

Executive Numbered Memo 001-2012-13 – High School Writing Assessment Eligibility

September 27, 2012

TO: Superintendents, Principals, and Testing Coordinators

RE: High School Writing Assessment Eligibility

Summary: For the 2012-13 school year, OAKS Writing will be available to students enrolled in grades 11 and 12 who have not yet met or exceeded the standard.

During the 2011 legislative session, the Oregon Legislature approved significant cuts to the Oregon Department of Education (ODE)'s operating budget. As part of these cuts, the Legislature voted to suspend the funding for the Writing Performance Assessment (including the Extended Writing Assessment) at grades 4 and 7 and to restrict eligibility to take the high school Writing assessment only to students currently enrolled in grade 11 who had not yet met or exceeded the writing standard.

The majority of this year's seniors belong to the 2009-10 9th grade cohort, which is the first cohort required to demonstrate proficiency in the Essential Skill of Writing in order to receive a regular or modified high school diploma. Based on concerns expressed by both ODE staff and the field about providing these students with sufficient opportunity to meet this graduation requirement, ODE has collaborated with the Legislature to expand eligibility to the high school writing assessment to include students enrolled in grade 12 who have not yet met or exceeded the standard. For 2012-13, eligible 11th grade students will have one opportunity to be assessed in either the winter or the spring test window and may either take the online or the paper-based assessment, but not both. Eligible 12th grade students may take either the online or paper-based assessment but may only test during the winter test window. All high school writing assessments will be scored by at least two raters. The high school Extended Writing Assessment will continue to be paper-based only and will be scored as in prior years.

Because scores from the winter writing test window will not be available until mid-April and scores from the Extended Writing Assessment will not be available until early-June, ODE strongly encourages districts to continue administering work samples to 12th grade students needing to demonstrate proficiency in the Essential Skill of Writing for graduation purposes. To support districts in carrying out this option, ODE staff will be offering a wide array of official state scoring guide training sessions (delivered via WebEx) throughout the 2012-13 school year. These sessions are designed to train school/district personnel to provide professional development on Essential Skills assessments, particularly work sample task development and scoring guide calibration training, using a "train-the-trainer" model.

If you have additional questions regarding the OAKS Writing assessment or official state scoring guide training opportunities, please contact Derek Brown at 503-947-5841.

If you have additional questions regarding the Extended Writing Assessment, please contact Brad Lenhardt at 503-947-5755.