

Ohio's Learning Standards and State Tests

Ohio students took new state tests in English language arts, math, science and social studies during the 2014-2015 school year, tied to Ohio's Learning Standards. Starting in November, parents will receive reports on their child's results on the tests he or she took. In January 2016, the Ohio School Report Cards will report test results for all districts and schools.

Why has Ohio adopted higher learning standards and new tests?

Colleges and today's careers require more than knowing facts and figures. Therefore, the new tests measure complex, real-world skills such as critical-thinking, problem-solving and writing that are given increased emphasis in Ohio's Learning Standards. This means that scores on the 2014-2015 tests may be lower for some students.

It will take time. While teachers have been gearing up for the new standards for almost four years, the new tests ask questions in different ways. As happens with every new test, scores will start to improve as teachers and students become more familiar with the standards and acquire the skills and knowledge to meet them. Experience shows that students routinely meet higher expectations when schools set them.

What types of questions were on these tests?

This was the first year for computer-based tests. Districts and schools give the tests on computers, in paper format or a combination of both. The tests included questions that require the student to interact with objects, respond to multiple parts of a question, problem solve and explain their answers.

How will my school use test scores?

Scores will help teachers perfect what and how they teach students over time. Your teachers should include other measures, such as class grades, participation, work habits, group projects and homework to complete a picture of your child's academic successes and struggles. They should share this information with you. The school will not use your child's test scores to determine whether your child moves on to the next grade or receives credit for a course. Exceptions are the reading test for the Third Grade Reading Guarantee and end-of-course tests to earn points for graduation.

What are the changes on the 2015-2016 state tests that will benefit my child?

In the 2015-2016 school year, the Ohio Department of Education will develop new tests in mathematics and English language arts with the assistance of Ohio educators. To build these new tests, the department will use its existing contract with the American Institutes for Research (AIR), a well-known test vendor. AIR currently provides Ohio's science and social studies tests. The new English language arts and math tests will be:

- Shorter than those given last school year;
- Given during one period of time, known as a testing window. Schools have a 20-day period to schedule all state tests; schools select the specific days that each student will take tests during this period; and
- High schools will give end-of-course tests at the end of the first semester. Elementary schools will give the grade 3 English language arts test Nov. 30-Dec. 11. All other tests will occur during the second half of the school year, close to the end.

To receive updates on current and future developments with Ohio's State Tests, visit education.ohio.gov/testing-updates.

