



JANUARY 2019 LEGISLATIVE BRIEF: OKLAHOMA ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENT PROGRAM (OAAP)

WHAT IS IT?

Students with disabilities are to be included in all state and district-wide assessments in accordance with the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) (34 CFR §200.6), the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (34 CFR §300.160) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (34 CFR Part 104). Assessment accommodations are determined based on the student's needs. Those accommodations may only be used for state assessment purposes if they are used regularly by the student during instruction and/or classroom testing. The Individualized Education Program (IEP) team determines how the student will participate in state and district-wide assessments – with or without accommodations, or by means of an alternate assessment.

The Oklahoma Alternate Assessment Program (OAAP), a component of the Oklahoma School Testing Program (OSTP), measures the academic achievement of alternate achievement standards, which differ in complexity from the Oklahoma Academic Standards (OAS). The OAAP is intended only for those students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who meet state-established criteria. In addition to ensuring that students meet criteria, the IEP team must determine that the OAAP is the most appropriate assessment for the student. Federal accountability requirements allow only 1% of all tested students in the state to participate in the OAAP. In the 2017-2018 school year, 5,969 students took the OAAP.

The OAAP mirrors the general assessment system in the grade levels and subjects assessed. Students enrolled in grades 3-8 and 11 are currently assessed in English language arts and math through the Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) Alternate Assessment System. Students in grades 5, 8 and 11 are also assessed in science and students in grade 11 are assessed in U.S. History through the DLM Alternate Assessment System.

HOW DID IT COME ABOUT?

The 1997 reauthorization of IDEA explicitly required the participation of students with disabilities in state and district-wide assessments. States were required to develop an alternate assessment for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who were unable to participate in the general assessment.

In 2002, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) added additional accountability requirements for states. The 2004 IDEA reauthorization added the requirement for schools to publicly report the progress of their students. In response, Oklahoma created the Oklahoma Alternate Assessment Program (OAAP) (70 O.S. §1210.508-3, OAC 210:10-13-11), which used a portfolio approach to assess content knowledge in all tested subject areas.

WHAT'S NEW?

The OAAP added the Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) Alternate Assessment System in 2011, which has now replaced the portfolio in measuring content knowledge in science, mathematics and English language arts. A high school U.S. History assessment is currently in development as well.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why do we assess special education students?

Denying students the ability to participate in state and district-wide assessments constitutes a denial of a free and appropriate public education (FAPE). Students with disabilities must receive a FAPE in the least restrictive environment and receive services, such as accommodations, that provide them access to the general education curriculum.

Is Oklahoma required to assess its special education students?

Yes, by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and state law (70 O.S. § 1210.508).

What is an accommodation?

A test accommodation is a change in the way a test is administered or in the way a student responds to test questions. Similar to instructional accommodations, test accommodations are intended to offset the effects of a student's disability and to provide him/her with the opportunity to demonstrate knowledge and skills on state-wide assessments.

The right of a student with a disability to receive allowable accommodations is protected by both federal and state laws. The student's current IEP/504 plan must specify precisely which test accommodation(s) he/she will receive.

What is the cost for administering the OAAP?

For FY19, the total cost to administer the OAAP is \$1,739,112. Federal funds allocated to states through the IDEA are used for the development and provision of the OAAP (34 CFR §300.704(b)(4)(x)).

WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION?

- [Oklahoma Alternate Assessment Program \(OAAP\)](https://sde.ok.gov/assessment): sde.ok.gov/assessment
- [OSDE Special Education Department](https://sde.ok.gov/special-education): sde.ok.gov/special-education
- [Oklahoma School Testing Program \(OSTP\) Accommodations for Students with an IEP or Section 504 Plan](https://bit.ly/2C4qpWy): bit.ly/2C4qpWy