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## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Oklahoma School Districts  
**FROM:** State Department of Education  
**SUBJECT:** House Bill 3218 – UPDATED Guidance for School Districts

### House Bill 3218

On July 1, 2016, a new bill went into effect that makes several changes to Oklahoma’s student assessment and accountability system, including high school graduation requirements. The most significant change is that it is no longer a state requirement for Oklahoma students to pass End-of-Instruction exams in order to graduate with a standard high school diploma.

The Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE) has received several questions from school districts about what the changes in law mean for students who are expected to graduate from now through 2020. While updated information will be provided as it becomes available, this guidance is intended to address the primary questions many districts have about what the new testing requirements will be, how students will qualify for a high school diploma over the next four years, and what changes to expect for the 2016-2017 school year.

### How does HB 3218 change the state graduation requirements?

HB 3218 directs the State Board of Education to establish a new system of assessments that **students entering Grade 9 in 2017-2018** will be required to take to graduate with a standard diploma. The End-of-Instruction (EOI) exams and Achieving Classroom Excellence (ACE) graduation requirements are repealed as of July 1, 2016.

- As of July 1, 2016, achieving a “cut score” on End-of-Instruction exams will no longer be required for graduation eligibility. For the 2016-2017 school year, the EOIs will be replaced with Grade 10 assessments in Math, English Language Arts, and Science. Students also must be tested in U.S. History once during high school, but this is not required to be during Grade 10. **While high school students must participate in the Grade 10 and U.S. History assessments, achieving a certain performance level is not a state graduation requirement.**
- For students who are already in high school or who enter Grade 9 during the 2016-2017 school year, HB 3218 directs districts to “adopt a plan that establishes

the assessment or assessments those students are required to take in order to graduate from a public high school with a standard diploma.”

- While districts may establish the assessment(s) students are required to take to qualify for a diploma, all students must take the Grade 10 tests in English Language Arts, Math, and Science to meet federal requirements. During the **2016-2017 school year only**, 10<sup>th</sup> grade students having a valid Biology I EOI score, may be exempt from taking the Science portion of the Grade 10 test at the discretion of the local district.
- The Retest/Winter/Trimester and Summer testing windows will no longer be necessary. A revised testing schedule will be posted on the OSDE website before the 2016-2017 school year begins.

Beginning with students entering Grade 9 in 2017-2018, to be eligible for a standard diploma each student must take the assessments included in the system that will be adopted by the State Board later this year. So a student will be required to take all required state assessments in order to graduate, but will not be required to achieve a certain score, as was required under the EOI system.

- Districts are required to report assessment score(s) and/or business/industry certification(s) on student transcripts beginning with the 2017-2018 school year, NOT the 2016-2017 school year.

**What will the state graduation requirements be from now until the new requirements adopted by the State Board of Education take effect?**

The **course completion** requirements for receiving an Oklahoma high school diploma have not **changed**. To be eligible for a diploma, students are still required to complete either the standard college preparatory/work ready curriculum, or with parent permission the core curriculum, as listed in 70 O.S. § 11-103.6.

The local plan for graduation requirements adopted by the district board of education **may exceed existing requirements** in state law.

- Some examples of assessments that could be adopted under a local graduation plan are:
  - Any EOI exams a student has already completed
  - ACT, SAT, PSAT/NMSQT
  - State Assessments: OSTP Grade 10
  - District-approved benchmark assessments
  - WorkKeys or equivalent skills-oriented assessments
- Any policy or plan addressing graduation requirements that will apply to students during the 2016-2017 school year should be adopted by the district board of

education before the beginning of the school year, or as soon as possible after the school year begins, to give students fair notice about the requirements they will be expected to meet.

**How does this affect students who are still completing 2016 graduation requirements?**

Students scheduled to graduate in 2015-2016 who are still completing graduation requirements after July 1, 2016, will need to consult with their district to determine graduation requirements since ACE is no longer in effect. As stated previously, HB 3218 directs districts to “adopt a plan that establishes the assessment or assessments those students are required to take in order to graduate from a public high school with a standard diploma.”

If a student who was scheduled to graduate in 2016 has not completed ACE graduation requirements by July 1, and the school district has not yet adopted a plan for local graduation requirements, OSDE recommends the district board of education make an individual determination regarding the student’s graduation status.

**OSDE encourages school districts to ensure that any students who are in this situation are provided ample opportunities to complete remaining requirements, as determined by the district, and earn their diploma.**

**What changes does HB 3218 make to the assessment and accountability systems?**

**All state assessments will be aligned to the Oklahoma Academic Standards. For the 2016-2017 school year assessments will cover the recently adopted Math and English Language Arts standards.**

HB 3218 directs the State Board of Education to adopt a system of student assessments in compliance with the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA) by the end of 2016, with the new assessment requirements applying to students entering Grade 9 in the 2017-2018 school year (the class of 2021). HB 3218 requires an annual assessment in English Language Arts (ELA) and Math for students in Grades 3 through 8. Writing, as part of the new academic standards, will be included in the English Language Arts assessments. Science assessments will be administered in Grades 5, 8 and 10.

In addition to developing a new assessment system, HB 3218 also directs the State Board of Education to develop a new school accountability plan by January 1, 2017. This plan must comply with ESSA requirements and include the following indicators:

- Student performance on statewide assessments
- Graduation rates for high schools
- An additional academic indicator for elementary and middle schools
- English language proficiency for English learners
- At least one indicator of school quality or student success

If the accountability plan developed by the State Board is approved by the Legislature early in the 2017 legislative session, school report cards for 2017 will be calculated using the new plan. Until a new plan is approved, HB 3218 requires report cards to be calculated using the existing A-F system.