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Ohio's Standards-Based Alternate Assessment for Students with Disabilities (AASWD)

Background

What are state assessments?

Achievement tests measure students on what they know and are able to do. They replace Ohio's proficiency tests. The tests for English language arts (reading and writing), mathematics, science and social studies will not all be given in one year, but be spread out from third to eighth grade. Students in the 10th grade will take tests in all five subject areas.

Currently, all students must pass state tests in five subject areas to graduate from high school. The Class of 2006 is the last class required to pass the ninth-grade proficiency tests in order to meet the testing requirements to earn an Ohio diploma. Beginning with the class of 2007, students will have to pass all parts of the Ohio Graduation Tests (OGT) to meet the testing requirements to earn an Ohio diploma. The OGT tests will be given beginning in 10th grade. Students who do not pass will have up to three opportunities each year to take the tests in the 10th, 11th and 12th grades.

State and federal regulations require that all students, including those with disabilities, participate in state- and district-wide assessments. As a means of facilitating their participation, these students may receive appropriate assessment accommodations.

It is expected that a small percentage of students in the general population, even with accommodations, will have a disability that prevents their participation.

In July 2000, Ohio implemented an alternate assessment for students with disabilities. This was designed to ensure the participation of all Ohio children in assessment and accountability systems. The alternate assessment was based upon a review of the student's individual progress by the child's Individualized Education Program (IEP) team. Results of the assessment were expressed in terms of a child's individual progress, based on the IEP team review.

In 2001-2002, the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) began working to develop an updated alternate assessment for students with significant cognitive disabilities. This work was brought about by the adoption of Ohio's academic content standards through Ohio Senate Bill 1; requirements under the federal *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) Act; and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

The primary goal for updating Ohio's alternate assessment system for students with disabilities was to ensure that the alternate assessment would document specific ways in which students demonstrate knowledge and skills relative to the Ohio academic

content standards. A secondary goal was to design assessments which would report achievement in the same way as the regular assessments. The updated system of alternate assessments was developed based on a collection of evidence (COE) model.

Is the Alternate Assessment a Test?

No. Ohio’s standards-based alternative assessment for students with disabilities (AASWD) documents access to grade-level content standards that reflect an alternate level of achievement for students with significant cognitive disabilities.

Grade level content standards define what all children should know and be able to do as they progress through school, an alternate level of achievement represents level of performance expectations that is less complex than the regular grade level assessment.

The alternate assessment is a collection of evidence that shows student performance of standards-based knowledge and skills within the context of classroom instruction.

A COE model represents evidence documenting student performance of standards-based knowledge and skills within the context of classroom instruction. This is a specific requirement of NCLB.

Subject Areas Assessed by the Alternate Assessment for Students with Disabilities, 2007-08

Subject Areas	Grade Levels
English Language Arts (ELA):Reading	3
ELA:Reading and Writing	4
ELA:Reading	5
ELA:Reading	6
ELA:Reading and Writing	7
ELA:Reading	8
ELA:Reading or Writing	10
Mathematics	3
Mathematics	4
Mathematics	5
Mathematics	6
Mathematics	7
Mathematics	8
Mathematics	10
Science	5
Science	8
Science	10
Social Studies	5
Social Studies	8
Social Studies	10

Frequently Asked Questions

Do all students need to participate in state assessments?

Yes. With the passage of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, there is no longer a question of whether students will participate in statewide testing; the question is how they will participate.

Do all IEP goals need to be linked to an Ohio Academic Content Standard?

No. Every student in Ohio will receive instruction aligned to the Ohio Academic Content Standards. In addition, each student has a variety of learning needs that may or may not be related to the standards and that is appropriate.

Who determines which students will participate in the AASWD?

Decisions concerning a student's participation in statewide and district-wide assessment are made at least annually by each student's IEP team. The State of Ohio provides IEP teams with guidelines for participation in the AASWD.

Who participates in Ohio's AASWD?

Ohio's AASWD was developed for students with significant cognitive disabilities. Participation in the AASWD is not based solely on disability condition, achievement level, school attendance or social/cultural factors. For further information, refer to Chapter 2 of the AASWD Administration Manual on the ODE Web site at <http://www.ode.state.oh.us>, keyword search *Alternate Assessment* or follow menu links from Testing and Assessments to Alternate Assessments.

Does the 1% "cap" limit the number of students who take the AASWD?

Federal regulations under the No Child Left Behind Act place a cap only on the total number of AASWD scores that may be counted as proficient towards adequate yearly progress (AYP) accountability calculations for school districts. This cap has been established at an amount not to exceed one percent of the total tested population. Ohio policy also applies this cap to state accountability calculations for school districts. Under certain conditions, districts may request a waiver of the application of the one percent cap to their accountability results on an annual basis.

How do students in ungraded programs participate in the AASWD?

If a student is currently assigned to a grade for the purposes of the Education Management Information System (EMIS), the student should participate in assessments according to this grade classification.

Students who currently are not assigned to a grade should be assigned to a grade level on the basis of their chronological age and participate in assessments with their same-

age peers.

For example, students at the beginning of these grades are approximately these ages:

Grade 3.....Ages 8 to 9
Grade 4.....Ages 9 to 10
Grade 5.....Ages 10 to 11
Grade 6.....Ages 11 to 12
Grade 7.....Ages 12 to 13
Grade 8.....Ages 13 to 14
Grade 9.....Ages 14 to 15
Grade 10.....Ages 15 to 16

Should students who are not expected to do well on the grade-level general assessments participate in the AASWD?

The decision about a student’s participation in the AASWD must not be made on the basis of the student’s “perceived probability” of poor achievement on the general assessments. As many students as possible should participate in the general assessments.

Can students participate in the general assessment in one content area (e.g., mathematics) and participate in the AASWD in another content area (e.g., reading)?

No. If a student can participate in any part of the general assessment, then he or she should take the entire general assessment with accommodations as needed. As many students as possible should participate in the general assessment.

When is an AASWD conducted?

The AASWD is conducted over a period of several months, beginning in the fall or winter of the school year. The final Collections of Evidence (COEs) are submitted to the scoring contractor in March.

Who assembles the Collection of Evidence (COE)?

The Collection of Evidence (COE) is collected and assembled by the educators who work with the students. The responsibility for the AASWD process should be shared by IEP team members. Joint planning and a common timeline for instruction and assessment will help special and general educators, related service providers and parents collaborate and complete the AASWD process.

Who scores the AASWD?

The AASWDs follow the same procedures for scoring as Ohio’s general assessments. The AASWDs are scored by trained scorers in a central location.

Who receives the results of the AASWD?

The achievement levels of AASWD participants will be combined with those of general assessment participants. Score results are reported to districts of residence within 60

days of test submission. Districts report individual results to parents of participants in the general and AASWDs. The achievement levels of all students are used for school, district, and state accountability and are a part of the Local Report Card.

What criteria will be used to score the Collection of Evidence (COE)?

The COE will be scored across four categories, known as domains: Performance, Instructional Context, Independence, and Settings and Interactions.

How do teachers get training and technical assistance to administer the AASWD?

State Support Teams (SSTs) in Ohio provide training and technical assistance for school districts in the planning and administration of the AASWD.

Resources

- Ohio Department of Education Web page for the AASWD, including alternate assessment manuals and other related resources, at: <http://www.ode.state.oh.us>, keyword search *Alternate Assessment* or follow menu links from Testing and Assessments to Alternate Assessments.

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