



Testing for Students in Special Education

Students in special education have an Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), which guide how the student will participate in state testing. For specific questions, please contact your local school. For general questions, please e-mail waas@k12.wa.us or visit www.k12.wa.us/assessment/altassess.aspx. You can also download, “*How Students in Special Education Participate in State Testing*” at <http://www.k12.wa.us/Resources/pubdocs/SpecialEdTesting.pdf>.

Washington Alternate Assessment System (WAAS) Portfolio

Students who submitted a Washington Alternate Assessment System Portfolio (WAAS-Portfolio) in the spring or who were unable to submit a portfolio in the spring will have an opportunity to submit a portfolio in November.

Locally Determined Assessments (LDA)

Twelfth-graders receiving special education services now have another way to meet the graduation requirement. The Locally Determined Assessment (LDA) System helps those students for whom the WASL/HSPE, the HSPE-Basic (passing is set at Level 2) or the Developmentally Appropriate Proficiency Exam (DAPE) are not appropriate tools to assess their skills, but neither is the Washington Alternate Assessment System (WAAS) Portfolio. These students need modified achievement standards. Students who are likely in this group read and comprehend adapted or below-grade level text, master a limited number of grade-level or below grade-level concepts and skills, and communicate orally and/or in writing.

To use an LDA to meet the graduation requirement, a student must:

- Be in grade 12
- Have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) for reading, writing and/or math
- Use one of three approved educational achievement tests
- Be on track with or have finished all other state and local graduation requirements (e.g., credits, culminating project, high school and beyond plan, etc.); **AND**
- Have a score on an approved standardized assessment and generated a Grade Equivalent (GE) score at or above 3.8. The score must have been obtained in either the 11th or 12th grade.

Note: Students with a Section 504 Plan are not eligible to use an LDA.

For more information on the LDA, visit: <http://www.k12.wa.us/assessment/altassess.aspx>



Waivers for Students With the Most Severe Cognitive Disabilities

Districts may make local decisions about the appropriateness of course credits, high school and beyond plans, and senior culminating projects for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. State laws and rules ([RCW 28A.155.045](#) and [WAC 180-51-115](#)) also acknowledge the critical role of the IEP team in determining the most appropriate high school assessments for students with disabilities. However, at this time, there is no mechanism by which districts may waive the reading, writing, and math assessment requirements for high school graduation.

OSPI has established a process and criteria for waiving the assessment requirements for students whose cognitive functioning is the most severely impaired. These are students who function at an “awareness level” of cognitive development. This level of cognitive development is extremely rare. Students at the awareness level exhibit the following:

- The student has limited intentionality and is **not** able to communicate using pre-symbolic strategies
- The student’s reaction to environmental stimuli may be limited to crying, opening eyes, movement, etc.
- The student’s behavior is not under his or her control but reflects a general physical state (e.g., hungry, wet, sleepy).
- The student may be conscious (awake) during limited times each day.
- Parents, teachers, or other adults are needed to interpret the child’s state from behaviors such as sounds, body movements, and facial expressions.

Please see OSPI Bulletin 015-08 at <http://www.k12.wa.us/BulletinsMemos/bulletins2008.aspx> for complete information.

Kevin’s Law and Graduation

Kevin’s law ([RCW 28A.155.170](#)), approved in 2007 by the Legislature, allows certain students receiving special education services to participate in high school graduation ceremonies with their peers. The law requires each school district that operates a high school to establish a policy and procedure to determine which students receiving special education services can participate in graduation ceremonies after four years, even if they plan to remain in school for several more years. Students allowed to participate under district policy will receive a certificate of attendance during graduation ceremonies and then, if earned, a diploma when they have completed their schooling.