

READY SCHOOLS, SAFE LEARNERS

GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOL YEAR 2020–21

Assessment Frequently Asked Questions

Updated: January 18, 2021

The purpose of this FAQ is to provide clarity on topics related to assessment.

1. Which federal and state assessment requirements remain in effect for the 2020-21 school year?

All federal and state assessment requirements, listed below, remain in place for 2020-21 and must be adhered to:

- Every Student Succeeds Act: [ESSA, Section 1111 \(b\)](#)
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act evaluation requirements: [IDEA Section 300.304](#)
- Oregon Statewide Assessment System: [ORS 329.485](#)
- Administration of statewide assessments: [OAR 581-022-2100](#)
- Individual student assessment and reporting: [OAR 581-022-2270](#)
- Identification of students who are talented and gifted: [OAR 581-022-2325](#)
- Universal risk factors for dyslexia: [OAR 581-022-2445](#)
- Local Performance Assessments at Grades 3 - 8 and High School: [OAR 581-022-2115](#)
- Nationally-Normed Assessment [ORS 329.488](#)*¹

ODE, in partnership with school districts, remain responsible for ensuring these requirements are met. This applies to all instructional models within RSSL: On-Site, Hybrid, and Comprehensive Distance Learning. Districts, schools, and public

¹ Local Performance Assessment and ORS 329.488 suspensions are on the consent agenda for the State Board of Education the week of January 19, 2021.

charter schools may need to support special education assessment in many different modes outside of typical formal, standardized assessment approaches, including the use of developmental continua, learning progressions, progress markers, and other frames of reference informed by research. Those approaches may be required when formal assessment approaches are not feasible.

2. Which federal and state assessment requirements have been waived for the 2020-21 school year?

As of October 2020, the following state assessment requirements have been waived for the 2020-21 school year:

- Kindergarten Assessment: [OAR 581-022-2130](#)
- Essential Skills Graduation Requirement : [OAR 581-022-2115](#)

The waiver for Essential Skills applies only to current seniors and juniors who have an early graduation plan in place to graduate in 2021.

3. What is most important to consider when planning for assessment in this atypical school year?

It is most important to leverage [formative assessment practices](#) and appropriately use [interim assessment systems](#). Formative assessment practices hold the most power for driving learning, as evidence of learning is brought to light in the moment and can guide student and educator practices. Student self-assessment is the cornerstone of formative assessment practices, supported by peer and teacher descriptive feedback. Interim assessments can be administered periodically to inform teacher practice and have flexible uses. Optimal uses of interim assessments occur after the content to be assessed had been provided during instruction. Interim assessment results can then be used to identify areas that require further instruction as well as areas where mastery has been attained.

As elaborated in [Ready Schools, Safe Learners](#) and [Comprehensive Distance Learning](#), prioritizing relationships and classroom routines prior to administering formal assessments is a necessity.

NOTE: It is important to emphasize that no single assessment should be used as a gatekeeper that effectively keeps students from participating in a program, course sequence, etc. This expectation applies to all placement tests and is particularly

concerning in the area of middle-grade mathematics placement tests. Multiple sources should be used to make course placement decisions, using multiple modes of assessment to ensure that the mode of assessment is not affecting the placement decision (which is likely high stakes for the student).

4. What is required for Dyslexia Screening and how do districts screen during CDL?

Oregon's dyslexia screening requirements remain in place for 2020-21. Districts need to screen every student who is first enrolled at a public school in the state for kindergarten or first grade for risk factors of dyslexia in accordance with [OAR 581-022-2445](#). Districts may choose to screen students during [Limited In-Person Instruction](#). Districts may also choose to employ distance learning screening when in-person instruction is not available. Many test vendors have developed administration procedures and expectations that are specific to appropriate uses of the instruments that they sponsor within online/distance learning contexts; adhering to those procedures and expectations is recommended.

Additionally, [OAR 581-022-2445](#) provides the requirements for completing a family history screening. One of these requirements is that the screening will be completed and documented by the classroom teacher, data-review team member, or designee of the team. In the event that a district is not able to successfully complete the screening for family history of reading difficulties, the district must demonstrate that reasonable efforts were made (i.e., documented attempts to reach families) to complete the screening. See the [ODE Dyslexia website](#) for more information. ODE expects this process to take time and strategic use of resources. Good faith efforts on the part of districts to meet the needs of student early literacy supports are paramount.

5. What is the status of statewide assessment administration planning?

ODE developed a statewide assessment and accountability waiver, which was open for public comment from December 1, 2020 through January 11, 2021. ODE will ask the United States Department of Education to waive assessment requirements for English language arts, mathematics, and science, for both general and alternate assessments. ODE is also requesting suspension of all accountability requirements. It is not yet known how the U.S. Department of Education will respond to state waiver requests. The summative assessments

remain a federal requirement and will only be suspended upon approval of the waiver by the U.S. Department of Education. ODE will make the English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA) annual assessment available. Students who can safely participate on-site, along with parental request and support, may participate in the ELPA. In lieu of summative assessments, ODE is developing the Student Educational Equity Development Survey (SEEDS) which will provide supplemental information about educational inputs and pedagogical processes that can be leveraged to increase outcomes for all students over time (see Question #6 below for additional information about SEEDS).

6. What is the Student Educational Equity Development Survey (SEEDS)?

Pursuant to our statewide assessment and accountability waiver request for 2020-21, ODE has developed and plans to pilot a series of Student Educational Equity Development Surveys (SEEDS) in spring 2021. The SEEDS design is founded in current research and literature, as well as input from education and community partners. The SEEDS measures four primary constructs in Grades 3-8: 1) *Access to Learning Resources*, 2) *Opportunity to Learn*, 3) *Self-Efficacy/Beliefs*, and 4) *Belonging*. The pilot SEEDS will be administered to Oregon students in Grades 3-8 and 11. Surveys focus on reading in Grades 3 & 6, mathematics in Grades 4 & 7, and science in Grades 5 & 8. The high school version of the survey includes the four primary constructs, including all three content areas (ELA, mathematics, and science) and adds Extra-curricular Engagement and Post-Secondary Planning. Additional questions address *Well-rounded Education* and *Career and Technical Education access*, as well. The 2021 pilot will be made available in Spanish and English, with plans to expand the items to additional language groups based on student population percentages thereafter. The SEEDS is composed of non-secure items that will be made publicly available annually. Statewide summary results, disaggregated by student groups (race/ethnicity, English learner, special education status, and socio-economic status) from the pilot 2021 administration will be published by grade level in a comprehensive report that ODE will develop in the summer of 2021, based upon analysis of data from the 2021 administration.

7. What are the expectations for administering the ELPA Screener and ELPA Summative?

Comprehensive and updated guidance regarding administration of the [English Language Proficiency Screener and Summative in 2020-21](#) was published on January 15, 2021.

8. How is ODE supporting PSAT administration for 10th-graders in 2020-21?

[ORS 329.488](#) directs ODE to provide a statewide opportunity for Oregon's 10th graders to access a nationally-normed college entrance practice exam. In previous years, ODE has contracted with the College Board for the PSAT administration; however, ODE's contract with the College Board expired on June 30, 2020. ODE recommended that the State Board waive these requirements for students who are in 10th grade in the 2020-21 school year on October 15, 2020. The topic is on the Consent Agenda for the State Board meeting on January 21, 2021.

9. Where can students take the GED tests and do GED Option Programs have additional responsibilities?

Students who are interested in taking the GED in Oregon should be referred to the [Oregon GED website](#) for information, including the availability of test sites that are available in their area.

For GED Option Programs that are in CDL and are also GED testing sites, [ODE's Third-Party Assessment Guidance](#) must be followed. If the GED Option Program is not a testing site, then students will follow the health and safety protocols of the site, in alignment with RSSL requirements.

10. Is the test fee program still in place for AP and IB exams?

Due to the state revenue forecast, the Oregon Legislature made significant budget reductions. The AP/IB Test Fee Program was one of the programs impacted by these reductions, and the second year of the Test Fee Program was reduced. Please see the AP/IB Examination Fee Funding Update for the 2020-2021 School Year for information about fees.

For specific information about spring exams, please refer to the [AP Examination website](#) and [IB website](#).

11. How can districts in Comprehensive Distance Learning support students taking Technical Skills Assessment, Industry Recognized Credentials, college-level course exams, AP, IB, or other national exams?

As shared above in Question #7, use of school facilities for assessments must be consistent with all relevant requirements including [Ready Schools, Safe Learners](#) and related requirements if *during* the school day and with [Early Learning Division guidance](#) if *outside* of the typical school day. Supporting students in demonstrating readiness for their next steps after high school is a critical function of K-12 schools. Every attempt to continue to offer opportunities for students to earn credentials and support transition to career and college should be maintained.

12. When planning assessment practices for individual student needs, what guidance applies and when? Which factors drive the determination of which guidance to apply?

Local and individual context necessarily drives these determinations. While all guidance for the 2020-21 school year must be followed as applicable, a number of factors can support school leaders as they make appropriate decisions regarding assessment. These factors include:

- **Timeframe:** Is the assessment being administered during or after school hours?
- **Location:** Will the administration take place at school or in another facility?
- **Type of Assessment:** What is the purpose of the assessment?

It is important to note that school or district sponsored assessment sites open using [Limited In-Person Instruction](#) while in [Comprehensive Distance Learning](#) must fully comply with all relevant RSSL guidance.

13. What recommendations does ODE have to offer to help districts meet the assessment needs of their students in 2020-21?

The following recommendations are offered to help districts plan for successful use of time, space, and personnel in preparing for assessment administration within the limited in-person requirements.

- Prioritize human and physical resources to privilege assessment administrations for students for whom the assessment results have individual impacts (e.g., dyslexia screener, IDEA evaluations, ELPA Screener/Summative)

- Work with families/caregivers to support a successful test administration by communicating clear expectations for families/caregivers if they are present during the assessment process