

Essential Skills

Essential Skills Achievement Standard on Smarter Balanced

Overview

The Essential Skills graduation requirements were adopted by the State Board of Education in 2008.

Three primary assessment options by which students can demonstrate proficiency in each of the Essential Skills to fulfill this graduation requirement follow.

- 1) Statewide assessment (OAKS through 2013-14; Smarter Balanced assessment starting in 2014-15¹);
- 2) Other standardized tests (such as SAT, ACT, etc.); and
- 3) Work samples (local performance assessments scored using the official state scoring guides).

Students may demonstrate proficiency in the required Essential Skills using any of the assessment options and need evidence from only one assessment option per Essential Skill. *All assessment options must require equivalent achievement standards to pass.*

As Oregon shifts from its current statewide assessment, OAKS, to the Smarter Balanced assessments in English language arts and Math in 2014-15, ODE must establish *equivalent levels of rigor* on the grade 11 Smarter Balanced assessments relative to the “meets” achievement standards on the OAKS.

Oregon Department of Education (ODE) plans to use information from three methods to establishing the performance level on the Smarter Balanced scale that represents an equivalent level of rigor to the current OAKS “meets” achievement standards. Across all methods, ODE will be looking for strong confirmatory evidence of equivalent rigor.

Methods for Establishing Equivalent Levels of Rigor

- **Direct Linking: OAKS to Smarter Balanced**

Student-level Smarter Balanced field test data will be delivered to ODE. The format of those data is unclear at this time, although ODE anticipates it will include raw student scores and difficulty values for all items that meet technical requirements. Once Oregon has access to those data, ODE will create a direct link to student performance on OAKS in order to understand the relationship between scores on the two assessments.

- **Qualitative Standards Verification**

ODE will engage a panel of Oregon educators in a qualitative standard verification process. Participants will examine documentation regarding the Smarter Balanced assessments and use their professional judgment to identify the performance level on the Smarter Balanced scale that represents an equivalent level of rigor to the current OAKS “meets” achievement standards.

¹ Grade 12 retest on OAKS Reading, Writing, and Mathematics will be available in 2014-15.

Essential Skills Graduation Requirements: Statewide assessment transition planning

The purpose of the Qualitative Standard Verification will be to mitigate the concerns below.

- **There is variation between OAKS and Smarter Balanced in the constructs.**
 - One test is a largely multiple choice test, while the other includes multiple choice, short answer (constructed response), and full performance tasks.
 - The content standards measured by the Smarter Balanced assessments differ from Oregon's content standards in significant respects.
- **Linking studies use data from the Smarter Balanced field test rather than the operational assessment.**
 - The linking studies intended to determine concurrent validity will be based on results from Smarter Balanced assessments, which are still in the process of establishing technical quality. The Smarter Balanced field tests were not designed (or validated) for making high-stakes individual student decisions; rather, their purpose is to create the new vertical scales and calibrate the items that will be used operationally in 2014-15.
 - The Smarter Balanced field test administration in spring 2014 carried no stakes for students or educators, thus differences in student motivation may skew the data used in the linking studies.
- **Common Core implementation varies across districts, creating unequal and limited opportunity to learn prior to the Smarter Balanced field test.**
 - The Common Core State Standards are still in their infancy. Districts in Oregon have not had a strong incentive to implement the Common Core, due to accountability being based on OAKS results. A tremendous amount of professional development will be necessary before the impact of the Common Core will be felt, and it is likely that districts vary in terms of the readiness to implement the Common Core.

Essential Skills Graduation Requirements: Statewide assessment transition planning

TIMELINE and PROCESS

	Month	Transition Methodology Activity	State Board Engagement	Assessment of Essential Skills Review Panel Engagement	Smarter Balanced Activity
2014	April				Field test admin.
	May				
	June				
	July				
	August		Informational update		
	September			Update and discuss	
	October				
	November	Develop qualitative standards verification methodology			
	December		Informational update		Field test results
2015	January	Conduct direct linking study using field test results			
	February				
	March		Informational update	Update and discuss	
	March	Conduct qualitative standard setting			
	April			Update and discuss	
	May	Collect feedback on Essential Skills achievement standard	Informational update		Grade 11 test admin.
	June		1 st read of SBAC Essential Skills achievement standard		
	July			Update and discuss	
	August		Adoption* 2		Grade 11 test results
	September				
	October				
	November	Revisit Essential Skills achievement standard based on first year of operational data			
December					

² This represents the earliest date by which adoption could occur; it does not indicate *that* adoption will occur on this date.