



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) and Washington Alternate Assessment System (WAAS). Please note that the MSP and HSPE replaced the WASL beginning in the 2009-10 school year. 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 assessment system?

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

- Take the **MSP or HSPE**: With or without accommodations.
- Take the **HSPE-Basic**: Students take the HSPE 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 unable to participate in paper-and-pencil tests show their skills and knowledge through a collection of their work.

The following additional options are available only to students in grades 11 and 12 who need to meet the state testing graduation requirement:

- Take the **WAAS-Developmentally Appropriate Proficiency Exam (WAAS-DAPE, formerly DAW)**: Students take a WASL – 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 WASL/HSPE (with or without accommodations), the high school HSPE-Basic (passing is set at Level 2) or the Developmentally Appropriate Proficiency Exam (DAPE, formerly DAW) 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 read and comprehend adapted or below-grade level test, master 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 ways tests and questions are presented, and the ways that 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. For example, an 11th-grader might take the 7th-grade Developmentally Appropriate Proficiency Exam 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.

What information about the MSP/HSPE/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 the student will participate in an alternative assessment, 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:

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

FAQs: High School Graduation Requirement

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

Students who do not receive special education services can earn a Certificate of Academic Achievement (CAA). Students in special education earn a CIA. They do so by passing the High School Proficiency Exam (with or without testing accommodations) 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.
- **HSPE/Grades 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.

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

For students in the classes of 2009-12 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.

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 what an individual student earned.

Can a student earn a CAA in one content area and the CIA in another?

No. Students earn a CAA by passing the HSPE and/or the state-approved CAA Options in reading, writing and math. Students who use the HSPE-Basic, WAAS-DAPE, WAAS-Portfolio or the Locally Determined Assessment System to pass any of the required subjects earn a CIA, not a CAA.

Can a student earn a CIA and then take the "regular" HSPE to earn a CAA?

Yes. A student who earns a CIA and wants to pursue a CAA may do so by following the requirements and the options provided to any other student. If the student is unsuccessful at earning the CAA, his/her CIA would still meet the graduation requirement.

Do students who participate in the WAAS-DAPE or Portfolio get retakes if they don't pass?

Yes. Students working toward a CIA have five opportunities to pass each subject (reading, writing and math). Testing windows are in spring (all HSPE and WAAS assessments) and August (HSPE, HSPE-Basic) and November (WAAS-Portfolio and WAAS-DAPE only).

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.