

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

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## ***Background***

### ***What are state assessments?***

Achievement assessments measure students on what they know and are able to do. They replace Ohio's proficiency tests. For the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 school years, the tests for English language arts (reading only) and mathematics will be administered in all grades 3-8. Science will be administered in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades. Students in the 10<sup>th</sup> 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 was 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 have to pass all parts of the Ohio Graduation Tests (OGT) to meet the testing requirements to earn an Ohio diploma. The OGT tests are given beginning in 10<sup>th</sup> grade. Students who do not pass have up to three opportunities each year to take the tests in the 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> 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, 2009-10**

<b>Subject Areas</b>	<b>Grade Levels</b>
English Language Arts (ELA):Reading	3
ELA:Reading	4
ELA:Reading	5
ELA:Reading	6
ELA:Reading	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	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 standards-based, aligned to Ohio Academic Content Standards?***

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 [education.ohio.gov](http://education.ohio.gov), keyword search *Alternate Assessment*.

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

Federal regulations under the NCLB 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 1% of the total tested population. Ohio policy also applies this cap to state accountability calculations for school districts. Under certain conditions in some years, the federal government permits Ohio to let districts request a waiver of this 1% cap on an annual basis.

### ***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.

***If a new student arrives in my classroom in February, do I have to do an AASWD for him or her?***

Yes, if a student enrolls in a district at any time prior to the last day to collect evidence and submit it to the scoring vendor, and the student's IEP indicates that he or she is to be assessed using the AASWD, then the district MUST submit a collection of evidence binder for him or her. Depending on the exact timing of the transfer, the "sending" district may have begun to fill the binder. The receiving district should work with the sending district to determine whether some evidence has been collected and to obtain the student's binder so that the assessment can be completed and submitted.

***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

***If a student who takes the AASWD is retained a grade but was proficient on the AASWD the previous year, do they have to take the AASWD again for the same grade level?***

Yes, all students must take the assessment for the grade they are enrolled, even if they took the same assessment the prior year and were proficient.

### ***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.

### ***What is the CoED Software?***

The Collection of Evidence Developer (CoED) software program is developed by consultants working for the State Support Team Region 5. The stand alone program format allows teachers to complete paper documentation of their alternate assessment electronically. Teachers enter the alternate assessment information which then populates into the identified Entry and Evidence Cover Sheets. This reduces teacher time by eliminating repetitive data entry. The CoED software was NOT developed by ODE. The Office of Assessment does endorse the use of the CoED software, but is unable to provide technical support or be held responsible for use of the program. It has been recognized, through much positive feedback, that most teachers who use the software appreciate its ease of use and time saving contribution. The evidence cover sheets generated by the program may be used in lieu of ODE versions of the same forms. However, for the purposes of scoring, ONLY information on the Collection of Evidence Student Answer Document (COESAD) and the evidence itself is used.

For more information or to download the most recent version of the CoED, contact your region's State Support Team or visit <http://www.sst5.k12.oh.us>

### ***When a student is receiving special education services outside his or her district of residence, which district is responsible for that student's AASWD?***

This student's AASWD should be a collaborative effort between the district of service and the district of residence. In most cases, the district of residence is responsible for administrative functions. These include providing the student's SSID number, ordering assessment materials, identifying the district and building IRN numbers within the district of residence, and submitting the completed COE to the test contractors for scoring. The district of service (e.g., MRDD, residential facility, ESC) plans, collects and assembles evidence for the AASWD.

However, in some unique situations (e.g., students placed by the Department of Youth Services, students placed in a Juvenile Detention Center), the student may not count for the district of residence for accountability purposes. For testing purposes, the student scores are sent to the district and school IRNs that are recorded in the student's record in TIDE. It is up to the districts of residence and service, with the assistance of their EMIS coordinators, to identify how the student's scores will be submitted in EMIS.

### ***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.

### ***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.

### ***Who receives the results of the AASWD and how are they reported?***

Student scores are reported to districts within 60 days of test submission. Scores are sent to the district and school whose IRNs are recorded in the student's record in TIDE. It is up to districts to forward the scores to parents.

The achievement levels of AASWD participants will be combined with those of general assessment participants. The achievement levels of all students are used for school, district and state accountability and are part of the Local Report Card. It is the responsibility of districts to determine where each student counts and appropriately have their scores reported in EMIS. The district and school which receive a student's scores from assessment and where the student's scores are ultimately reported in EMIS are separate issues.

### ***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.

### ***What about the new 2% Modified Assessment?***

Adopted final federal regulations (effective 5/9/07) and guidance (7/20/07) provide for alternate assessments based on modified achievement standards (AA-MAS), which provide additional flexibility for states in their assessment and accountability systems. The population for whom such assessments would be appropriate is NOT the same population as students eligible for AA-SWD. The ODE received a federal grant to begin development of the AA-MAS and will conduct field testing of eligible students with disabilities in March 2010 for grades 5-8 and OGT. For AA-MAS eligibility guidelines, go to [education.ohio.gov](http://education.ohio.gov), key word search AA-MAS.

### ***Do third graders who take the AASWD OAA in spring have to take the grade 3 Reading OAA during the previous fall administration?***

No. The students who are eligible for AASWD cannot take a standardized test and provide meaningful information. The AASWD is given over a lengthy period of time, so practically there is no opportunity to collect sufficient third grade reading evidence for a "fall" administration of the AASWD.

### ***Can a student who takes the fall grade 3 Reading OAA take the grade 3 AASWD OAA in the spring?***

No, in most cases. It is possible that an IEP team is unsure about the severity of a student's disabilities in terms of taking standardized tests of academic content and providing meaningful information for a younger student (such as a third grader), and so the IEP team may choose to have such a student take the OAA for third grade reading one time, in order to establish the student's level of achievement, and then reconvene and decide that the AASWD is the most appropriate test participation for the student. However, second grade diagnostic measures, released test forms and practice tests for grade 3 reading OAA are readily available and should be used locally to help guide the IEP team in making this determination prior to the fall grade 3 reading administration.

***Can a student who takes the regular OGT in grade 10 take the AASWD OGT the following year?***

No, in nearly all cases. A tenth grade student whose IEP team has determined that the regular OGT is an appropriate testing option should be able to participate a second time in the regular OGT, unless some traumatic event has affected the student.

***Can a student take both a regular OAA or OGT test AND the AASWD in the SAME year?***

No. There are no circumstances (beyond the scenario described above) where this is allowable. Test vendor records for the regular OAA/OGT and the AASWD are annually audited to monitor compliance with this requirement.

***Resources***

• Ohio Department of Education Web page for the AASWD, including alternate assessment manuals and other related resources, at [education.ohio.gov](http://education.ohio.gov), keyword search *Alternate Assessment*.

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