <http://arkedu.state.ar.us/standards/standards.html>

Quality Counts 2004 profile of Arkansas: <http://counts.edweek.org/sreports/qc04/state.cfm?slug=17ar.h23>

For additional information, see also: <http://www.greatschools.net/issues/ar/ach.html>

---

## CONNECTICUT

### HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION POLICY

Local districts make the graduation decision based on a combination of local performance assessments and student academic records. Districts must take state test results into account in the graduation decision but may not use the test as the sole determinant of graduation and may not deny a diploma on the basis of the state test. Students must take the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) in reading, mathematics, writing, and science, and results are reported on the high school transcript. Students who meet or exceed the state standard in each subject area receive a Certificate of Mastery.

### GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Local districts decide how to use CAPT in combination with local assessments (which must include other performance assessments and coursework performance) to make graduation decisions. Students must earn a minimum of 20 credits, including the following: English (4), mathematics (3), science (2), social studies (3), civics and American government (1/2), arts or vocational education (1), physical education (1).

### DESCRIPTION OF STATE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

The Connecticut assessment program consists of the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) and the Connecticut Academic Performance Test-2 (CAPT-2). science assessments for grades 5 and 8 are in development and will be administered starting in 2008. Scale scores range from 100 to 400, and student proficiency levels are advanced, goal, proficient, basic, and below basic.

CMT is given in grades 3-8 in reading, writing, and mathematics and includes five tests:

- 1) The Degrees of Reading Power (DRP) test assesses reading skills; it is a cloze test that requires students to fill in blanks in reading passages;
- 2) The Reading Comprehension test consists of both multiple-choice and open-ended response questions;
- 3) The Direct Assessment of Writing requires students to draft a piece of writing;
- 4) The Editing and Revising test assesses writing skills through multiple choice questions; and
- 5) The mathematics test contains multiple-choice, open-ended, and grid-in items. Students enter their responses for grid-in items in a seven-digit grid.

CAPT-2 is a criterion-referenced test administered in 10th grade in reading, mathematics, writing, and science. CAPT-2 is directly aligned with the content recommended in [The Connecticut Framework: K-12 Curricular Goals and Standards](#).



The mathematics test contains grid and open-ended items, each of which counts for approximately 50% of the total score.

The science test contains multiple-choice and open-ended items, and also includes a hands-on experiment. Approximately 30% of the score is from open-ended items.

The Reading Across the Disciplines test consists of two subtests: 1) Reading for Information contains multiple-choice and open-ended items; and 2) Response to Literature is a four-item extended task. Approximately 75% of the final score is from open-response items.

The Writing Across the Disciplines test contains three subtests: Interdisciplinary Writing Sessions 1 and 2, each consisting of a single extended performance task, and the Editing and Revising test consisting of multiple-choice questions. Approximately 70% of the total score is from open-response items.

### TEST USES

Students: CAPT-2 results are reported on high school transcripts and are a factor in making graduation decisions.

Schools: Assessment results are made public and used to help schools identify weaknesses and strengths in curriculum and instruction. The state provides technical assistance and categorical aid to low-performing districts. As required under NCLB, assessment results are one of the factors used to identify low-performing schools. These schools may be eligible for aid or sanctions.

### ALTERNATIVES AND OPTIONS FOR ALL STUDENTS

Local districts must offer performance assessments (besides CAPT) and coursework performance as a means for determining graduation. Students who have not achieved mastery in one or more subject areas in 10th grade may voluntarily retake all or part of the test in grades 11 and 12.

### OPTIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities may take assessments with standard accommodations. Students with severe cognitive disabilities may be tested against the CMT/CAPT Skills Checklist, which mirrors the domains tested on the standard assessments.

### OPTIONS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELL)

ELL students may take state assessments with standard accommodations. ELL students are tested annually for English language proficiency using the Language Assessment Scales. Students are exempt from the reading and writing portions of the CMT and CAPT if they have been identified as an ELL enrolled in a U.S. school for fewer than 10 school months and the student has taken the Language Assessment Scales (LAS) at least once in the previous 10 school months.

### SOURCES

Assessment Guidelines: <http://www.csde.state.ct.us/public/der/s-t/agl.htm>

Parent Brochure on the CMT: [http://www.csde.state.ct.us/public/der/s-t/cmt\\_resources\\_publications.htm](http://www.csde.state.ct.us/public/der/s-t/cmt_resources_publications.htm)

CAPT Program Overview, 2004 Technical Bulletin, and CAPT Skills Checklist can be found at: [http://www.csde.state.ct.us/public/der/s-t/capt\\_resources\\_publications.htm#1](http://www.csde.state.ct.us/public/der/s-t/capt_resources_publications.htm#1)

---

## DELAWARE

### HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION POLICY

Students must successfully complete state-required course credits and any additional local graduation requirements to receive a diploma. The results of state high school tests appear on the high school transcript. The state awards three kinds of diplomas: Basic, Standard, and Distinguished, based on the composite index score earned on the state high school tests in reading, writing, and mathematics.

### GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

To graduate every student must successfully complete all local requirements and a minimum of 22 credits including: 4 credits in English language arts, 3 credits in mathematics, 3 credits in science, 3 credits in social studies, 1 credit in physical education, 1/2 credit in health, 1 credit in computer literacy, 3 1/2 credits in elective courses and 3 credits in a career pathway (a planned program of sequenced or specialized courses designed to develop knowledge and skills in a particular career or academic area).

According to current laws, Delaware offers three types of diplomas to students who complete all local district and state requirements:

- 1) Basic – given to students who have a graduation index below 3.0.
- 2) Standard – given to students who obtain a graduation index between 3.0 and 3.99, and
- 3) Distinguished – given to students who obtain a 4.0 or higher graduation index and have no performance level below Level 3 (see below).

Test scores in reading, writing, and mathematics are factored together into a graduation index which ranges from 0.0-5.0 and equals  $0.4x(\text{reading performance level}) + 0.4x(\text{math performance level}) + 0.2x(\text{writing performance level})$ .

Note: The three-tiered diploma system has been very controversial and was postponed. In 2004, all students who met credit requirements received a standard diploma and students who earned a graduation index of 4.0 or higher (and at least a performance Level 2 (see below) in each content area) received a distinguished diploma. Governor Minner supports repeating this policy for 2005 and establishing a task force to recommend revised graduation requirements that would be implemented in 2007. A pending bill (HB 2) would eliminate the tiered diploma and require standard diplomas to be issued starting in 2005.

### DESCRIPTION OF STATE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

The Delaware Student Testing Program (DSTP) consists of the Stanford Achievement Test (SAT-9) (a nationally normed exam) in reading and math and Delaware items in reading, writing, math, science and/or social studies linked to the Delaware content standards. Student performance levels are Level I (well below standard), Level 2 (below the standard), Level 3 (meets the standard), Level 4 (exceeds the standard), and Level 5 (distinguished).

The reading and mathematics tests given in grades 2-10 consist of multiple choice, short answer, and extended-response items.

The writing test given in grades 3-10 consists of an extended response to a prompt and a short essay responding to a question about a reading passage.

The science and social studies tests given in grades 4, 6, 8, and 11 consist of multiple-choice and short-answer questions.

### TEST USES

**Students:** Students' test results appear on high school transcripts. Test results are one of the factors that determine which type of diploma a student receives and can be used to make some promotion decisions at some grade levels. Delaware requires and funds remediation for students who have failed the state exams. Students in grades 3, 5, and 8 who score at Level 1 — “well below the standard” — in reading (in grades 3, 5, and 8) or in math (in grade 8 only), must attend summer school, and students who still score at Level 1 on the test taken at the end of summer school are only promoted if other indicators such as districts tests, classroom projects and grades demonstrate they are ready for the next grade. Students who score at Level 2 and students in grades 2, 4, 6, 7, and 9 who score in the “unsatisfactory” progress level must have Individual Improvement Plans (IIP).

**Schools:** Assessment results are made public and used to help schools identify strengths and weaknesses in instruction and curriculum. As required under NCLB, assessment results are one of the factors used to identify low-performing schools.

### OPTIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities may take state assessments with standard accommodations. The Delaware Alternate Portfolio Assessment (DAPA) is available for students with severe cognitive disabilities. DAPA is given in the same grades and subject areas as the DSTP it substitutes for — in grades 2-10 in English/language arts and math, and in grades 4, 6, 8, and 11 in science and social studies.

### OPTIONS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELL)

ELL students may take state assessments with standard accommodations. Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners (ACCESS for ELLs) is administered annually to determine the English language proficiency levels of ELL students starting in fall 2005. ACCESS for ELLs is available for three overlapping tiers of English proficiency levels (beginning, intermediate and advanced) in each of the grade clusters except kindergarten (which has only one level). The reading and listening portions of the test consist of selected-response items while the writing and speaking portions are constructed response.

### SOURCES

About the Delaware State Testing Program: [http://www.doe.state.de.us/aab/DSTP\\_intro.html#intro](http://www.doe.state.de.us/aab/DSTP_intro.html#intro)

“How does the DOE currently measure student achievement statewide?” [http://www.doe.state.de.us/aab/how\\_do\\_we\\_currently\\_measure\\_stud.htm](http://www.doe.state.de.us/aab/how_do_we_currently_measure_stud.htm)

Delaware Alternate Portfolio Assessment 20004-05 Parent Brochure can be downloaded at

## Appendix B: State Profiles

---

<http://www.udel.edu/cds/dapa/>  
“Basics of Accountability”: [http://www.doe.state.de.us/AAB/DSTP\\_faq.html](http://www.doe.state.de.us/AAB/DSTP_faq.html)  
“Assessment, math Standards and Three-Tiered Diploma Issues Addressed” at: <http://www.doe.state.de.us/news/2005/0216.shtml>  
Diploma Index Calculator: <http://www.doe.state.de.us/AAB/DICalculator.htm>  
ESL Services Homepage: <http://capweb.capital.k12.de.us/pub/curr/esl/whatsnew.htm>  
Delaware State Graduation Requirements: <http://www.doe.state.de.us/info/gradreqs.shtml>

---

## HAWAII

### HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION POLICY

Students must complete state-required course credits and any additional local school graduation requirements to receive a diploma. Students who complete all graduation requirements, a senior project, and earn a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher earn a Board of Education Recognition Diploma. The state is developing statewide rubrics and assessment tools that schools can use to guide their assessment processes for determining student proficiency.

### GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

To earn a high school diploma in Hawaii, students are required to:

Earn a minimum of 22 credits including English (4 credits – including 1 credit each of English 1 & 2), social studies (3 credits – including 1/2 credits “Modern History of Hawaii” and 1/2 credits “Participation in a Democracy”); science (3 credits); physical education (1 credit); health (1/2 credits); and guidance (1/2 credits). (Starting for the class of 2006-07, 2 credits in World Language, fine arts, or Career and Technical Education will also be required).

Starting for the class of 2006-07, students will be asked to demonstrate proficiency through course performance. The state is in the process of developing the statewide rubrics and assessment tools that schools can use and adapt to guide their assessment process.

The state encourages schools to incorporate a senior project into their expectations. Schools can determine the nature of this project.

### DESCRIPTION OF STATE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

The Hawaii State Assessment (HSA) is based on the Hawaii Content and Performance Standard II assessments (HCPS II). HSA consists of seven segments: three in reading, three in math and one in writing. Students in grades 3-8 and 10 take the HCPS II test in reading, writing and math. Student proficiency levels are: well below proficiency, approaches proficiency, meets proficiency and exceeds proficiency.

One reading segment and one math segment are based on the Stanford Achievement test (SAT-9) — a nationally normed multiple-choice test. Student proficiency levels on the SAT-9 are: below average, average or above average. The other segments of the HCPS II are standards-based tests.

### TEST USES

Students: The state encourages schools to use multiple assessment strategies rather than

rely solely on state tests in making decisions about student promotion and placement

Schools: Assessment results are made public and used to identify strengths and weaknesses in curriculum and instruction. As required under NCLB, assessment results are one of the factors used to identify low-performing schools. These schools may be eligible for aid and/or subject to sanctions, which may include permitting student transfers, school closure, reconstitution, reconstitution as charters, and turning schools over to private management. In addition to basic per-pupil funding, Hawaii provides money to schools based on a weighted student formula (determined annually) based on the level of individual student needs.

### OPTIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities may take assessments with accommodations. An Alternate Assessment is available for students with severe cognitive disabilities. The Alternate Assessment is based on extended benchmarks and requires the collection of two independent pieces of evidence using two types of assessment. Students who complete their IEPs receive standard diplomas.

### OPTIONS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELL)

ELL students may take assessments with accommodations. Each ELL student's English language proficiency is assessed annually with the Language Assessment Scales (LAS). The state is looking at other tests and will be piloting some of these other tests in order to make a change by the 2006-07 school year.

### SOURCES

Hawaii's assessment system is described at: <http://www.greatschools.net/issues/hi/ach.html>  
Hawaii DOE Consolidated State Application Accountability Workbook can be downloaded at:  
[http://arch.k12.hi.us/pdf/HI\\_ConAppAcctWB072804.pdf](http://arch.k12.hi.us/pdf/HI_ConAppAcctWB072804.pdf)  
Description of Weighted Formula Program at: <http://reach.k12.hi.us/empowerment/wsf/>  
Graduation Requirements: <http://lilinode.k12.hi.us/STATE/BOE/POL1.NSF/85255a0a0010ae82852555340060479d/91ae48edb6f3e0140a2566a3006f0dec?OpenDocument>

---

## IDAHO

### HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION POLICY

Idaho will require students to pass either a high school exit exam or to demonstrate proficiency through another locally established mechanism starting in 2006.

### GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Idaho is phasing in a high school exit exam and will require students to earn a proficient or advanced score on the Idaho Standards Achievement Tests (ISAT) or to demonstrate proficiency of the achievement standards through some other locally established mechanism starting January 1, 2006. In addition, students must complete 42 semester credits including the following core units:

Secondary language arts and Communication (9): 4 in English, a course in speech or debate will fulfill, at most, 1 of the 9 credits;

## Appendix B: State Profiles

---

mathematics and science (8): at least 4 in math and 4 in science, 2 of which are laboratory sciences;  
social studies (5): government (2), U.S. history (2), economics (1);  
humanities (2);  
health/wellness (1)

### DESCRIPTION OF STATE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

The Idaho assessment system features a mix of multiple-choice and performance assessments.

Idaho Reading Indicator (IRI) is a quick (10-minute) indicator of early reading skills administered in the fall, winter, and spring of grades K-3.

Idaho Standards Achievement Tests (ISAT) are criterion-referenced multiple-choice tests administered in grades 2-10 in reading, language usage, and math skills. science is assessed in grades 5, 7, and 10. ISAT is aligned to the Idaho Achievement Standards. ISAT is a computer-adapted test, although a paper/pencil, Braille, and large-print versions are available for students whose IEP or 504 plans require that accommodation.

Idaho Direct math Assessment (DMA), a performance assessment, is given in grades 4, 6, and 8.

Idaho Direct Writing Assessment (DWA), a performance assessment, is given in grades 5, 7, and 9.

### TEST USES

Students: Students must pass the ISAT, or demonstrate proficiency through a locally determined mechanism to graduate beginning with the Class of 2006.

Schools: Assessment results are made public and used to identify strengths and weaknesses in instruction and curriculum. As required under NCLB, assessment results are one of the factors used to identify low-performing schools.

### ALTERNATIVES AND OPTIONS FOR ALL STUDENTS

Students who do not pass the ISAT may appeal to their local school board. The school board can decide whether to allow the student to demonstrate proficiency of the achievement standards through some other locally established mechanism. All locally established mechanisms must meet the criteria of the state board of education rules. The mechanism must meet the following criteria:

- 1) The measure must be aligned at a minimum to 10th grade state content standards
- 2) The measure must be aligned to the state content standards for the subject matter in question
- 3) The measure must be valid and reliable; and
- 4) 90% of the criteria for the measure, or combination of measures, must be based on academic proficiency and performance

Before appealing to the local school board for an alternate measure, the student must be  
A. Enrolled in a special education program and have an IEP, or

- B. Enrolled in a limited English proficient program for three academic years or less, or
- C. Enrolled in the fall semester of the senior year.

#### OPTIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities may take state assessments with accommodations or adaptations. If adaptations are used, the test is invalidated and the student is not counted as having taken the ISAT for AYP and graduation purposes. Students with severe cognitive disabilities may take the Idaho Alternate Assessment (IAA), a performance-based assessment scored by the students' special education teachers. IAA is aligned with Alternate Content Knowledge and Skills, which differ in complexity and scope from the general education knowledge and skills but are still aligned with the Idaho Achievement Standards. Information for the IAA is collected over 4-8 weeks. Students with disabilities in the classes of 2006 and 2007 can apply for an appeal to the ISAT if they have an IEP that outlines alternate requirements for graduation or if adaptations are recommended on the test.

#### OPTIONS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELL)

LEP students may use accommodations and adaptations. If adaptations are used for an LEP student, the ISAT test is invalidated and the student is deemed not proficient. All LEP students must take the ISAT math assessment but LEP students who have been in U.S. schools for at most 10 months may be exempted from the ISAT reading and language usage assessments and take the language proficiency exam instead. Students for whom English is a second language are tested annually to monitor their progress toward mastering English. Idaho is in the process of creating a single state assessment for schools to use. Until that is developed, each district determines the test used to measure this skill.

#### SOURCES

Idaho Department of Education assessment site: <http://www.sde.state.id.us/dept/testreports.asp>

Idaho administrative code (the relevant sections are 105, 107, and 111) can be downloaded at: <http://www2.state.id.us/adm/adminrules/rules/idapa08/0203.pdf>

Idaho Alternate Assessments: <http://www.sde.state.id.us/specialed/default.asp>

Idaho LEP FAQ [http://www.boardofed.idaho.gov/lep/LEP\\_FAQ\\_10-04.pdf](http://www.boardofed.idaho.gov/lep/LEP_FAQ_10-04.pdf)

---

## ILLINOIS

#### HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION POLICY

Students must complete state-required course credits and any additional local graduation requirements to receive a diploma. The results of state high school tests appear on the high school transcript. Students may earn the Prairie State Achievement Award for performing at a high level on state high school tests.

#### GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Students must take the Prairie State Achievement Examination (PSAE), the Illinois Measure of Annual Growth in English (IMAGE) (for students with limited English proficiency), or the Illinois Alternate Assessment (IAA) (for students with severe cognitive disabilities). Additionally, students must meet state and local course requirements which must include three years of language arts, two years of mathematics (one of which may be related to computer



technology), one year of science, two years of social studies (one history of the U.S. or history and government of the U.S.), and one year of music, art, foreign language or vocational education. Students are required to pass a test on the Constitution of the United States and the State of Illinois prior to graduation. The test is developed by each local school district.

#### DESCRIPTION OF STATE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

The Illinois state assessment system is designed to measure students' progress relative to the Illinois Learning Standards. The state assessment system contains two mandatory assessments, and two optional assessments:

- 1) Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) is required for students in grades 3-8 in reading and math and in grades 4 and 7 in science. The science test contains multiple-choice items; the mathematics and reading tests contain both multiple-choice and extended-response items. The grade 3 reading test also contains 14-word analysis questions. Student performance levels are: academic warning, below standards, meets standard, and exceeds standards.
- 2) The Prairie State Achievement Examination (PSAE) is required for 11th grade students in reading, math, and science. Student performance levels are: academic warning, below standards, meets standard, and exceeds standards. PSAE includes three components, each of which is scored separately:

State-developed science assessment, which is a multiple-choice test;

The ACT, given nationally, which is a multiple-choice test that covers English, mathematics, reading, and science and includes an optional writing test that is a short essay. ACT scores range from 1-36; and

Two WorkKeys assessments (Reading for Information and Applied mathematics), which are multiple-choice assessments that evaluate workplace skills.

- 3) The Illinois Grade 2 Assessment of Reading and mathematics is the Terra Nova, Basic Multiple Assessments, a set of norm-referenced multiple-choice tests only for Title-1 funded schools serving 2nd grade as the highest grade.
- 4) The Illinois Consumer Education Proficiency Test is a multiple-choice test that can exempt high school students from the consumer course graduation requirement.

#### TEST USES

**Students:** Student scores on the PSAE appear on their transcripts. Students may earn Prairie State Achievement Awards (PSAA) for each subject tested by the PSAE in which they perform at the "exceeds standards" level.

**Schools:** Assessment results are made public and used to identify strengths and weaknesses in curriculum and instruction. As required under NCLB, assessment results are one of the factors used to identify low-performing schools. These schools may be eligible for aid and/or subject to sanctions, including school closure, reconstitution, reconstitution as a charter, turning the school over to private management, and withholding funds.



### ALTERNATIVES AND OPTIONS FOR ALL STUDENTS

Students may re-take the PSAE in the fall of 12th grade.

### OPTIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities may take assessments with standard accommodations. Students with severe cognitive disabilities may take the IAA, a portfolio-based assessment given in place of the ISAT and PSAE. Students are scored on a rubric from 1-4. Someone who knows the student administers IAA and the assessment is scored centrally. Students who successfully complete their IEP earn a standard diploma

### OPTIONS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELL)

ELL students may take assessments with standard accommodations. IMAGE is an assessment used by the state to measure the progress of students with limited English proficiency in reading and mathematics in grades 3, 5, 8, and 11. IMAGE is appropriate for students in the following categories:

- 1) Students in their first 3 years of a state approved TBE/TPI program whose English language proficiency results do not indicate that the student could understand the regular state test.
- 2) Students in their 4th or 5th years of a state approved TBE/TPI program who:
  - a) scored below the 50th percentile in listening, speaking, writing, or reading on a standardized English language proficiency test; or b) were first enrolled in a TBE/TPI program after August 1999 and demonstrates a level of English proficiency such that ISAT/PSAE would be unlikely to yield valid and reliable information on what the student knows and can do in the academic content areas; or c) scored below the “Transitioning” category in either reading or writing on the most recent IMAGE administration; or d) scored in the “Below Standards” or “Academic Warning” categories on the prior year’s ISAT administration.

The decision for a student with limited English proficiency (up to 5 years) to take IMAGE (and not ISAT and PSAE) is made locally on an individual basis.

Starting in fall 2005, Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners (ACCESS for ELLs) will be administered annually to determine the English language proficiency levels of ELL students. ACCESS for ELLs is available for three overlapping tiers of English proficiency levels (beginning, intermediate, and advanced) in each of the grade clusters except kindergarten (which has only one level). The reading and listening portions of the test consist of selected-response items while the writing and speaking portions are open-ended.

### SOURCES

Illinois Assessment home page: <http://www.isbe.net/assessment/>

2005 ISAT District Manual can be downloaded at: [http://www.isbe.net/assessment/pdf\\_2005\\_ISAT\\_District\\_Manual.htm](http://www.isbe.net/assessment/pdf_2005_ISAT_District_Manual.htm)

Prairie State Achievement Exam Parent Brochure can be downloaded at: <http://www.isbe.net/assessment/pdfPSAEbro.htm>

Graduation and PSAE can be downloaded at: <http://www.isbe.net/assessment/pdfPSAE05gradguidmemo.htm>

IMAGE Guide 2004 can be downloaded at: <http://www.isbe.net/assessment/pdfIMAGE-Guide2004.htm>

The WIDA Project (ACCESS for ELLs): <http://www.cal.org/projects/wida.html>

Graduation requirements can be downloaded at: <http://education.umn.edu/nceo/TopicAreas/Graduation/StatesGrad.htm>

---

## INDIANA

### HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION POLICY

To graduate, students must complete local requirements and minimum course credits and either pass the high school exit exam or meet a set of alternate criteria including grades, attendance, and teacher recommendations. The state awards four types of diplomas, which are differentiated by factors such as rigor of coursework, national test (SAT or ACT) scores, and grades.

### GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Students must complete all state and local requirements and demonstrate mastery of the academic standard assessed by Indiana's Graduation Qualifying Exam (GQE) through one of the following:

- 1) Attain a passing score on both the mathematics and English/language arts portions of the GQE;
- 2) Complete all components of Core 40 curriculum with a C or higher in each course; or
- 3) Otherwise demonstrate mastery by fulfilling all of the requirements listed in the "Alternatives and Options" section.

Indiana currently offers three diploma options:

- 1) High School Diploma requires 40 semester credits include the following:

- English/language arts (8)
- mathematics (4-2 algebra I or integrated mathematics)
- science (4)
- social studies (4-2 U.S. history, 1 U.S. government, 1 another social studies course or global economics or consumer economics)
- directed electives: foreign language, arts, computers, career area or technology competency (2)
- physical education (1)
- health/safety (1)

Starting in 2010, all graduating students must also complete:

- 2 credits physical education (increased from 1 credit)
- 2 credits in biology as part of the science requirement
- 6 credits in a career academic sequence (to explore career exploration and preparation possibilities)

5 flex credits (further courses in the career academic sequence, courses involving workplace learning, advanced career-technical education, or additional courses in language arts, social studies, mathematics, science, world languages, or fine arts) instead of the 2 credits of directed electives

2) Core 40 diploma is designed to prepare students for further education. Students must complete at least 40 semester credits including the following:

English/language arts (8)  
mathematics (6 – including algebra I & II, geometry, and any further credits in trigonometry, calculus, discrete mathematics, or probability & statistics)  
science (6 – 2 biology, 2 physics and/or chemistry, and 2 others)  
social studies (6 – 2 U.S. history, 1 U.S. government, 1 world history and civilization and/or world geography, 1 economics)  
directed electives — foreign language, arts, computers, career area or technology competency (8)  
physical education (1) (increased to 2 after 2010)  
health/safety (1)

Starting in 2010, students must earn all of the current required credits (with the exception of only 5 instead of 8 directed elective credits) as well as a second credit in world history/civilization or world geography, and a second credit in physical education.

3) Core 40 Diploma with Academic Honors requires students to earn a GPA of B or better, and fulfill credit requirements. Only courses in which the student earned a C or above may count toward the 40-credit requirement. Students must complete all credit requirements for a Core 40 diploma, 2 additional math credits (8 total), and the flex credits must include:

art (2)  
foreign language (6-8 – either 6 in one language or 2 in each of 2 languages)

Starting in 2010, students must complete 47 total credits, all of the current requirements and at least one of the following to earn Academic Honors: 1) 4 credits in 2 AP courses & the AP test, 2) 6 transferable college credits, 3) 2 credits in AP courses, the AP test, and 3 transferable college credits, 4) earn 1200 or higher on SAT I, 5) earn 26 or higher on ACT, or 6) an International Baccalaureate diploma.

4) Core 40 Diploma with Technical Honors (which will be issued starting in 2010) requires 47 semester credits including all the required credits for a Core 40 Diploma, with the exception that instead of 6 flex credits the student must earn 8-10 credits in a career-technical program. Also, the student must earn a state-recognized certificate or certificate of technical achievement in the career-technical program. Local school boards can create additional requirements.

#### DESCRIPTION OF STATE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress-Plus (ISTEP+) is based on the Indiana Academic Standards adopted in 2000.

ISTEP+ is criterion-referenced exam administered in the fall in grades 3-10 in English/

## Appendix B: State Profiles

---

language arts and mathematics. ISTEP+ is administered in science in grade 5. Science will also be assessed in grade 7 starting 2005, and in grade 9 starting 2007. ISTEP+ consists of a Basic Skills Assessment (multiple-choice) and Applied Skills Assessment (short-answer or essay questions).

The Graduation Qualifying Exam (GQE), given for the first time as the Grade 10 ISTEP+, is aligned with 9th-grade standards. The test consists of a Basic Skills Assessment (multiple-choice) and Applied Skills Assessments (short-answer or essay questions) in English/language arts and mathematics. Performance levels are did not pass, pass, and pass+.

The state currently administers Core 40 End-of-Course Assessment in algebra I and English in both online and paper-and-pencil formats and is piloting exams in algebra II, biology I, and U.S. history in a sample of schools. The tests contain both multiple-choice and open-ended items. Passing scores on the EOC exams are decided locally.

Schools may, with the approval of the board, substitute locally adopted tests for the ISTEP+ English/language arts and mathematics tests at grades 4, 5, 7, and 9 if the test meets the following requirements:

- Aligned with Indiana's Academic Standards
- Tests basic skills and applied skills
- Graded on a common vertical scale
- Meets security requirements listed in the ISTEP program manual
- Provides, as appropriate, a method of testing and grading that will allow comparison with national and international academic standards
- Reviewed for alignment with Indiana academic standards and recommended for approval, as being in alignment with the standards, by an entity experienced in determining alignment of tests with academic standards; and
- Reviewed for alignment with psychometric properties of ISTEP and recommended for approval, as being in alignment with those psychometric properties, by an independent panel of individuals appointed by the department and experienced in examining psychometric properties of tests.

### TEST USES

**Students:** Students who do not pass the GQE (or the retake exams) must demonstrate mastery of state standards through alternate methods. State funds for required remediation services for students who failed the exam are allocated using a three-tiered method based on student/district performance.

**Schools:** Assessment results are used to identify strengths and weaknesses in school performance and educational programs. As required under NCLB, assessment results are one of the factors used to identify low-performing schools, which may be eligible for aid and/or subject to sanctions, including school closure, reconstitution, and reconstitution as charters.

Schools that participate in the Comprehensive Assessment System (which includes Core 40 End-of-Course Exams and Early Assessments in K-2 as well as the mandatory annual assessments) are eligible for educational achievement grants, including awards, and will receive a proportionally greater share of remediation funds, including grants. Schools that place in the upper quartile (25%) of the state in student attendance rates, mathematics proficiency scores, language arts proficiency scores, and the percent of students passing both language arts and mathematics are eligible to receive a Four Star Award (which is not a monetary award).

### ALTERNATIVES AND OPTIONS FOR ALL STUDENTS

Students have four opportunities to retake the exam before the end of the 12th grade. If students have not passed the exit exam but have met the other graduation requirements, they are allowed to retake the exit exam after the 12th grade as many times as they wish and can receive a diploma.

Indiana has an appeals process for students who do not achieve a passing score on the graduation exam and do not meet the Core 40 requirements. They may be eligible to graduate if they do all of the following:

- Take the graduation examination in each subject area in which they did not achieve a passing score at least one time every school year after the school year in which they first took the graduation examination.

- Complete remediation opportunities provided by their school.

- Maintain a school attendance rate of at least ninety-five percent (95%) with excused absences not counting against attendance.

- Maintain at least a C average or the equivalent in the courses comprising the credits specifically required for graduation by rule of the board.

- Obtain a written recommendation from their teachers in each subject area in which the students have not achieved a passing score. The school principal must concur with the recommendation. The recommendation also must be supported by documentation that the student has attained the academic standard in the subject area, based upon tests other than the graduation examination or classroom work.

- Otherwise satisfy all state and local graduation requirements.

### OPTIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities may use accommodations on the GQE and can receive a regular high school diploma. Students with severe cognitive disabilities may take the Indiana Standards Tool for Alternate Reporting (ISTAR) instead of ISTEP+. ISTAR is a web-based system that utilizes teacher ratings to measure the progress of students on functional achievement indicators and academic standards that are appropriate to the student's achievement level, without regard to the student's age.

If a student with a disability does not achieve a passing score on the graduation examination, the student's case conference committee may determine that the student is eligible to gradu-

ate if the committee finds the following:

The student's teacher of record, in consultation with a teacher of the student in each subject area in which the student has not achieved a passing score, makes a written recommendation to the case conference committee. The recommendation must be endorsed by the principal of the student's school and supported by documentation that the student has attained the academic standard in the subject area, based upon tests other than the graduation examination or classroom work.

The student meets all of the following requirements:

Retakes the graduation examination in each subject area in which he or she did not achieve a passing score as often as required by the student's IEP.

Completes remediation opportunities provided by the student's school to the extent required by the student's IEP.

Maintains a school attendance rate of at least 95% to the extent required by student's IEP, with excused absences not counting against the student's attendance.

Maintains at least a C average or the equivalent in the courses comprising the credits specifically required for graduation by rule of the board.

Otherwise satisfies all state and local graduation requirements.

#### OPTIONS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELL)

ELL students may use standard accommodations for the GQE. Limited-English proficient (LEP) students who have been enrolled in United States schools for fewer than three years may participate in the Indiana Standards Tool for Alternate Reporting (ISTAR) in lieu of ISTEP+; however, ISTAR does not replace the GQE. LEP students must still demonstrate mastery of the Indiana Academic Standards tested in the GQE. All LEP students must be administered a state-approved language proficiency test each year.

#### SOURCES

ISTEP+ Program Manual 2004-05 can be downloaded at: <http://www.doe.state.in.us/istep/progman04-05.html>

Indiana Accountability FAQ: <http://www.doe.state.in.us/asap/accountability2.html#anchor170335>

Core 40 Curriculum Chart: <http://doe.state.in.us/asap/core40.htm>

Indiana Four Star Awards described at: <http://www.doe.state.in.us/assessment/fourstar.html>

For more information on Indiana, see Center for Education Policy (2004), State High School Exit Exams: A Maturing Reform at: [www.ctredpol.org/highschooexit/ExitExamAug2004/ExitExam2004.pdf](http://www.ctredpol.org/highschooexit/ExitExamAug2004/ExitExam2004.pdf)

## KANSAS

### HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION POLICY

Kansas awards diplomas to students who earn the state's required course credits and complete any additional local graduation requirements. The state requires each school to establish an assessment system aligned with state standards.

### GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Local school boards create graduation requirements that must include at least 21 credits distributed as follows:

- English language arts – 4 units
- History and government – 3 units
- science – 3 units including one unit as a laboratory course
- mathematics – 3 units, including algebraic and geometric concepts
- Physical education – 1 unit
- Fine arts – 1 unit
- electives – 6 units

### DESCRIPTION OF STATE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

Kansas has a series of required state assessments and also requires each school to establish an assessment system aligned with state standards. Student performance levels on the state assessments are basic, proficient, advanced, and exemplary. An optional reading diagnostic test is administered in grade 2.

Kansas Assessments in reading and math are multiple-choice assessments administered in grades 3-8 and in high school. A new Kansas math Assessment will be administered starting in 2006 consisting of a constructed response item, which the district may opt to include and multiple-choice questions based on the Kansas Content Standards revised in 2003.

Writing, an open-response assessment will be administered in 2006-07 (and biennially thereafter) in grades 5-8 and once in high school.

science, which consists of multiple-choice items, will be administered in 2007-08 (and biennially thereafter) in grades 4 and 7 and once in high school.

History/government, which consists of multiple-choice items, will be administered in 2007-08 (and biennially thereafter) in grades 6 and 8 and once in high school.

The Kansas Computerized Assessment (KCA), which differs from the paper-and-pencil version of the Kansas Assessments only in type of administration, is available in reading, math, science, and history/government. Districts are allowed to choose either version.

### TEST USES

Students: Tests are used for providing information about student learning. The state does not mandate results to be used for any specific student-level decisions.

## Appendix B: State Profiles

---

Schools: Assessment results are made public and used to identify strengths and weaknesses in curriculum and instruction. As required under NCLB, assessment results are one of the factors used to identify low-performing schools.

### OPTIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities may take assessments with standard accommodations.

A student with an IEP or 504 plan who is not eligible to take the Alternate Assessment and performs at or below the 4.0 percentile rank as measured by nationally and/or locally normed measures of achievement in the academic area under consideration may take the Kansas modified assessments. Modified Assessments are available in pre-reading, reading, mathematics, social science, and science. The modified assessments are given in the same grades and in the same format as the standard Kansas assessments and assess selected or modified indicators from the Kansas Curriculum Standards.

Students with severe cognitive disabilities may take the Alternate Assessment, a portfolio-based alternative to the Kansas assessments based on the Kansas Extended Standards. The Alternate Assessment is an integrated assessment so students must take all sections of the Alternate Assessment or all sections of the Kansas modified assessments or Kansas's assessments.

### OPTIONS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELL)

ELL students may take assessments with standard accommodations. The English Language Proficiency (ELP) assessment is available to assess ELL students in the five domains of language proficiency starting spring 2005. ELP contains both multiple-choice and extended-response items. A student who has been in the U.S. for less than a year may take the ELP assessment in lieu of the Reading Kansas Assessment.

### SOURCES

Kansas Assessment FAQs: <http://www.ksde.org/assessment/faqkansasassessments.html>  
Assessment comparison document can be downloaded at: <http://www.ksde.org/outcomes/mathassessmentinfo.html>

Information about the Kansas Computerized Assessment (KCA) can be downloaded at: <http://www.ksde.org/assessment/index.html>

Kansas Modified Assessment Eligibility Criteria and Overview 2004 can be downloaded at: [www.nkesc.org/State Assessments PDF/ksmodass04.pdf](http://www.nkesc.org/State%20Assessments%20PDF/ksmodass04.pdf)

Kansas Alternate Assessment Flowchart 2003 at: [www.nkesc.org/State Assessments PDF/ksaltassflwcht04.pdf](http://www.nkesc.org/State%20Assessments%20PDF/ksaltassflwcht04.pdf)

Graduation Requirements: <http://www.ksde.org/outcomes/qpareg2005.htm#91-31-20>  
[http://www.ksde.org/qpa\\_and\\_grad\\_reqs\\_summary\\_march\\_03.htm](http://www.ksde.org/qpa_and_grad_reqs_summary_march_03.htm)

---

## KENTUCKY

### HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION POLICY

To graduate in Kentucky, students must successfully complete the state's minimum required credits and meet any additional local graduation requirements. Districts can choose whether and how to use state assessment results in making graduation decisions. Students can earn a



Commonwealth Diploma by earning passing grades in rigorous courses and taking advanced placement or international baccalaureate tests.

### GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Student must complete 22 credits including the following:

- language arts (4)
- social studies (3) – incorporating U.S. history, economics, government, world geography, and world government
- mathematics (3) – including algebra I, geometry, and an elective
- science (3) – including life science, physical science, and earth & space science
- health (1/2)
- physical education (1/2)
- “History and Appreciation of Visual and Performing Arts” (1)

Students can earn a Commonwealth Diploma by:

- 1) Fulfilling all requirements for a standard diploma
- 2) Completing all minimum requirements of the Precollege Curriculum which are: language arts (4 units – English I-IV), mathematics (3 units – including algebra I or II and geometry), science (including biology I, chemistry I, or physics I), and social studies (2 units – including world civilization and U.S. history)
- 3) Earning at least a C in at least 4 courses with content as described in the Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) program course description booklets in the following subjects: English (1), science or mathematics (1), foreign language (1), and one other
- 4) Taking at least three of the AP or IB tests associated with the above courses, without regard to the score received.

### DESCRIPTION OF STATE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

Kentucky’s Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS) a mix of multiple-choice and performance assessments. Student performance levels for CATS are “Novice,” “Apprentice,” “Proficient,” and “Distinguished.”

Terra Nova (CTBS/5) is a nationally norm-referenced multiple-choice test currently administered at the end of primary and grades 3, 6, and 9 in reading, language arts, and math. To comply with new NCLB regulations, beginning in 2005-2006 Kentucky will administer the CTBS/5, augmented with items aligned with Kentucky’s Core Content, in reading in grades 3, 5, 6, and 8 and in mathematics in grades 3, 4, 6, and 7.

Kentucky Core Content Test (KCCT) is a standards-based assessment with multiple-choice and open-ended questions designed to cover the breadth of Kentucky’s Core Content. KCCT is administered in reading in grades 4, 7, and 10, in science in grades 4, 7, and 11, in practical living/vocational studies in grades 5, 8, and 10, and in math, social studies, and arts & humanities in grades 5, 8, and 11. The reading, mathematics, science, and social studies tests consist of open-response multiple-choice questions. The arts and humanities and practical living/vocational studies tests consist of open-response and multiple-choice questions. Approximately 67% of the final score in each content area is from open-response questions.

## Appendix B: State Profiles

---

Writing portfolios are submitted in grades 4, 7, and 12. The portfolios are scored at the school according to specific requirements (called rubrics) by groups of teachers (language arts teachers at some schools and all teachers at others).

The Writing on Demand Assessment, given in grades 4, 7, and 12, assesses writing skills by asking students to respond to one of two extended response prompts.

### TEST USES

**Students:** Local districts can decide whether and how to use the state test results for promotion, graduation, instruction, and placement.

**Schools:** Kentucky's accountability system focuses primarily on schools. Performance results are made public and used by schools to identify strengths and weaknesses in curriculum and instruction. As required under NCLB, assessment results are one of the factors used to identify low-performing schools. Schools that fall short of their goal in an accountability cycle receive the assistance of a Scholastic Audit, a "Highly Skilled Educator" and are eligible to receive state funds. Scholastic Audits — performed by state, regional, and local district personnel — are thorough and provide audited schools with information on more than 80 indicators related to school success. Schools that perform well receive money from the state to be used for school purposes. Kentucky rewards improving or high-performing schools.

### OPTIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities may take assessments with standard accommodations. The Alternate Portfolio, scored at the regional level, is used to assess students with severe disabilities unable to perform with a paper-and-pencil test. Student performance levels are novice, apprentice, proficient and distinguished.

### OPTIONS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

ELL students may take state tests with standard accommodations. ELL students who meet federal guidelines may be exempted from state tests.

### SOURCES

CATS main page: <http://www.education.ky.gov/KDE/Administrative+Resources/Testing+and+Reporting+/CATS/default.htm>

Kentucky's Accountability System: <http://www.education.ky.gov/KDE/Administrative+Resources/Testing+and+Reporting+/CATS/Accountability+System/default.htm>

"What about Kentucky's Tests?": <http://www.education.ky.gov/KDE/Administrative+Resources/Testing+and+Reporting+/CATS/Accountability+System/What+About+Kentucky%27s+Test%3f.htm>

"Testing in Kentucky" (2002): <http://www.education.ky.gov/KDE/HomePageRepository/Publications/Testing+in+Kentucky.htm>

Graduation Requirements: <http://www.education.ky.gov/KDE/Instructional+Resources/High+School/Additional+Information/High+School+Graduation+Requirements.htm>

Kentucky Commonwealth Program described at: <http://www.lrc.state.ky.us/Kar/704/003/340.htm>

Expansion of CATS to comply with NCLB described at: <http://www.education.ky.gov/KDE/Instructional+Resources/Curriculum+Documents+and+Resources/Core+Content+for+Assessment/Core+Content+for+Assessment+Vertically+Aligned.htm>

## MAINE

### HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION POLICY

To graduate, students must complete state-required course credits and any additional local requirements. Starting in 2007, graduation will also be based on students' demonstrated proficiency on state standards. Districts will decide how to combine evidence from the state test with evidence from local performance assessments at the classroom, school, and district levels to demonstrate each student's proficiency in the state's system of learning results.

### GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Beginning with the class of 2006-07 students must meet the standards of the system of Learning Results in the content areas of English language arts, health and physical education, mathematics, science and technology, and social studies. Beginning with the class of 2009-10, career preparation, modern and classical languages, and visual and performing arts will be added. Local assessment systems will determine if the student meets all of the content standards. Each local assessment system must include assessments at the classroom, school, school administrative unit, and state levels.

In addition, students must demonstrate proficiency with computers and earn at least 16 credits including the following: English/language arts (4 credits), fine arts (1 credit), health (1/2 credit), physical education (1 credit), mathematics (2 credits), science and technology (2 credits – at least 1 in laboratory study), social science (1 credit general and 1 credit in American history and government).

### DESCRIPTION OF STATE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

Maine's Comprehensive Assessment System (CAS) has both state and local components.

The State component includes the Maine Educational Assessment (MEA), a criterion-referenced assessment given to students in grades 4, 8, and 11 and has been aligned with the learning results (adopted in 1996), with individual student scores reported in writing and reading, mathematics, and science/technology. The writing assessment consists of one extended response to a prompt and a short task while the reading, mathematics, and science/technology tests all contain multiple-choice and constructed-response items. The grade 8 MEA is available in an electronic format. Maine is currently piloting the MEA in reading and mathematics for grades 3, 5, 6, and 7, and should begin administering the exam in 2005-2006 to comply with NCLB. Student performance is reported in both scaled scores (501-520) and performance levels of "Does Not Meet the Standards," "Partially Meets the Standards," "Meets the Standards," and "Exceeds the Standards."

Local assessment includes a variety of assessment types designed to measure the depth and breadth of each content area. The local assessments can include classroom-based portfolios, observations and exhibitions, as well as district-administered exams and tasks.

With assistance from the state, local school districts are now designing plans that combine

the MEA exams with classroom, school, district, and/or regional assessments. For example, the city of Bangor's school district draws from classroom portfolios and locally created writing and reading tests to evaluate students' language arts skills. Aggregated data from the assessments are reported publicly as well as to the schools. City assessment results are combined with classroom-based assessment information by teachers and administrators and used to guide and modify instruction. Superintendents are to certify local assessments to meet state technical requirements. If local and state assessment results vary greatly, the state will review the local assessments.

### TEST USES

**Students:** Assessment results are part of a student's permanent record and will be incorporated as a factor in graduation decisions.

**Schools:** Assessment results are made public and used to identify strengths and weaknesses in curriculum and instruction. As required under NCLB, assessment results are one of the factors used to identify low-performing schools. If too great a percentage of students in a school or district fall in the lowest MEA performance category the commissioner analyzes the school or district's Comprehensive Education Plan and student performance on the local assessment system. If warranted based on this analysis, the commissioner assigns a team with expertise in the areas of need identified in the analysis of the unit to assist the school or district in planning for improved student performance for a period at least one year.

### ALTERNATIVES AND OPTIONS FOR ALL STUDENTS

CAS allows students to take tests through three avenues: standard administration, administration with accommodations and alternate assessment. The alternate assessment for the state component of the CAS, the Maine Educational Assessment (MEA), is the Personalized Alternate Assessment Portfolio (PAAP). Student accommodations must be those used in the classroom. PAAP is intended for students who cannot be fairly assessed with the MEA, even with accommodations, which includes but is not limited to students with disabilities and English language learners. The local/PAAP, which will be an alternative to local assessments, is being field tested and should be fully implemented in 2005-2006.

### OPTIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities may take the Maine Educational Assessment (MEA) with standard accommodations or complete a Personalized Alternate Assessment Portfolio (PAAP). Students who complete their IEPs are eligible for a standard diploma unless the district has established proficiency requirements that apply to all students.

### OPTIONS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELL)

ELL students may take the Maine Educational Assessment (MEA) with accommodations, or complete a Personalized Alternate Assessment Portfolio (PAAP) instead.

Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners (ACCESS for ELLs) is administered annually to determine the English language proficiency levels of ELL students. ACCESS for ELLs is available for three overlapping tiers of English proficiency levels (beginning, intermediate, and advanced) in each of the grade clusters except kindergarten (which has only one level). The reading and

listening portions of the test consist of selected-response items while the writing and speaking portions are open-ended.

### SOURCES

MeCAS home page: <http://www.state.me.us/education/l salt/compassess.htm>

Information about Maine's CAS can be found at: <http://www.maine.gov/education/mea/Assessment%20QA.htm>

Brochure on Maine's Learning Results and CAS: [www.maine.gov/education/l salt/mecas\\_ip/mecas\\_brochure.pdf](http://www.maine.gov/education/l salt/mecas_ip/mecas_brochure.pdf)

MEA home page: <http://www.state.me.us/education/mea/index.htm>

Maine's Instructional program, assessment, and diploma requirements can be downloaded at: <http://www.maine.gov/education/LR%20Rules%20Document.htm>

Administrative letter 21: ACCESS for ELLs at: <http://www.state.me.us/education/edletters/2005/adlet/05adlet021.htm>

Chapter 101 Special Education Regulations: <http://www.maine.gov/education/speced/1999%20Regs%20Effective%2062403.rt>

May 2004 Update on MEA at: <http://www.maine.gov/education/edletters/2004/ilet/04ilet122.htm>

MCAS Alternate Assessment System home page: <http://www.state.me.us/education/mea/aawebintro.htm>

---

## MARYLAND

### HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION POLICY

Starting with students who enter high school in the fall of 2005 (generally class of 2009), students will have to pass either the high school exit exam or a state-approved alternate assessment to graduate from high school. Students will also be required to complete credit requirements and meet all local requirements (which must include attendance and service-learning components). Students' scores on the Maryland High School Assessments (HSA) appear on their transcripts.

### GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Students must meet any local requirements (which must include attendance and service-learning requirements) and earn at least 21 credits including the following:

- English (4)
- math (3: 1 algebra/data analysis, 1 geometry)
- science (3: 1 biology, 2 including laboratory experience)
- social studies (3: 1 U.S. history, 1 world history, 1 local, state, or national government)
- fine arts (1)
- physical education (1/2), health (1/2), technology education (1)

and either:

- 2 credits of foreign language or advanced technology and 3 elective credits, or
- 4 credits from successfully completing a state-approved career-technology program and 1 elective credit.

## Appendix B: State Profiles

---

In addition, students must take the High School Assessments (HSA) in English, algebra/data analysis, biology, and government. Starting with students who enter grade 9 in fall 2005 (generally in the class of 2009), students must achieve one of the following:

- 1) a passing score on each test,
- 2) a minimum score for each test and a combined overall score (the total of all the passing scores),
- 3) a specific score on a Maryland State Department of Education-approved comparable assessment(s), or
- 4) a passing score on the four HSAs by a combination of 1) and 3)

### DESCRIPTION OF STATE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

Maryland School Assessments (MSA) are aligned with Maryland Content Standards and administered in reading and math in grades 3-8. The MSA consists of multiple-choice and constructed-response questions. In March 2008, science will be added in grades 3, 5, and 8. Student performance levels are basic, proficient, and advanced. Maryland High School Assessments are end-of-course exams in English I, algebra/data analysis, biology, and government. The tests consist of multiple-choice, short-answer, and writing prompt/essay questions.

### TEST USES

**Students:** End of course exams and states tests are to be used in making graduation decisions. Maryland requires and funds remediation for students failing the exams. Students' scores on the High School Assessments (HSA) appear on their transcripts.

**Schools:** Assessment results are reported and used by schools to identify strengths and weaknesses in instruction and curriculum. As required under NCLB, assessment results are one of the factors used to identify low-performing schools. These schools may be eligible for aid and/or subject to sanctions, including school closure, reconstitution, reconstitution as charters, turning the school over to private management, and withholding funds. If schools improve, they may receive monetary rewards and recognition.

### ALTERNATIVES AND OPTIONS FOR ALL STUDENTS

Students may retake a HSA test after completing intervention or appropriate assistance activities. Students can retake a test until they receive a passing score or reach age 21. If a transfer student passes a course equivalent to one of the courses tested and the student is granted credit for the respective course by the school he or she is entering, the student is exempted from taking the test. The state also plans to allow other tests to be substituted for the High School Assessments, which may include Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate tests.

### OPTIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities may take assessments with standard accommodations. Students with severe disabilities may take the Alternate Maryland School Assessment (Alt-MSA) instead of the MSA. Alt-MSA assesses student attainment of instructional level reading and mathematics mastery objectives aligned with grade-level Maryland Content Standards.

### OPTIONS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELL)

ELL students may take assessments with standard accommodations.

ELL students in their first year in U.S. schools are exempted from the MSA reading test, and must take a test of English language proficiency instead. The English language proficiency of each ELL student is assessed annually using the Idea Proficiency Test (IPT).

#### SOURCES

Maryland's graduation requirements can be found at: <http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/testing/hsa/>

“A Parent’s Guide to Achievement Matters Most” at: [http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/testing/testing\\_overview.htm](http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/testing/testing_overview.htm)

Alt-MSA home page: [http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/testing/alt\\_msa/](http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/testing/alt_msa/)

Service Learning Requirements: <http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/programs/servicelearning/docs/requirements.htm>

For more information see “State high school exit exams: A maturing reform” at: [www.ctred-pol.org/highschool/ExitExamAug2004/ExitExam2004.pdf](http://www.ctred-pol.org/highschool/ExitExamAug2004/ExitExam2004.pdf)

---

## MISSOURI

### HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION POLICY

In Missouri, students must complete state-required course credits and any additional local graduation requirements to receive a diploma. Districts can also allow students to demonstrate proficiency of the achievement standards through locally established performance-based assessments.

### GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Students must earn 22 credits distributed as follows:

- communication arts (3)
- mathematics (2 – which cannot include “computer math”)
- science (2)
- social science (2 – 1 credit in American history and 1/2 credit in government)
- fine arts (1), practical arts (1)
- physical education (1)
- and electives (10)

Students must pass a test (developed or selected by the local school district) on the Constitutions of the United States and of the state of Missouri and in American history and institutions as well as a course (or courses) on those subjects sometime in grades 7-12.

Students receive a College Preparatory Studies Certificate (CPSC) if they meet the following GPA, ACT or SAT score, and credit requirements:

Earn at least a 3.0 GPA (on a 4.0 scale) in English/language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies combined

Score above the prior year’s national composite average mean on the American College Test (ACT) or on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), and

Complete a rigorous academic program of at least 24 credits including communication



arts (4 credits – at least 2 credits in courses emphasizing composition or writing skills, 1 credit may be in debate), mathematics (3 credits – all from algebra I or beyond), science (2 credits, including a laboratory science), social science (3 credits – 1 credit in American history and 1/2 credit in government), fine arts (1 credit), practical arts (1 credit), physical education (1 credit), specified core electives (3 credits – foreign language and/or combinations from 2 or more of English), mathematics (which may be a computer science course with an algebra I prerequisite), social studies, science, and fine arts, and general electives (6 credits).

### DESCRIPTION OF STATE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

The Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) is linked to the Show-Me Standards, which were adopted in 1996. The MAP assessments contain multiple-choice, short-answer, and performance-event items. Student proficiency levels are step 1, progressing, nearing proficiency, proficient, and advanced. Initially, MAP covered all six areas of the Show-Me Standards (mathematics, communication arts, science, social studies, fine arts, and health/physical education) but districts are only required to administer tests in communication arts in grades 3, 7, and 11, and in mathematics in grades 4, 8, and 10. The Missouri Education Agency also offers science and social studies tests, which districts may opt to administer.

To comply with the new requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Missouri is developing or refining grade-level tests in communication arts and mathematics for grades 3-8 and for grades 11 and 10 respectively. The tests will be administered beginning in 2006.

### TEST USES

Students: Tests are used for providing information about student learning. The state does not mandate results to be used for any specific student-level decisions.

Schools: Assessment results are made public and used to identify strengths and weaknesses in curriculum and instruction. As required under NCLB, assessment results are also used to identify low-performing schools. These schools may be eligible for aid and/or subject to sanctions, including reconstitution. All districts must create a Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP) that contains detailed goals, outcomes or objectives that will guide district improvement efforts for at least a five-year period.

### ALTERNATIVES AND OPTIONS FOR ALL STUDENTS

“The State Board of Education has authorized the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to waive the standard graduation requirements for school districts that wish to develop and implement performance-based graduation standards as an alternative to the credit-based requirements. Any school district interested in this alternative should contact the Supervision Section for information and guidance in developing such a system.” (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2002)

### OPTIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities may take assessments with standard accommodations. Students with severe cognitive disabilities take the MAP-Alternate (MAP-A). MAP-A is portfolio-based and assesses students on Missouri’s Alternate Framework, which is based on the Show-Me Standards in communication arts, science, fine arts, mathematics, social studies, and health/physical education. Students who achieve their IEP goals receive a standard diploma.



### OPTIONS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELL)

ELL students may take assessments with standard accommodations. All ELL students take the Missouri English Language Learning Assessment (MELL), currently Maculaitis version 2 (MAC II), annually to test their levels of English-language proficiency. Student proficiency scores are Levels 1-5.

### SOURCES

Missouri Assessment Program home page: <http://www.dese.state.mo.us/divimprove/assess/index.html>

Missouri Assessment Program Update 2004 can be downloaded at: <http://www.dese.state.mo.us/divimprove/assess/publications.html>

Accommodations allowed for the 2004 MAP are list at: <http://www.dese.state.mo.us/divimprove/assess/special.html>

New State Policies on Reading Assessment at: <http://dese.mo.gov/schoollaw/LegFolder/SB%20319sum.htm>

MAP-Alternate home page: <http://www.dese.state.mo.us/divimprove/assess/mapa.html>

2005 MELL Test Coordinator's Manual can be downloaded at: <http://www.dese.state.mo.us/divimprove/fedprog/discretionarygrants/bilingual-esol>

NCLB Policy Brief on low-performing schools at: [www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/35/19/3519.pdf](http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/35/19/3519.pdf)

Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (2002, September). Graduation requirements for students in Missouri's public schools: Guidelines for principals, counselors, and other school personnel. Retrieved January 8, 2005 from: <http://dese.mo.gov/divimprove/sia/gradindex.htm>

---

## MONTANA

### HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION POLICY

To graduate in Montana, students must successfully complete the state's minimum required credits and meet any additional local graduation requirements.

### GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Local districts establish graduation requirements, which includes a minimum of 20 required credits including English/language arts (4), mathematics (2), social studies (2), science (2), health enhancement (1 – 1/2 credit in each of 2 years), arts (1 credit), and vocational/technical education (1).

### DESCRIPTION OF STATE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

Montana Comprehensive Assessment System (MontCAS) has two phases: phase 1 is a norm-referenced test (NRT) & phase 2 is a criterion-referenced test (CRT). Both phases will be administered in spring 2005.

NRT is a multiple-choice test given in reading, language arts, math, social studies, and science. The Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) is the NRT given in grades 4 and 8, and the Iowa Test of Educational Development (ITED) is the NRT given in grade 11. The future of NRT in Montana is currently being discussed.

CRT (Measured Progress) is a test based on Montana's content standards consisting of multiple-choice and constructed response items given in reading and math given in grades 4, 8,

and 10. Starting spring 2006 CRT will be administered in grades 3-8 and 10. Starting spring 2008 CRT will also be administered biennially in science in grades 4, 8, and 10. Student proficiency levels are novice, nearing proficiency, proficient, and advanced.

### TEST USES

**Students:** Tests are used for providing information about student learning. The state does not mandate results to be used for any specific student-level decisions.

**Schools:** Assessment results are made public and used to identify strengths and weaknesses in curriculum and instruction. As required under NCLB, assessment results are one of the factors used to identify low-performing schools.

### OPTIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities may take assessments with standard accommodations or with non-standard accommodations and get a waiver for certain established learner outcomes, covered in the student's IEP. Districts are encouraged to give these students a standard diploma.

Students with severe cognitive disabilities may be assessed with the Alternate Assessment Scale (AAS) instead of the norm-referenced test (NRT). Students may take some sections of the AAS and other section of the NRT. Those most familiar with the student use multiple sources of information to score the student against a set of expanded performance standards derived from the Montana Standards Framework in the areas of reading, language arts, mathematics, social studies, and science.

Students with the most severe cognitive disabilities may take the Criterion-Referenced Test Alternate (CRT-Alternate). Someone familiar with the student uses a four-point scale to score an activity aligned with Montana's content standards though extended benchmarks in reading and mathematics.

### OPTIONS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELL)

ELL students may take assessments with standard or nonstandard accommodations.

Students with limited English proficiency (LEP) with fewer than three years of instruction in English may be assessed with the Alternate Assessment Scale (AAS) (described in the options for students with disabilities section) instead of the norm-referenced test (NRT).

In 2005, ELL students may take a test of English language proficiency instead of the English CRT, but must still take the math CRT. Students with limited English proficiency are tested annually for English language proficiency in the areas of listening, speaking, reading, writing, and comprehension. Montana field-tested the assessment, which contains multiple-choice and extended-response items, in fall 2004 and will probably start to administer the test in fall 2005. Performance levels are early acquisition, intermediate, and transitional.

### SOURCES

The following can be downloaded at <http://www.opi.state.mt.us>

Assessment Handbook Volume 3

2004 CRT Test Coordinators Manual

Overview of Montana Comprehensive Assessment System

Policy Survey on the Future of Norm-Referenced Tests

ARM 11/25.905 (contains Montana's graduation requirements)

## NEBRASKA

### HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION POLICY

Students must complete state-required course credits and any additional local graduation requirements to receive a diploma. Local districts are required to develop performance assessment systems to evaluate the state learning standards. These local assessment systems are approved by the state. Local districts determine whether and how these assessments are factored into the graduation decision.

### GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

The state sets a minimum credit requirement of 200 credits for graduation, 80% of which must be in core-curriculum subjects of English, math, science, and social science, but allows local school boards to determine all other graduation requirements, including how the local assessments are factored into the graduation decision.

### DESCRIPTION OF STATE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

School-based Teacher-led Assessment and Reporting System (STARS) requires school districts to develop local assessment plans that are aligned with state or district learning standards. Districts can develop their own criterion-referenced instruments (which may include classroom assessments such as observations, portfolios, or rubrics) or they can purchase them from commercial publishers.

All districts must assess the content standards in reading and mathematics in grades 3-8, and 11. Also in grades 4 or 5, 8, and 11 state standards in science in 2005-06 and social studies in 2006-2007 must be assessed.

A norm-referenced test is administered at least once in the elementary grades, once in the middle grades, and once in the high school grades.

The Statewide Writing Assessment, which consists of one extended response, is given to all students in grades 4, 8, and 11.

All districts submit District Assessment Portfolios of assessment plans for each grade level assessed. Districts must follow six criteria (described below) in designing their assessment plans and submit plans to the Nebraska Department of Education for review by an independent panel that rates their quality. To guide districts and provide examples of high quality, the state identifies and publicizes four models for each of the six criteria. Districts are encouraged either to adapt their assessments to be similar to the models, or to simply adopt a model component to meet a particular criterion. Districts submit their plans to an independent agency for review every five years.

The six criteria are:

1. Assessments reflect state or local standards.
2. Students have an opportunity to learn the content.
3. Assessments are free from bias or offensive language or situations.
4. The level is appropriate for students.
5. There is consistency in scoring.
6. The mastery levels are appropriate.

### TEST USES

Students: Tests results are used to provide information about student learning. Specific uses of test results are determined locally as part of districts' assessment policies.

Schools: Assessment results are made public and used to identify strengths and weaknesses in curriculum and instruction. As required under NCLB, assessment results are one of the factors used to identify low-performing schools. These schools may be eligible for aid. All districts in Nebraska have two state accountability goals to meet annually – the District Assessment Quality Rating and a Student Performance Rating. Both goals must be met with ratings of good, very good, or exemplary. Schools with poor performance ratings are provided support and technical assistance through partnerships established by the state and educational service units.

### ALTERNATIVES AND OPTIONS FOR ALL STUDENTS

Options are determined locally as part of districts' assessment plans.

### OPTIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities may take assessment with standard accommodations.

Students with severe cognitive disabilities are assessed with an alternate assessment. The Special Education Alternate Assessment is comprised of five domains; the functional academic domain contains target behaviors linked to the general education content standards.

### OPTIONS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELL)

ELL students may take assessments with standard accommodations.

ELL students who have been in Nebraska schools for less than three years may take an alternate assessment, a locally developed assessment at the same grade level as the grade level standards being assessed. The alternate assessment may be a portfolio, performance based task, a classroom assessment, district checklist, or an assessment in the student's native language.

ELL students also participate in the English Language Development Assessment (ELDA) that was developed by a consortium of states.

### SOURCES

A handbook that outlines Nebraska's school-based teacher-led assessment and reporting system (STARS) is available at: <http://www.nde.state.ne.us/stars/index.html>  
Graduation requirements can be downloaded at: [www.nde.state.ne.us/Legal/Rle10CITIZEN.pdf](http://www.nde.state.ne.us/Legal/Rle10CITIZEN.pdf)

---

## NEW HAMPSHIRE

### HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION POLICY

New Hampshire requires students to complete state-required course credits and any additional local graduation requirements to receive a diploma. Districts determine whether and how to incorporate results from the state assessment into graduation decisions, but may not

use the tests as a sole basis for any student decision, including graduation.

### GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

To graduate, a student must complete a minimum of 19 3/4 units of credit distributed in the following way:

- arts education: 1/2 Unit
- computer education: 1/2 Unit
- English: 4 Units
- mathematics: 2 Units
- physical sciences: 1 Unit
- biological sciences: 1 Unit
- U.S. and New Hampshire history and government: 1 Unit
- basic business and economic education: 1/2 Unit
- social studies elective: 1 Unit
- physical education: 1 Unit
- health education: 1/4 Unit
- open electives: 7 Units

plus any additional local requirements.

### DESCRIPTION OF STATE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

New Hampshire Educational Improvement and Assessment Program (NHEIAP) is a state-wide educational improvement and assessment program aligned with the New Hampshire curriculum frameworks that were cooperatively developed by educators at all levels, business people, government officials, community representatives, and parents.

The NHEIAP exams are standards-based tests consisting of multiple choice and open-ended questions. NHEIAP is administered in grades 3, 6, and 10 in reading and mathematics. science will be assessed in grade 10 in 2006. Student performance levels are novice, basic, proficient, and advanced.

Beginning in 2005, NHEIAP will include a standards-based test, the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) that has been developed in collaboration with Vermont and Rhode Island. NECAP will be administered in grades 3-8 in reading and mathematics, and writing and consists of multiple-choice, short-answer, constructed-response, and writing prompt questions.

### TEST USES

Students: The state specifies that, "Results from a single, on-demand test such as NHEIAP should not be used as the sole basis for making educational decisions or comparing schools and districts. Rather, the results should be used to identify trends, strengths, weaknesses, and then analyzed in combination with other available information about student achievement as well as school or district data on educational, demographic, and economic factors that contribute to student performance."

Schools: Assessment results are made public and used by the schools to identify strengths and weaknesses in curriculum, instruction, professional development, resource allocation, and staffing decisions. As required under NCLB, assessment results are one of the factors used to identify low-performing schools.

### OPTIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities may take assessments with standard accommodations. The NHEIAP-Alternate Assessment is available for students with severe cognitive disabilities. The NHEIAP-Alternate Assessment is a flexible, objective, individualized portfolio, which documents the student's performance and program. The evidence for the portfolio is collected throughout the school year (September to April).

### OPTIONS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELL)

English language learners (ELL) may take assessments with standard accommodations. ELL students who have been in the country for less than 10 months are exempted from the reading portion of the test, but not the mathematics portion. Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners (ACCESS for ELLs) is administered annually to determine the English language proficiency levels of ELL students. ACCESS for ELLs is available for three overlapping tiers of English proficiency levels (beginning, intermediate, and advanced) in each of the grade clusters except kindergarten (which has only one level). The reading and listening portions of the test consist of selected-response items while the writing and speaking portions are open-ended.

### SOURCES

The "Alternate assessment educator's guide 2004-2005" can be downloaded at:

<http://www.ed.state.nh.us/education/doe/organization/curriculum/NHEIAP%20Alt%20Assessment/NHEIAP-Alt.htm>

NECAP home page: <http://www.ed.state.nh.us/education/doe/organization/curriculum/NECAP/NECAP.htm>

Overview of NHEIAP by measured progress and use of assessment results: <http://www.measuredprogress.org/nhprofile/explanations/AssessExplained.htm>

2004-2005 Grade 10 Test Participation can be downloaded at: <http://www.ed.state.nh.us/education/doe/organization/curriculum/Assessment/assessment.htm>

Graduation requirements in ED306.23 can be downloaded at:

<http://www.ed.state.nh.us/Education/laws/AdministrativeRulesTableOfContent.htm>

---

## NEW JERSEY

### HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION POLICY

New Jersey requires students to pass either the high school exit exam or a state developed alternate assessment. Students must also complete credit requirements or locally established curricular activities or programs.

### GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

To receive a state diploma, students must either pass the state High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA) by scoring "proficient" or "advanced proficient" in all areas, or complete and pass the state-developed alternative assessment, the Special Review Assessment (SRA), which provides students with remedial coursework based on the specific areas of weaknesses identified by the various tests of the HSPA and an alternative form of assessment. Students must earn a minimum of 110 credit-hours including the following: language arts literacy (20), math (15), science (15), social studies (15 – including 2 courses in U. S. history), health

and P.E. (3.75 per year), Visual and Performing arts (5), Practical arts (5), world languages (5 – or proficiency assessment). Technology literacy must be integrated throughout the curriculum.

Local districts may establish curricular activities or programs (which must be approved) aimed at achieving New Jersey’s Core Curriculum Content Standards to meet all or part of the 110-credit requirement.

### DESCRIPTION OF STATE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

New Jersey’s state testing program includes: the “Assessment of Skills and Knowledge” (ASK); the Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment (GEPA) and the Grade 11 High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA). The set of assessments includes language arts, mathematics, and science at grades 4, 8, and 11. The assessments are aligned with the state’s Core Curriculum Content Standards, adopted in May 1996. Student performance levels are partially proficient, proficient, and advanced proficient.

ASK is administered in grades 3 and 4 in mathematics and language arts literacy, and in grade 4 in science. The tests consist of multiple choice and open-ended items. Assessments in language arts and mathematics for grades 5-7 will be implemented in 2006.

The Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment tests mathematics, language arts literacy, and science and consists of multiple choice and open-ended items.

The High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA), administered in the fall of 11th grade, is a standards-based test that evaluates reading, writing, science and mathematics using a comprehensive criterion-referenced assessment that uses multiple methods, including multiple-choice, short- and extended-response, and open-ended items. Open response counts for about 60% of the score in writing and about 25% in reading and mathematics.

### TEST USES

Students: The HSPA and SRA are used to measure students’ proficiency in the New Jersey Core Content Standards and to trigger remediation services if needed.

Schools: Assessment results are made public and used to identify strengths and weaknesses in curriculum and instruction. As required under NCLB, assessment results are one of the factors used to identify low-performing schools.

### ALTERNATIVES AND OPTIONS FOR ALL STUDENTS

Students who do not achieve a proficient score on the regular exit exam are put into remediation classes; students who do not achieve a proficient score are given the alternate Special Review Assessment (SRA). The SRA consists of 1) remedial coursework; and 2) performance assessment tasks. The performance assessment tasks are developed by the state and administered and scored locally. The SRA is an untimed assessment.

### OPTIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

In addition to the SRA, the state allows an extensive list of accommodations for students with disabilities. Some students with disabilities are designated IEP-exempt from passing the HSPA. Students who are designated IEP-exempt must take the exempt portions of the test at least once, but the scores will not affect their graduation status. Students with dis-



abilities who pass the exit exam using accommodations and meet the requirements of their IEPs receive a regular high school diploma. Students with severe disabilities take the Alternate Proficiency Assessment instead of the HSPA. Students who complete their IEP program receive a standard diploma.

### OPTIONS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELL)

ELL students receive accommodations on the HSPA exam. ELL students may demonstrate proficiency in the required content areas through successful completion of the HSPA or SRA in their native language or in English. In order to be eligible for an SRA in the native language, an ELL student must have scored below the state-established cutoff score on one of the state-approved English language tests and have either (1) participated in a bilingual, ESL, or English Language Services Program for two consecutive years or less prior to the date of the HSPA; or (2) attended school in the United States for three consecutive years or less prior to the date of HSPA testing. Some of the Special Review Assessment tasks have been translated into three languages, and translations into additional languages are being explored.

English language learners who take the SRA in English must also pass an English fluency test in order to receive a high school diploma.

### SOURCES

New Jersey State Department of Education web sites:

<http://www.nj.gov/njded/assessment>

<http://www.ets.org/njask/>

<http://www.njpep.org/assessment/TestSpecs/MathNJASK/index.html>

<http://www.nj.gov/njded/assessment/ms/>

<http://www.state.nj.us/njded/aps/info/grad.htm>

<http://www.state.nj.us/njded/code/current/>

---

## NORTH DAKOTA

### HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION POLICY

Students must successfully earn at least 21 credits from a set of required curriculum offerings which are determined by local school districts and approved by the state. Students must also meet additional local graduation requirements to receive a diploma.

### GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

After June 30, 2005 students must complete all local requirements and at least 21 credits from the required curriculum offerings. The required curriculum offerings each public and nonpublic high school must make available to be approved by the superintendent of public instruction include:

English/language arts — 4 units

mathematics — 3 units (increased to 4 units after June 30, 2005)

science — 4 units

social studies — 3 units (increased to 4 units after June 30, 2005) including 1 unit world history and 1 unit U.S. history



health and physical education — 1 unit (specifically 1/2 unit health and 1/2 unit physical education during each school year after June 30, 2005)  
music — 1 unit (increased to 2 units, 1 in music after June 30, 2005)

Before June 30, 2005, high schools must offer 6 units from business education, economics, foreign language, American sign language, career and technical ed education courses. After June 30, 2005, high schools must also offer: foreign language – 2 units of the same language, career and technical education – 2 units.

### DESCRIPTION OF STATE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

The North Dakota state assessment system is based upon a single state-mandated assessment, the North Dakota State Assessment (NDSA). NDSA is a criterion referenced test aligned to state content standards consisting of multiple-choice and open-ended response questions administered in the fall in grades 3-8 and 11 in reading/language arts and mathematics. Student proficiency levels are: novice, partially proficient, proficient, and advanced.

### TEST USES

Students: Tests results are used to provide information about student learning. Specific uses of test results are determined locally as part of districts' assessment policies.

Schools: Assessment results are made public and used to identify strengths and weaknesses in curriculum and instruction. As required under NCLB, assessment results are one of the factors used to identify low-performing schools.

### OPTIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities may take assessments with standard accommodations. Severely disabled students may take the North Dakota Alternate Assessment (NDALT). Students may take one subject in the NDALT and one subject in the NDSA. NDALT is designed to measure student progress in mathematics and English/language arts standards but can be used for social studies and science if the district is also testing those subjects. The NDALT is performance based and data are collected over a minimum of nine weeks.

### OPTIONS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELL)

ELL students may take assessments with standard accommodations. The English language proficiency levels of all ELL students must be assessed annually. The state is in the process of creating a new test of English language proficiency by the 2005-2006 school year. Currently, a majority of schools use the Woodcock-Munolz Language Survey. Districts also have the option of using the Language Assessment Scales (LAS) or the Idea Proficiency Test (IPT).

### SOURCES

“Summary of ND Assessment Features” can be downloaded at: <http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/testing/assess/index.shtm>

North Dakota DPI Testing and Assessment home page: <http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/testing/index.shtm>

North Dakota Curriculum and Testing code can be downloaded at: [http://www.nasbe.org/healthyschools/States/North\\_Dakota.html](http://www.nasbe.org/healthyschools/States/North_Dakota.html)

North Dakota Alternate Assessment home page: <http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/speced/resource/alternate/index.shtm>

## OKLAHOMA

### HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION POLICY

Students must complete a set of state-required course credits and meet any additional local graduation requirements to receive a diploma. Students must also take end-of-instruction tests for English II, algebra I, biology I, and U.S. history. Results of state high school tests appear on the high school transcript.

### GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Students must complete at least 23 units of credit including the following:

- language arts (4 – including 1 grammar and composition and 3 of equal or greater rigor)
- mathematics (3 – including 1 algebra I or algebra I taught in contextual methodology and 2 in computer science, math above algebra I, or contextual math classes which will enhance technical preparation)
- science (3 – including 1 biology or biology in context)
- social studies (3 – including 1 U.S. history, 1/2-1 U.S. government, 1/2-1 Oklahoma history)
- arts (2)
- electives (8)

Students must also take end-of-instruction tests for English II, algebra I, biology I, and U.S. history in order to graduate. These scores appear on transcripts, but are not used to deny diplomas.

### DESCRIPTION OF STATE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

The Oklahoma School Testing Program (OSTP) consists of Oklahoma Core Curriculum Tests (OCCT) given in grades 3, 4, 5, 7, and 8 (which will be given in grades 3-8 starting the 2005-2006 school year), and end-of-instruction tests. All of the tests are aligned with the Oklahoma Priority Academic Student Skills (PASS). Student performance levels are: unsatisfactory, limited knowledge, satisfactory, and advanced.

OCCT are criterion-referenced tests. OCCT are (or will be, starting in 2005-06) administered in reading and mathematics in grades 3-8, in Social studies in grade 5, in geography in grade 7, in writing in grades 5 and 8, and in science and United States history, Constitution and government in grade 8. The writing test consists of extended responses while all other OCCT tests consist solely of multiple-choice items.

End-of-Instruction (EOI) Tests for English II, algebra I, biology I, and U.S. history must be taken to fulfill graduation requirements. All of the tests contain multiple-choice items. The English II test also contains extended-response items (one active and one being field-tested).

### TEST USES

Students: Students' test scores appear on their transcripts. End-of-instruction tests must be taken, but not passed, in order to graduate.

Schools: Assessment results are made public and used to identify strengths and weaknesses in curriculum and instruction. As required under NCLB, assessment results are one of the

factors used to identify low-performing schools. These schools may be eligible for aid and/or subject to sanctions, including school closure, reconstitution, reconstitution as charters, permitting student transfers, or turning schools over to private management. State law says that if the funds are available, high-performing schools may be given rewards, such as closure or allowing their students to transfer to higher-performing schools.

### OPTIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities may take assessments with accommodations or take an out-of-level alternate assessment. Alternate tests can be administered to students with significant disabilities if all criteria are met. Students with severe cognitive disabilities may take the Oklahoma Alternate Assessment Portfolio (OAAP), which is also aligned with the Oklahoma Priority Academic Student Skills (PASS), instead of standard state assessments for grades 3-8 in reading and mathematics, English II, and algebra I.

### OPTIONS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELL)

ELL students may take assessments with standard accommodations. ELL students who have been in U.S. schools for less than a year may not take the state reading test (or English II) but must take the English proficiency exam and all other applicable subjects

### SOURCES

The following can be downloaded at <http://www.sde.state.ok.us/home/defaultie.html>

State Testing Frequently Asked Questions

Oklahoma School Testing Program Act – State Law 2003

Test Preparation Manuals 2004-2005

ABCs of the OSTP

---

## OREGON

### HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION POLICY

Oregon requires students to fulfill minimum credit requirements plus other local requirements and complete work samples in several fields of study. Students who meet or exceed performance standards on these assessments may earn a Certificate of Initial Mastery (CIM), a CIM subject area endorsement, and/or a Certificate of Advanced Mastery (CAM) in addition to their diploma. Starting in 2006-2007, students must complete an educational plan or profile, provide evidence of extended application, demonstrate career-related knowledge and skills, and take part in career-related learning experiences.

### GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

To graduate, students must earn 22 units of credit including the following: language arts (3 – 1 unit written composition), mathematics (2), science (2), social sciences (3 – including history, civics, geography, and economics), health education (1), physical education (1), applied arts, fine arts, or second language (1). In order to ensure the rigor of the high school coursework that students complete in the process of preparing for college, The OUS Course Approval Process was redesigned to require high schools to map course content to college entry standards.

Beginning with the class of 2007, all students must:

## Appendix B: State Profiles

---

- Develop an education plan and build an education profile
- Build a collection of evidence, or include evidence in existing collection(s), to demonstrate extended application
- Demonstrate career-related knowledge and skills in the following areas: personal management, problem solving, communication, teamwork, employment foundations, and career development; and
- Participate in career-related learning experiences outlined in the education plan

To earn a CIM a student must either:

- 1) meet standards in English, mathematics, and science by either passing all of the high school tests and work samples given at the CIM or high school level (listed in the assessment system section) or
- 2) pass a juried assessment (described in the alternatives and options section).

To earn a CIM subject area endorsement a student must either:

- 1) pass the state test and/or work samples if they are offered (as they are for social science starting in 2005-06),
- 2) meet state standards in the subject if they exist (as they do for health education), or
- 3) meet local performance standards if no state standards exist for that subject (for subjects like art, second language, and physical education).

To earn a Certificate of Advanced Mastery a student must:

- 1) Pass the state reading test, three speaking work samples and either three writing work samples or the state writing test.
- 2) Pass one of the mathematics tests or two math problem solving work samples, and either the science test or scientific inquiry work samples.
- 3) Develop an education plan and profile, and participate in career related learning experiences as outlined in the education plan.
- 4) Demonstrate extended application through a collection of evidence and demonstrate career-related knowledge to meet standards adopted by the state board.

### DESCRIPTION OF STATE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

The Oregon Educational Act for the 21st Century requires state tests in reading and math at grades 3 – 8 and high school; writing, in grades 4, 7 and high school; and science in grades 5, 8, and high school. The system includes three components: knowledge and skills tests; State performance assessments; and classroom work samples. At least one tool is used in each content area each school year to measure student performance.

I. Knowledge and Skills Tests are multiple-choice tests administered in grades 3-8 and CIM level in reading/literature and mathematics and in grades 5 and 8 and CIM level in science.

II. State Performance Assessments

- 1) The writing assessment is administered to students in grades 4 & 7 and those at the CIM level. Mathematics problem solving is under development.
- 2) Work Samples: For writing, speaking and mathematics problem solving, students in grades 3 – 8 must complete one work sample scored with the state scoring guide, meeting the performance standard. Students at the CIM level must complete two work samples from different strands in mathematics problem solving; and three samples in writing (one persuasive, one expository and one imaginative or narrative). In speaking, CIM students must complete three samples (one persuasive, one informa-

tive, and one unrehearsed). For scientific inquiry, students in grades 4 - 8 and CIM must complete one work sample, scored in the required dimensions. For social science analysis, students in grades 6–8 and CIM must complete one work sample, scored in the required dimensions, beginning in 2005-06.

### TEST USES

**Students:** Students who perform well on the Oregon Statewide Assessment and fulfill several other requirements may receive a Certificate of Initial or Advanced Mastery.

**Schools:** Assessment results are made public and used to identify strengths and weaknesses in curriculum and instruction. As required under NCLB, assessment results are one of the factors used to identify low-performing schools.

### ALTERNATIVES AND OPTIONS FOR ALL STUDENTS

A student in grades 9 through 12 may request a juried assessment, an exception to the statewide CIM Benchmark assessment procedures, when he or she has mastered the standards for one or more content areas of the CIM but is unable to demonstrate mastery through related statewide assessments. A juried assessment uses a collection of material to decide if a student has met the standards.

### OPTIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities may take assessments with standard accommodations. Students with severe cognitive disabilities may take extended assessments, which are based on alternate standards. The extended assessments currently offered are: The Extended Career and Life Role Assessment System (CLRAS), Extended Reading, Extended mathematics, and Extended Writing. CLRAS is based on teacher observation of daily activities while the other tests are based on structured tasks. Assessments taken with modifications and extended measures are not classified as passing the state's benchmark standard.

### OPTIONS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELL)

ELL students may take tests with standard accommodations. Those in their first year in U. S. schools may be exempted from all except the mathematics state assessments. The English language proficiency of each student is assessed annually using a state-approved assessment. Currently the following are acceptable: Language Assessment Scales (LAS), Woodcock Munoz, Idea Proficiency Test (IPT), and Harcourt's Standard Assessments.

### SOURCES

Documents on including all students in state assessment can be downloaded at: <http://www.ode.state.or.us/opportunities/grants/sig/statewide-assessment>

Oregon Department of Education Standards for Public Elementary and Secondary Schools at: [http://arcweb.sos.state.or.us/rules/OARS\\_500/OAR\\_581/581\\_022.html](http://arcweb.sos.state.or.us/rules/OARS_500/OAR_581/581_022.html)

Oregon Department of Education Assessment/Testing home page: <http://www.ode.state.or.us/search/results/?id=169>

Background for Oregon's assessment system: <http://www.ode.state.or.us/teachlearn/testing/dev/techaspects/background>

Extended Assessment Basics: <http://www.ode.state.or.us/teachlearn/testing/admin/alt/ea/basics/>

Juried Assessment: <http://www.ode.state.or.us/search/results/?=175>

Accommodations and Modifications: <http://www.ode.state.or.us/teachlearn/testing/manuals/tables/>

Certificate of Initial Mastery (CIM) home page: <http://www.ode.state.or.us/search/results/?=25>

Oregon University System. (2003, July). Aligning Public University Admission with K-12 Student Learning. Retrieved December 10, 2004 from: [www.ous.edu/Aligning%20K-16.pdf](http://www.ous.edu/Aligning%20K-16.pdf)

Alignment between college admissions and K-12 standards: <http://www.ous.edu/Aligning%20K-16.pdf>

[http://www.ode.state.or.us/teachlearn/subjects/general/OREGONSASSMTSYSTEM\\_12132004.pdf](http://www.ode.state.or.us/teachlearn/subjects/general/OREGONSASSMTSYSTEM_12132004.pdf)

---

## PENNSYLVANIA

### HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION POLICY

Pennsylvania requires students to demonstrate proficiency on either the state assessments or on local assessments aligned with the state's standards. The results of state high school tests appear on the high school transcript but are not used to deny diplomas. Local graduation requirements must also include course completion and grades and completion of a culminating project.

### GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Pennsylvania requires all students to participate in the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) and to demonstrate proficiency in reading, writing, and mathematics on either the state assessments or on local assessments aligned with the state's standards in order to graduate. The state specifies that graduation requirements shall include: course completion and grades, completion of a culminating project, and results of local assessments aligned with academic standards. Local districts decide on how the state test is used in the overall graduation decision. Unusually, Pennsylvania does not set minimum credit requirements. Student scores on state assessments are listed on their transcripts.

Students who score proficient or better in any subject area on the grade 11 PSSA or the grade 12 retest are eligible to receive a special Certificate of Proficiency and students who score advanced in each subject area of the grade 11 PSSA are eligible to receive a Certificate of Distinction.

### DESCRIPTION OF STATE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) is a criterion-referenced assessment consisting of multiple choice, constructed response, and essay items, based on standards adopted in 1999 for reading, writing, speaking and listening and mathematics. Students are tested in grades 3, 5, 8, and 11 in mathematics and reading, and in grades 5, 8, and 11 in writing. Reading and math tests for grades 4, 6, and 7 are being field tested in spring 2005. science (which will likely be administered in grades 4, 7 and 10) will be field tested in 2006-2007. Student performance is categorized as advanced, proficient, basic, and below basic.

### TEST USES

Students: Results from the 11th grade PSSA are recorded on transcripts and used in instructional decisions. Test scores determine whether a student earns a Certificate of Proficiency or Distinction.

Schools: Assessment results are made public and used to identify strengths and weaknesses

in curriculum and instruction. As required under NCLB, assessment results are one of the factors used to identify low-performing schools. Pennsylvania provides cash rewards to high-performing or improving schools through the School Performance Incentive program.

#### ALTERNATIVES AND OPTIONS FOR ALL STUDENTS

Local assessments mapped to the state standards are an option for all students.

#### OPTIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities may take assessments with standard accommodations. Students with severe cognitive disabilities may take the Pennsylvania Alternate System of Assessment (PASA). PASA is a set of performance-based tasks in reading, writing, and mathematics administered in several sessions. Students with disabilities who complete their IEP receive a standard diploma.

#### OPTIONS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELL)

ELL students may take assessments with standard accommodations. ELL students in their first year of enrollment in U. S. schools may be exempted from the reading PSSA but must still take the mathematics PSSA. All ELL students are administered the Stanford English Language Proficiency (SELP) assessment.

#### SOURCES

Pennsylvania System of School Assessment home page: [http://www.pde.state.pa.us/a\\_and\\_t/site/default.asp?g=0&a\\_and\\_tNav=|630|&k12Nav=|1141|](http://www.pde.state.pa.us/a_and_t/site/default.asp?g=0&a_and_tNav=|630|&k12Nav=|1141|)

2005 Accommodations Guidelines can be downloaded at: [http://www.pde.state.pa.us/a\\_and\\_t/cwp/view.asp?a=108&Q=45132&a\\_and\\_tNav=|678|&a\\_and\\_tNav=|](http://www.pde.state.pa.us/a_and_t/cwp/view.asp?a=108&Q=45132&a_and_tNav=|678|&a_and_tNav=|)

Getting ready! 2005 PSSA can be downloaded at: [http://www.pde.state.pa.us/a\\_and\\_t/cwp/view.asp?a=108&Q=73314&a\\_and\\_tNav=|680|&a\\_and\\_tNav=|](http://www.pde.state.pa.us/a_and_t/cwp/view.asp?a=108&Q=73314&a_and_tNav=|680|&a_and_tNav=|)

Accountability FAQ: <http://www.pde.state.pa.us/pas/cwp/view.asp?a=3&Q=94804&pasNav=|6139|&pasNav=|6325|>

PA code regarding graduation requirements: <http://www.pacode.com/secure/data/022/chapter4/s4.24.html>

---

## RHODE ISLAND

#### HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION POLICY

Currently, Rhode Island students are required to meet local requirements for graduation. Starting in 2008, districts will decide how to combine evidence from a state high school reference examination with evidence from local performance assessments and coursework to demonstrate each student's proficiency in state standards. The state's high school examination can determine up to 10% of the graduation decision. Local portfolios and performance assessment tasks that are developed by districts and intermediaries with state assistance will be approved by the state based on statewide criteria.

#### GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Rhode Island is currently developing a high school reference examination and is in the process of establishing proficiency-based graduation requirements that will combine student scores on the state test, which cannot comprise of more than 10% of all of the weighted fac-



tors contributing to the decision, with local performance assessments to inform the graduation decision.

Regents' Regulations require that students demonstrate proficiency in six core academic areas: English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, technology, and the arts. RIDE will establish the definition of proficiency in English language arts and mathematics for the class of 2008 based on the Grade Span Expectations (GSEs) for grades 9 and 10. Later, science will be added when the Grade Span Expectations (GSEs) are completed through the work of the New England Common Assessment Programs (NECAP). Ultimately there will also be a state-required assessment in grade 11 for English language arts, mathematics and later science (2007-2008). Districts will be responsible for establishing their own definition of proficiency in the area of social studies, technology, and the arts. However, those performance definitions must be based on a set of recognized state or national standards. Students' proficiency in each of the six core academic areas must be demonstrated through at least two of the following methods: departmental end of course exams, a Certificate of Initial Mastery, portfolios, extended "capstone" projects, public exhibitions, and the use of technological tools.

The Rhode Island Certificate of Initial Mastery (CIM) has four basic components, each of which has multiple elements that are assembled into a CIM portfolio. Students must achieve a passing score in each section (including demonstrating proficiency in both mathematics and English/language arts) to earn a CIM.

- 1) Students must demonstrate proficiency in New Standards in mathematics and English/language arts through scores on the New Standards Reference Exam, two on-demand performance tasks, and one extended performance task.
- 2) Work Habits: Two adults assess the student's teamwork skills and personal responsibilities, using the capstone project and student-selected work samples.
- 3) Capstone Project: An individualized culminating or senior project.
- 4) A reflective essay based on the student's experience, written following the completion of all other CIM components.

### DESCRIPTION OF STATE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

Currently, the Rhode Island State Assessment Program includes New Standards Reference Exams the Rhode Island Writing Test, and the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP)

The New Standards Reference Exams (NSRE) are standards-based tests given in grade 11 in mathematics and English/language arts. NSRE contains both multiple choice and open-ended questions.

NECAP is being piloted in NH, RI, and VT in the 2004-05 school year and will be administered officially for the first time in October 2005. NECAP consists of multiple-choice, short-answer, constructed-response, and writing-prompt questions. NECAP is administered in grades 3-8 in reading and mathematics. Writing, which is still under development, will also be assessed in grades 5 and 8.



### TEST USES

**Students:** Assessment results are used to provide information about student learning and proficiency in the state standards. Student results on state tests may be a factor in graduation and promotion decisions, although state tests can comprise no more than 10% of the total decision.

**Schools:** Assessment results are made public and used to identify strengths and weaknesses in curriculum and instruction. School improvement plans and district strategic plans must describe how high schools will incorporate applied learning for all students through classroom, work-related and/or community service experience. As required under NCLB, assessment results are one of the factors used to identify low-performing schools. These schools may be eligible for aid. The Board of Regents has adopted a tiered-approach to progressive support and intervention that includes a state-level analysis of data coupled with a subsequent in-depth look at local data. Much of this work takes place under the aegis of the state's School Accountability for Learning and Teaching (SALT) initiative, which includes peer-to-peer school visitations, formal state guidance about school improvement (documents and workshops), district and school annual improvement plans, and targeted state assistance under the auspices of Department of Education Field Service Teams, coordinated technical assistance, and monetary assistance with targeted funds.

### OPTIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities may take assessments with standard accommodations. Students with severe disabilities may take the Rhode Island Alternative Assessment, a portfolio-based assessment in English language arts and mathematics.

### OPTIONS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELL)

ELL students may take assessments with standard accommodations. Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners (ACCESS for ELLs) is administered annually to determine the English language proficiency levels of ELL students. ACCESS for ELLs is available for three overlapping tiers of English proficiency levels (beginning, intermediate, and advanced) in each of the grade clusters except kindergarten (which has only one level). The reading and listening portions of the test consist of selected-response items while the writing and speaking portions are open-ended.

### SOURCES

RIDE Assessment and Accountability news: <http://www.rido.net/assessment/default.htm>

Assessment Interpretation Guides: <http://www.rido.net/standards/stateassessment/interpretationguides.htm>

Overview of CIM program: <http://www.ri.net/Skills/>

---

## SOUTH DAKOTA

### HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION POLICY

In South Dakota, students must complete state-required course credits and any additional local graduation requirements to receive a diploma. Beginning in 2006, South Dakota will offer three types of diplomas (standard, advanced, and distinguished) based on the kinds of

courses successfully completed by students.

### GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Students must complete 22 units including:

- English/reading and communication arts (4 units including 1 1/2 writing, 1 1/2 literature, including 1/2 American literature and 1/2 Speech)
- social studies (3 units including 1 U.S. history, 1/2 U.S. government, 1/2 geography)
- mathematics (2 units)
- science (2 units of lab science)
- fine arts (1/2 unit)
- laboratory computer science (1/2 unit)

Starting in 2006, South Dakota will offer three types of diplomas:

- 1) Standard requires students to complete 22 units including the following:
  - English/reading and communication arts (4 units including 1 1/2 writing, 1 1/2 literature – including 1/2 American literature and 1/2 speech)
  - social studies (3 units including 1 U.S. history, 1/2 U.S. government, 1/2 geography, and 1/2 world history)
  - mathematics (3 units including algebra I)
  - science (2 units of lab science)
  - fine arts (1 unit)
  - health or physical education (1/2 unit)
  - economics or personal finance (1/2 unit)
  - world languages, computer science, or approved career and technical education courses (2 units)
- 2) Advanced requires students to complete all standard diploma requirements plus a third lab science credit in biology, chemistry, or physics and the three units of math must include algebra I, algebra II, and geometry.
- 3) Distinguished requires students to complete all advanced diploma requirements plus a fourth science unit, two years of the same world language, and 1/2 unit of computer studies (instead of choosing 2 units of world languages, computer science, or approved career and technical education courses).

### DESCRIPTION OF STATE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

The South Dakota Assessment System consists of the South Dakota State Test of Educational Practice (STEP), Stanford Writing, and a criterion referenced academic achievement test, currently the Dakota Assessment of Content Standards (DACCS).

STEP is a multiple-choice test based on the Stanford 10 Abbreviated Test with additional questions aligned with the South Dakota standards in reading and mathematics (as well as science by 2007). The Stanford 10 Abbreviated test is standards based and yields both norm-referenced and standards-based scores. STEP is given in grades 3-8 and 11 in reading, language arts, mathematics, science and social science. Student proficiency levels on STEP are: below basic, basic, proficient, and advanced.

Stanford Writing Assessment, given in grades 5 and 9, is a single extended response. The as-

assessment is scored on a four-point scale in each of the following categories: ideas and development; organization, unity, and coherence; word choice; sentences and paragraphs; grammar and usage; and mechanics.

DACS is a computer-adaptive, criterion-referenced, multiple-choice test given to students in grades 3, 6, and 10 in reading, mathematics, science and language arts.

### TEST USES

Students: Tests results are used to provide information about student learning. Specific uses of test results are determined locally as part of districts' assessment policies.

Schools: Assessment results are made public and used to identify strengths and weaknesses in curriculum and instruction. As required under NCLB, assessment results are one of the factors used to identify low-performing schools. Schools that meet AYP in both reading and math for two consecutive years and either close an achievement gap for a subgroup of students by at least 10% or have at least 80% of all students perform at the proficient or advanced levels in reading and math receive a Distinguished Schools award.

### OPTIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities may take assessments with standard accommodations. Students with severe disabilities may take part in the Statewide Team-led Alternate Assessment and Reporting System (STAARS). STAARS measures students' skills in communication, community use, functional academics, leisure, social academic skills-reading/language arts, and academic skills-mathematics based on daily skills demonstrated and work samples, which are independently rated by three local scorers.

### OPTIONS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELL)

ELL students may take assessments with standard accommodations. Students with limited English proficiency who have been in the district for less than a year can be exempted from the assessment. Students with limited English proficiency take the Stanford English Language Proficiency Test (SELP), which consists of multiple-choice reading, writing conventions and listening items, and performance-based writing and speaking items. Performance levels in the Stanford LEP are pre-emergent, emergent, intermediate, basic, and advanced.

### SOURCES

"Overview of South Dakota Assessment System" can be downloaded at: <http://www.state.sd.us/deca/OCTA/testing/index.htm>

South Dakota STEP home page: <http://www.state.sd.us/deca/OCTA/testing/dakSTEP.htm>

DACS Newsletter August 2004 can be downloaded from: <http://www.state.sd.us/deca/DACS/index.htm>

Assessment of Students with limited English proficiency (LEP): <http://www.state.sd.us/deca/TA/titleIII/assessment.htm>

SELP test overview can be downloaded at: <http://www.state.sd.us/deca/TA/titleIII/>

STAARS FAQ's can be downloaded at: <http://www.state.sd.us/deca/Special/news/staars.htm>

Title I School Improvement Requirements can be downloaded at: <http://www.state.sd.us/deca/NCLB/schoolimprovement.htm>

South Dakota's new graduation requirements can be downloaded at: <http://www.state.sd.us/deca/gradrequirements/index.asp>

## VERMONT

### HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION POLICY

Vermont requires students either to complete minimum credit requirements or to demonstrate proficiency of the achievement standards through performance-based assessments. Students must also complete all other local requirements.

### GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Students must fulfill any local requirements and either:

- Demonstrate attaining or exceeding the standards as measured by results on performance based assessment; or
- Complete at least 20 Carnegie units, including the following:
  - English/language arts (4 years)
  - science (3 years)
  - mathematics (3 years)
  - history and social sciences (3 years)
  - arts (1 year)
  - and physical education (1 1/2 years).

### DESCRIPTION OF STATE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

Each district must develop a local assessment system consistent with the Vermont Comprehensive Assessment System (CAS) which assesses students in both classroom-based and school-wide assessments in the “Fields of Knowledge” (art, language, and literature; history and social sciences; science, mathematics and technology) and “Vital Results” (communication, reasoning and problem solving, personal development, civic responsibility).

CAS includes the Vermont Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA), New Standards Reference Exams (NSRE), The New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP), and VT-PASS, as well as locally developed assessments, norm-referenced standardized tests, and portfolios that schools and districts may choose to use to evaluate students in other grades and subjects. The tests are aligned with Vermont’s Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities.

The DRA is a standards-based assessment of reading given individually to students in 2nd grade. Teachers score the student’s oral reading for accuracy and the retelling for comprehension using uniform methods and guidelines.

NSRE, a standards-referenced exam with multiple-choice, constructed-response, and extended-response items, is given in grades 4, 8, and 10 in English/language arts and mathematics. The grades 4 and 8 NSRE exams will be replaced by the NECAP in 2005.

VT-PASS is a standards-based science exam given in grades 5, 9, and 11. VT-PASS consists of multiple-choice questions, open-ended responses, and hands-on performance tasks.

New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) is being piloted in NH, RI, and VT in the 2004-05 school year and will be administered officially for the first time in October 2005. NECAP consists of multiple-choice, short-answer, constructed-response, and writing-prompt questions. NECAP is administered in grades 3-8 in reading and mathematics, and writing (which is still under development) will also be assessed in grades 5 and 8.

### TEST USES

Students: Test results are used to provide information about student learning. Specific uses of student assessment results are determined locally.

Schools: Assessment results are made public and used to identify strengths and weaknesses in curriculum and instruction. As required under NCLB, assessment results are one of the factors used to identify low-performing schools. These schools may be given aid and/or subject to sanctions, including school closure or reconstitution. Schools or districts that either close the achievement gap between AYP groups for two or more consecutive years in a statistically significant way or exceed their adequate early progress for two or more years receive public recognition from the state board.

### OPTIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities may take assessments with standard accommodations. Adapted assessments are available for students who are working on the same skills or standards as general education students, but showing significantly lower performance or difficulty levels. (Adapted assessments are not available for the VT-DRA). Severely disabled students may complete a Lifeskills Portfolio instead of taking part in state assessments. Each student develops a Lifeskills Portfolio centered on two of the following five content areas: 1) Communication Skills, 2) Selected Academics, 3) Personal Management and Socialization, 4) Home/School/Community, and 5) Vocational and Leisure Skills. The Portfolio must address three critical learning outcomes cross-referenced to Vermont's Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities in both content areas. Students who complete their IEPs receive standard diplomas.

### OPTIONS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELL)

ELL students may take assessments with standard accommodations. Some ELL students may be eligible to take Adapted Assessments.

Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners (ACCESS for ELLs) is administered annually to determine the English language proficiency levels of ELL students. ACCESS for ELLs is available for three tiers of English proficiency levels in each of the grade clusters except kindergarten (which has only one level). The reading and listening portions of the test consist of selected-response items while the writing and speaking portions are open-ended.

### SOURCES

VDE assessment home page: [http://www.state.vt.us/educ/new/html/pgm\\_assessment.html](http://www.state.vt.us/educ/new/html/pgm_assessment.html)

Vermont Alternate Assessment home page: [http://www.state.vt.us/educ/new/html/pgm\\_alternate.html](http://www.state.vt.us/educ/new/html/pgm_alternate.html)

NECAP home page: [http://www.state.vt.us/educ/new/html/pgm\\_assessment/necap.html](http://www.state.vt.us/educ/new/html/pgm_assessment/necap.html)

“School Accountability System Based on Student Achievement” can be downloaded at:

<http://www.state.vt.us/educ/new/html/board/rules.html#School%20Accountability>

“Vermont’s framework of standards & learning opportunities” can be downloaded at:

<http://www.state.vt.us/educ/new/html/pubs/framework.html>

Vermont school improvement and action planning home page: [http://www.state.vt.us/educ/new/html/pgm\\_improvement.html](http://www.state.vt.us/educ/new/html/pgm_improvement.html)

New State Assessment for English Language Proficiency can be downloaded at: [http://www.state.vt.us/educ/new/html/pgm\\_esl.html](http://www.state.vt.us/educ/new/html/pgm_esl.html)

Student performance indicator definitions: <http://crs.uvm.edu/schlrpt/perform.htm>  
“School Quality Standards” (which includes graduation requirements) can be downloaded at:  
[http://www.state.vt.us/educ/new/html/board/rules\\_fulltoc.html](http://www.state.vt.us/educ/new/html/board/rules_fulltoc.html)

---

## WASHINGTON

### HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION POLICY

Starting in 2008, Washington will require students to either pass a statewide exit exam or an alternative assessment of equal rigor to earn a diploma. Students must also complete minimum credit requirements, a culminating project, an educational plan, and any additional local requirements. For both the culminating project and high school plan, districts can choose how to implement and define the process and may also choose to award credit for these requirements. Currently, students who pass the state tests receive a special recognition, the Certificate of Academic Achievement (CAA).

### GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Washington’s high school graduation policy is in development and plans to require (by 2008) all students to earn a Certificate of Academic Achievement by demonstrating achievement of the 10th grade reading, writing, and math standards on the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) with science added in 2010. In 2008, students must complete at least 19 credits including the following:

- English (3)
- math (2)
- science (2)
- social science (2 1/2)
- health and fitness (2)
- occupational education (1)
- arts (1)

Other distinguishing features of Washington’s high school graduation policy are two non-credit requirements for an individualized culminating project (which must be completed by students in the class of 2008) and a high school education plan.

The culminating project (CP) is a senior project that students complete for graduation. This project allows students to demonstrate both their learning competencies and skills through writing, speaking, producing and/or performing. Specific CP requirements are established by each local school district. For the most part, however, students construct their own culminating project and have options for: choice of topic, flexibility to design project framework, choice of delivery method/design type of presentation, choice of mentor, and design evaluation to assess the effect of the project on the student.

The state also requires students to develop an education plan for their high school experience, including what they expect to do the year following graduation.

### DESCRIPTION OF STATE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

There are three components to the Washington State Assessment System (WSAS): statewide

standardized testing, classroom-based assessments and assessment of staff development. The state provides teachers with prototypes of classroom-based assessments that can be altered as needed. The statewide testing focuses on the Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EARLs) and includes both norm- and criterion-referenced assessments, and both multiple-choice and open-response items.

Every fall, all second graders must be given an oral reading test for accuracy and fluency from an assessment package approved by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. Approved assessment packages include: Developmental Reading Assessment, Sunshine Reading Assessment Kit, Analytical Reading Inventory, Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy, and others.

The Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) is a set of criterion-referenced tests, given in reading, writing, and mathematics at grades 4, 7, and 10 and science in grades 5, 8, and 10. The assessments consist of multiple-choice, short-answer, and extended-response items and prompted direct writing samples for the writing test. The performance levels for reading and math are levels I and II, which are “does not meet the standard”; level III, which is “meets the standard”; and level IV, which is “exceeds the standard.”

Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) is a norm-referenced multiple-choice test given in grades 3 and 6 in reading and math, and also in language arts in grade 6. Iowa Test of Educational Development (ITED) is a norm-referenced multiple-choice test given in grade 9 in reading, language arts, and mathematics. ITED also includes an interest inventory.

### TEST USES

**Students:** State test results appear on students’ transcripts. Students who pass the state test receive a Certificate of Academic Achievement. Test results or those of alternative assessments will be a factor in the graduation decision starting in 2008.

**Schools:** Assessment results are made public and used to identify strengths and weaknesses in curriculum and instruction. As required under NCLB, assessment results are one of the factors used to identify low-performing schools.

### ALTERNATIVES AND OPTIONS FOR ALL STUDENTS

At present, the state allows alternate assessments for students who do not pass the WASL and requires schools to develop individual plans for students who have failed initial exam administration. If the student successfully meets the state standards on the objective alternative assessments then the student shall earn a certificate of academic achievement. The state plans to allow students who do not demonstrate performance on the state test to demonstrate proficiency through an appeals process and/or alternate assessment.

The legislature has charged the Office of Public Instruction to begin developing for each content area, alternate assessments comparable to the skills and standards required for students to demonstrate. A task force will identify projects, portfolios, or tasks that represent sufficient evidence of mastery of the learning standards for each subject matter required for graduation. Once approved, a student may use the objective alternative assessments to demonstrate that he or she successfully meets the state standards for that content area provided that the student has retaken the Washington assessment of student learning at least once. Students may retake all or portions of the WASL four times.



### OPTIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities may take assessments with standard accommodations. Washington offers students with severe cognitive disabilities a portfolio-based assessment aligned with Washington's Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRs) in the content areas of communication, reading, writing, mathematics, and science. Students with disabilities may use alternate assessments commensurate with their IEPs to demonstrate skills and abilities to earn a Certificate of Individual Achievement instead of a Certificate of Advanced Mastery, but are still eligible for a regular high school diploma starting 2008.

### OPTIONS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELL)

ELL students may take assessments with standard accommodations. ELL students in their first year in U.S. schools are exempt from the WASL tests in reading, writing, and science.

### SOURCES

Overview of WA State Assessment System: <http://www.k12.wa.us/assessment/default.aspx>  
Second grade oral assessment: <http://www.k12.wa.us/assessment/readingsecondgradeassess.aspx>  
Alternate Assessment home page: <http://www.k12.wa.us/assessment/altassess.aspx>  
WA's graduation requirements: <http://www.k12.wa.us/CertificateAcademicAchievement/gradreq.aspx>  
For more information see, "State high school exit exams: A maturing reform" at: [www.ctred-pol.org/highschoolexit/ExitExamAug2004/ExitExam2004.pdf](http://www.ctred-pol.org/highschoolexit/ExitExamAug2004/ExitExam2004.pdf)

---

## WEST VIRGINIA

### HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION POLICY

Students in West Virginia complete state-required course credits (both core requirements and within the student's career major) and work-based learning requirements as the basis for graduation. Students must also complete any additional local graduation requirements. A Certificate of Proficiency detailing a range of student and academic information that includes test results, along with coursework, activities, and special competencies, is provided to all graduates.

### GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

To graduate a student must complete the following requirements:

- I. Core Requirements (17 credits – raised to 18 credits for 2006-2007 school year):
  - English (4 credits)
  - mathematics (3 credits – at algebra I and above, and 4 credits beginning 2006-07)
  - science (3 credits – “Coordinated and Thematic Science” (CATS) 9, and two above CATS 9 level)
  - social studies (4 credits – “United States to 1900,” “World Studies to 1900,” “20th/21st Centuries,” and civics/government)
  - physical education (1 credit)
  - health (1 credit)
  - arts (1 credit)
  
- II. electives (3 credits)



III. Career Major Courses (4 credits):

Students choose a career major and enter one of three pathways (professional, skilled, or entry) by the end of 10th grade. Each student must complete either:

1. Professional Pathway: 4th credit of mathematics (above algebra I), 4th credit of science (above CATS 10), and 2 credits in same foreign language
2. Skilled Pathway – 4th credit of mathematics (above algebra I) and 3 credits in concentration, or
3. Entry Pathway – 4 credits in concentration

IV. Career Development – Prior to selecting career majors, opportunities for career decision making must be provided in grades 9-10.

V. Work-based learning – All students must participate in a work-based learning experience sometime in grades 9-12. If credit is granted for these experiences, content standards and objectives will be developed and approved at the local level.

Upon graduation, students receive a certificate of proficiency which provides a range of indicators, and measures of academic progress, including: (1) test results in the statewide testing program; (2) high school courses taken (in grades 7-12) with grades and credits received; (3) computer instruction received, (4) GPA for all high school courses completed, (5) class rank out of graduating class; (6) attendance per year for grades 9-12; (7) curricular and extra-curricular activities; (8) grade scale including letter/numerical equivalent, use of weighted grades; (9) special competencies; (10) technical training and credentials acquired; (11) successful completion of career major; (12) formal work-based learning experiences completed; and (13) college credits earned.

#### DESCRIPTION OF STATE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

A range of student assessments informs West Virginia's measures of student progress and achievement:

- 1) West Virginia Educational Standards Tests (WESTEST) is given to students in grades 3-8 and 10 in mathematics, reading/language arts, and science, and also in social science in grades 3-8. WESTEST is a criterion-referenced test consisting of multiple choice and short answer/constructed response items aligned to West Virginia's Content Standards and Objectives (CSOs). Performance levels on WESTEST are: distinguished, above mastery, mastery, partial mastery, and novice.
- 2) The West Virginia Writing Assessment is given to students in grades 4, 7, and 10.
- 3) The American College Testing program (ACT) includes:  
ACT EXPLORE is a norm-referenced multiple-choice test given in 8th grade in English, mathematics, reading, and science. Information is also collected about students' educational and career plans, interests, high school course work plans, and self-identified needs for assistance.

ACT PLAN is a norm-referenced multiple-choice test given in 10th grade in English, mathematics, reading, and science used to predict students' ACT score. Information is also collected about students' educational and career plans, interests, high school

## Appendix B: State Profiles

---

course work plans, and self-identified needs for assistance.

ACT is a national, multiple-choice test generally taken in grade 11 that covers English, mathematics, reading, and science and includes an optional writing test that is a short essay. ACT scores range from 1-36.

- 4) End-of-course exams are multiple-choice tests being field-tested in English 9, Coordinated & Thematic science 9 & U.S. history to 1900 in grade 9, in World Studies to 1900 in grade 10, in English 11 and 20-21st Century Studies in grade 11, in English 12 in grade 12, and in algebra and geometry upon completion of the courses.

### TEST USES

**Students:** Test results provide information about student learning. Assessment results appear on each student's Certificate of Proficiency.

**Schools:** Assessment results are reported and used by the school to identify strengths and weaknesses in instruction and curriculum. As required under NCLB, assessment results are one of the factors used to identify low-performing schools. These schools may be eligible for aid and/or subject to sanctions including permitting students to transfer.

### OPTIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities may take assessments with accommodations and/or modifications. The West Virginia Alternate Assessment is available for students with severe cognitive disabilities. It is based upon datafolios of student work collected throughout the school year (three collection periods). The Alternate Assessment is based on mandated Content Standards from Reading, English/language arts, mathematics, science and social studies standards. Student performance levels are: Awareness, Progressing, Competent, and Generalized.

### OPTIONS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELL)

ELL students may take assessments with standard accommodations. The English language proficiency of each ELL student is assessed annually using the West Virginia Test of English Language Learning (WESTELL) starting spring 2004.

### SOURCES

West Virginia Measures of Academic Progress legislative rules: <http://wvde.state.wv.us/policies/p2340.html>

West Virginia Policy 2510: Assuring Quality of Education can be downloaded at: <http://wvde.state.wv.us/policies/>

WESTEST home page: <http://westest.k12.wv.us/understanding.htm>

WESTEST Exam Manuals for 2004-05 are at:

[osa.k12.wv.us/ctc04/examiner/WESTEST 3 8 ExamManual Feb 18.pdf](http://osa.k12.wv.us/ctc04/examiner/WESTEST_3_8_ExamManual_Feb_18.pdf) (for grades 3-8)

[osa.k12.wv.us/ctc04/examiner/WESTEST 10 ExamManual final3.pdf](http://osa.k12.wv.us/ctc04/examiner/WESTEST_10_ExamManual_final3.pdf) (for grade 10)

\*\*Assuring the Quality of Education: Regulation for Education Programs at: <http://wvde.state.wv.us/policies/p2510.html>

Alternate Assessment home page: <http://osa.k12.wv.us/aa.htm>

"Assessment Update 'Advancing the Work'" from November 2003 can be downloaded at: [http://osa.k12.wv.us/TestCoordinators/ctc\\_nov13\\_meet pp.ppt](http://osa.k12.wv.us/TestCoordinators/ctc_nov13_meet_pp.ppt)

## WISCONSIN

### HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION POLICY

In Wisconsin, students must complete state-required course credits and any additional local graduation requirements to receive a diploma. Districts develop policies for granting the diploma that include coursework, pupil academic performance as evaluated through local assessments and teacher recommendations.

### GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Local graduation requirements include a minimum of 12 1/2 credits distributed as follows:

- English (4) – incorporating instruction in written communication, oral communication, grammar and usage of the English language, and literature
- social studies (3) – incorporating instruction in state and local government
- mathematics (2) – incorporating instruction in the properties, processes, and symbols of arithmetic and elements of algebra, geometry, and statistics
- science (2) – incorporating instruction in the biological sciences and physical sciences
- physical education (1 1/2) – incorporating instruction in the effects of exercise on the human body, health-related physical fitness, and activities for lifetime use
- health education (1/2) – can be earned in grades 7-12

Local school boards are encouraged to require a minimum of 8 1/2 additional credits in vocational education, foreign languages, fine arts, and other courses and to develop policies for granting the diploma that include coursework, pupil academic performance as evaluated through local assessments and teacher recommendations.

### DESCRIPTION OF STATE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

The Wisconsin Student Assessment System (WSAS) is aligned with the Wisconsin Model Academic Standards. WSAS includes the Wisconsin Reading Comprehension Test (WRCT), the Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examinations (WKCE), and DPI-approved, locally-adopted and locally-scored supplemental assessments in areas like social studies and oral communication that are scored using state standards and rubrics.

WRCT is a standards-based test in reading administered in 3rd grade consisting of multiple-choice and short-answer items.

WKCE is standards based, but includes the TerraNova test, a nationally norm-referenced test. WKCE assesses students in reading and math in grades 3-8, and 10 and in writing, science and social studies in grades 4, 8, and 10. WKCE consists of multiple-choice and short-answer questions, and a rough draft writing sample. Proficiency levels on the WKCE are: minimal performance, basic, proficient and advanced.

### TEST USES

Students: Test results are among the factors used to make promotion decisions.

Schools: Performance results are reported. As required under NCLB, assessment results are one of the factors used to identify low-performing schools. These schools may be eligible for additional funds and/or sanctions.

### OPTIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities may take assessments with standard accommodations or participate in WSAS alternate assessments (WAA). WAA is built from performance activities, tasks, and projects that are embedded in the curriculum and yield original student work.

### OPTIONS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELL)

ELL students may take assessments with standard accommodations or participate in WSAS alternate assessments (WAA). WAA is built from performance activities, tasks, and projects that are embedded in the curriculum and yield original student work.

Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners (ACCESS for ELLs) is administered annually to determine the English language proficiency levels of ELL students. ACCESS for ELLs is available for three overlapping tiers of English proficiency levels (beginning, intermediate, and advanced) in each of the grade clusters except kindergarten (which has one level). The reading and listening portions of the test consist of selected-response items while the writing and speaking portions are open-ended.

### SOURCES

Graduation requirements: <http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/dlsis/cal/pi1803.html>

WSAS home page: <http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/oea/assessmt.html>

WKCE home page: <http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/oea/kce.html>

Guidelines for Students with Special Needs in State Assessments: <http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/oea/specneed.html#LIMENG>

Repeal of High School Graduation Test: <http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/oea/hsgt.html>

For more information see: <http://www.greatschools.net/issues/wi/ach.html>

---

## WYOMING

### HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION POLICY

In Wyoming, local districts determine graduation requirements that incorporate the state's minimum credit requirements. Local assessments must demonstrate each student's proficiency in state standards. To earn a diploma, students must successfully complete state-required course credits and local graduation requirements. Wyoming offers diplomas with three types of endorsement (advanced, comprehensive, general), depending on a student's mastery of the state's standards.

### GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

In Wyoming, graduation is a locally determined process, with the following minimum state requirements:

Successful completion (by grades or successful performance on competency-based equivalency examinations) of the following in grades 9-12: English (4 school years), mathematics (3 school years), science (3 school years), social studies (3 school years – including history, American governments, and economic systems and institutions); and

Satisfactorily passing an exam on the principles of the constitutions of the United States and the state of Wyoming.

Wyoming offers three types of diplomas depending on a student's mastery of the common core of knowledge and common core of skills:

- 1) Advanced endorsement, which requires a student to demonstrate advanced performance in a majority of the areas of the common core of knowledge and skills and proficient performance in the remaining areas;
- 2) Comprehensive endorsement, which requires a student to demonstrate proficient performance in all areas of the common core of knowledge and skills;
- 3) General endorsement, which requires a student to demonstrate proficient performance in a majority of the areas of the common core of knowledge and skills

Common core of knowledge: reading/language arts, social studies, mathematics, science, fine arts and performing arts, physical education, health and safety, humanities, career/vocational education, foreign cultures and languages, applied technology, government and civics.

Common core of skills: Problem solving, Interpersonal communications, Keyboarding and computer applications, Critical thinking, Creativity, Life Skills (including personal financial management).

#### DESCRIPTION OF STATE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

Wyoming's state assessment combines the state-required test — Wyoming Comprehensive Assessment System (WyCAS) — and a “body of evidence” system, which allows districts the option to use the state test in combination with local assessments. WyCAS assessments are aligned with Wyoming's state standards and consist of multiple-choice, constructed-response, extended-response, and written-prompt questions administered to students in grades 4, 8, and 11 in reading, writing, and mathematics. Science tests for grades 4, 8, and 11 are being developed and will be field-tested in spring 2006. The performance levels are advanced, proficient, partially proficient, and novice.

The “body of evidence” system encourages districts to develop assessment systems that will meet the following goals:

- Establish and communicate improved student achievement as the primary function and goal of the student assessment program.
- Institute a comprehensive program of valid and reliable student assessments, which includes norm-referenced tests, curriculum-referenced assessments, such as criterion-referenced tests and performance assessments.
- Limit disruption of instructional time by progressively increasing the quantity and quality of embedded, aligned, and integrated assessments administered throughout the school year.

## Appendix B: State Profiles

---

Communicate and disseminate results that are easily understood by parents, students, staff, and patrons through an effective reporting network, especially those assessments that are related to student placement, remediation, promotion, and graduation.

Require embedded professional development that equips teachers to utilize assessment as an instructional tool.

Require districts to develop measures of student learning, determine proficiency, and monitor student performance relative to the content standard for graduation.

### TEST USES

Students: Uses of student assessment results are determined locally.

Schools: Assessment results are made public and used by schools to identify strengths and weaknesses in curriculum and instruction. As required under NCLB, assessment results are one of the factors used to identify low-performing schools.

### OPTIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities may take assessments with standard accommodations. The Wy-CAS-Alternate Assessment is available for students with severe cognitive disabilities. Wy-CAS-Alt is a locally scored performance-based assessment aligned with Expanded Content Standards through Real World Performance Indicators.

### OPTIONS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELL)

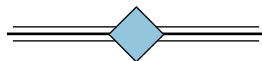
Students with limited English proficiency may take assessments with standard accommodations. Districts annually administer to all ELL students a locally chosen assessment of English language proficiency in the four domains of reading, writing, speaking/oral, and listening.

### SOURCES

Wyoming's graduation requirements can be downloaded at: [soswy.state.wy.us/RULES/5218.pdf](http://soswy.state.wy.us/RULES/5218.pdf)

“Wyoming Comprehensive Assessment System” by Parent Education Network can be downloaded at: <http://www.wpen.net/PDF/educationextras/PENeewycas903.pdf>

“Wyoming Accountability Workbook,” can be downloaded at: <http://www.k12.wy.us/aa.asp>







<http://schoolredesign.net>