



How Students in Special Education Participate in State Testing

This information sheet provides answers to frequently asked questions about students in special education and their participation in the state testing system, including the grades 3-8 Measurements of Student Progress (MSP), the High School Proficiency Exam (HSPE), End-of-Course (EOC) exams and Washington Alternate Assessment System (WAAS). Each student in special education has an Individualized Education Program (IEP), which guides how the student will participate in state testing. For help with additional questions, please e-mail waas@k12.wa.us, call (360) 725-6089 or visit www.k12.wa.us/assessment/altassess.aspx.

Frequently Asked Questions: **All Grades**

How do students in special education participate in the state testing system?

The following options are available to students in grades 3-8 and 10:

- Take the **MSP, HSPE or EOCs**: With or without accommodations.
- Use the **MSP/HSPE/EOC Basic**: Students take the MSP, HSPE or EOCs at grade level – with or without accommodations – but IEP teams adjust passing criteria from Proficient (Level 3) to Basic (Level 2). A Level 2 score cannot be used to meet state and federal accountability, but can be used for graduation.
- Use the **WAAS-Portfolio**: Students with significant cognitive challenges can show their skills and knowledge through a collection of their work.

The following additional options are available to students in grades 11 and/or 12 who did not pass a regular exam and whose IEP teams have determined that regular high school exam(s) are not appropriate toward meeting graduation requirements:

- Take the **WAAS-Developmentally Appropriate Proficiency Exam (WAAS-DAPE)**: Students take a state test – with or without accommodations – at a grade level that best matches their abilities. Students pass by earning Proficient (Level 3).
- **Locally Determined Assessments**: Twelfth-graders receiving special education services qualify for this option. The Locally Determined Assessments (LDA) helps those students for whom the HSPE (with or without accommodations), 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 WAAS-Portfolio. These students need modified achievement standards. Students likely in this group master only a limited number of grade-level or below grade-level concepts and skills and communicate orally and/or in writing.

What accommodations are available to students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP)?

Accommodations include changes in setting, the way tests and questions are presented and how students respond. Some examples include a scribe for students unable to write their own responses, physical supports (e.g., special pencil, large-type test), time extensions, etc. All testing accommodations must be consistent with the accommodations a student receives on a regular basis at school and must be included in a student's IEP.

Who determines how a student participates in the state assessment system?

The IEP team, which includes a student's parents or guardians, decides what testing tool to use based on the student's needs in each content area. The testing tool used may vary by content area. As noted above, in grades 3-8 and once in high school the IEP team determines the most appropriate state assessment option for the student. For example, an 11th-grader might take the 7th-grade DAPE for writing and take the HSPE with accommodations in reading. These decisions, as well as any decisions about accommodations for the student, are made during the annual IEP team meeting or, if the IEP team agrees, during a meeting closer to the testing period. All decisions must be documented in the student's IEP.

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What information about the MSP/HSPE/EOC/WAAS must be documented in a student's IEP?

1. A statement of any accommodations to be provided for state assessments. The statement must address:
 - When these services will begin.
 - The anticipated frequency, location and duration of those services.
2. If the IEP team determines that the student will participate in the WAAS-Portfolio alternate assessment, the IEP must include a statement that names the assessment chosen and why that assessment is appropriate for the student.

What happens when a family and a school district disagree about how to assess a student?

A family may use dispute resolution to resolve any disagreement they have with a school district regarding student participation in state or district assessments. For information on these options, please visit:

www.k12.wa.us/SpecialEd/mediation.aspx.

FAQs: High School Graduation Requirement

How does a student in special education earn a Certificate of Academic Achievement (CAA)?

Students earn a Certificate of Achievement (CAA) by passing the HSPE/EOCs (with or without accommodations) at the Proficient level and/or the CAA Options in reading, writing and math. CAA Options are state-approved alternatives to the HSPE and are available after a student takes the HSPE at least once. The CAA Options are:

- **Advanced Placement and College Admission Test Scores:** Students use scores earned on the SAT, ACT and Advanced Placement tests to show they have key knowledge and skills.
- **Collection of Evidence:** With the help of a teacher, students compile a set of classroom work samples showing they meet grade-level academic standards in reading and/or writing.
- **GPA Comparison:** A student's grades in either math or English courses are compared to the grades of other students who took the same courses AND passed the HSPE/EOCs.

How does a student in special education earn a Certificate of Individual Achievement (CIA)?

For graduation purposes, IEP teams may determine that students are not appropriately assessed by passing the required tests in one or more of the required content areas at the proficient level. The options available for earning a CIA are:

- Use the **MSP/HSPE/EOC and pass at Basic (Level 2)**: Students take the MSP, HSPE or EOCs at grade level – with or without accommodations – but IEP teams adjust passing criteria from Proficient (Level 3) to Basic (Level 2).
- Use the **WAAS-Portfolio**: Students with significant cognitive challenges can show their skills and knowledge through a collection of their work.
- Take the **WAAS-Developmentally Appropriate Proficiency Exam (WAAS-DAPE)**: Students take a state test – with or without accommodations – at a grade level that best matches their abilities. Students pass by earning Proficient (Level 3).
- Locally Determined Assessments**: Twelfth-graders receiving special education services qualify for this option. The Locally Determined Assessments (LDA) helps those students for whom the HSPE (with or without accommodations), 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 WAAS-Portfolio. These students need modified achievement standards. Students likely in this group master only a limited number of grade-level or below grade-level concepts and skills and communicate orally and/or in writing.

How does a student in special education earn a high school diploma without a CIA?

For students through the class of 2012 to be eligible for a diploma, they must meet state reading and writing standards and earn two math credits after 10th grade, if they do not pass the high school math exam at Basic (Level 2) or Proficient (Level 3). Students in the classes of 2013 and 2014, must earn a CAA or CIA by passing reading, writing and math. Beginning with the class of 2015, students must pass reading, writing, math and science.

Do students get different diplomas if they earn a CAA or CIA or no certificate at all?

No. All students get a "regular" diploma. The student transcript will indicate whether an individual student earned a CAA or CIA, or neither.

If parents refuse to have their child participate in state testing, can the child earn a diploma?

No. Students must complete all state and local school district graduation requirements to graduate.