



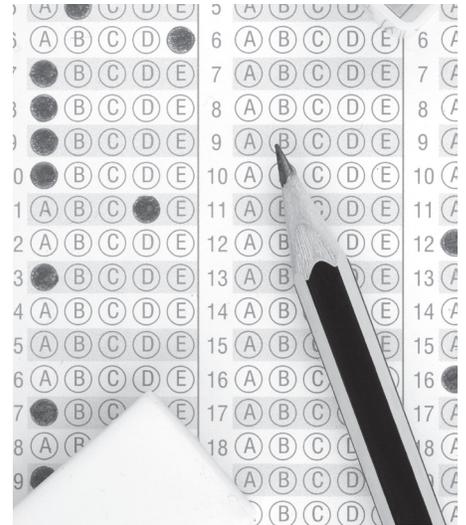
Standardized testing in schools

Standardized testing in schools has recently been featured in local and national news reports. Portland Public Schools would like your family to be fully informed about what standardized tests mean for your student and your school.

A key learning tool

Oregon's statewide assessments, called the Oregon Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (OAKS), are taken by students in grades 3, 5, 8 and 11 to assess Reading, Math, Science and Writing skills. OAKS tests show:

- ▶ How well students have learned what they need to know in each subject. This information helps teachers to plan effective classroom lessons.
- ▶ How well schools are serving students. The state rates your school based on how well students perform on OAKS – including whether enough students take OAKS tests. (The Oregon Department of Education requires that 95 percent of students take OAKS tests at every grade they are offered.)



OAKS tests are just one of the ways teachers assess how well students are doing in school. However, they are important because they are objective, standards-based and comparable across schools and school districts.

A requirement for graduation

- ▶ In Oregon, students are required to show mastery in key areas in order to graduate from high school. Most students show that mastery by passing the Reading and Writing OAKS tests. (The Class of 2014 and beyond must also pass Math tests.)
- ▶ Students are required to take the OAKS tests unless they qualify for an exemption.

Exemptions

State law allows for students to opt out of the tests for only two reasons: for disability or religious reasons. Parental permission is required for a student to opt-out of a test.

Learn more

You can learn more about standardized testing, including student exemptions, at www.ode.state.or.us/home/. If you have questions about standardized testing in Portland Public Schools, please go to www.pps.net/departments/research-evaluation/1487.htm or contact PPS Research, Evaluation & Assessment at jsuggs@pps.net or 503-916-3341.