



SHAWNEE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Superintendent

The Changing of Seasons

Fall is a beautiful time of year. It is that time of year when the leaves on trees begin to turn their vibrant colors while others lose their leaves altogether. It is a season of change. As we physically change seasons in Oklahoma; similarly, the State Board of Education is transitioning to a new season of test score benchmarking. Many of us enjoy the warmth of summer temperatures, so that first shift to the brisk, chilly fall temperatures is often a jolt to our system. Likewise, as the State Department of Education begins the release of the new test score benchmarks for schools across the state, it is predicted to be a brisk and windy jolt to our parents, staff and students. The changing of seasons is inevitable, but we take comfort in the fact that the warmth of summer will come again. We believe this to also be true for student performance related to state academic standards and test scores.

Here is what you need to know about these changes:

1. In 2016, Oklahoma began teaching more comprehensive academic standards, which required new, more complex Oklahoma School Testing Program (OSTP) assessments to measure them. The new assessments were given to students in spring 2017, and test results will be released in late fall 2017.
2. Oklahoma assessment scores now track for **college and career readiness** and align with national benchmarks like the SAT, ACT and the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).
3. New assessments require setting new performance levels for English language arts and math in grades 3-8 and 10 and for science in grades 5, 8 and 10. Performance levels, or “cut scores,” are presented in categories: *Advanced, Proficient, *Limited Knowledge, and **Unsatisfactory (*Basic and **Below Basic).*
4. In year 1 – **Nov. 2017** – we will see a significant drop in the number of students reported as Proficient or Advanced. That decrease does **not** mean students are less skilled than last year or that a school is less effective. It means Oklahoma’s scores have been recalibrated to align with the knowledge and skills students need to be ready for college and career.
5. This school year represents a new beginning and **A TOTAL RESET**; no comparison is possible with student or school performance in past years. It will become the baseline for student and school performance as we continue efforts to position **every** Oklahoma student on the leading edge for success.

In the coming months, we will continue to provide ongoing information related to student test scores. Additionally, as we shape our five-year strategic improvement process for our school district these changes will help us realign our focus with how to best deliver educational services to our students. Regardless of the outcome of the releasing of test scores we will work together to provide the best for the students of Shawnee Public Schools. We appreciate your ongoing support and commitment to partner with us during this time of transition.

For more information, check out the following links on the State Department’s website.

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