

NEW STATE MATH ACHIEVEMENT STANDARDS



On Oct. 28, 2010, the Oregon State Board of Education (OSBE) voted to increase math achievement standards (cut scores) of grades 3–8. This is being done because, while many students were meeting or exceeding math benchmarks in elementary and middle school, these scores were not able to predict success for students once they reached high school.

The changes will equate to a seven-point increase to the benchmark level on elementary school tests, a six-point increase in grades 6 and 7, and a four-point increase in grade 8.

What will the new math achievement standards mean to my student?



As a parent of a K–8 student, there is a possibility that your child’s test results will appear to drop. This will likely be the trend initially. Students who met or exceeded last year’s cut scores may not obtain the same rating with the cut score increases. This is not your child’s, or your child’s teachers’, fault. It will take some time to ramp-up teaching to the new standards. It does not mean your child knows less than he/she did the year before.

What are Achievement Standards?



Achievement Standards, also called Cut Scores or Performance Standards, define the amount of knowledge and skills that students must demonstrate in each grade and content area on state tests. These tests are known as the Oregon Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (OAKS) and the state’s goal is for every student to achieve a level of “Meet” or “Exceed.”

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Why is the State Board of Education doing this now, without time for more preparation?



The new standards are necessary to get students ready for new tougher graduation requirements and success after high school. It will also give students a better chance at making the benchmarks when tested on National Common Core Standards (a shared set of clear educational standards for K-12 math and English), which are scheduled to be in place in 2014. The fear was that if the increase in cut scores was put off any longer, the students would not be ready in three years.

How do my student's school and teachers feel about this?



The teachers and administrators are feeling some frustration to have this new challenge to overcome at a time when they already have to find ways to do more with fewer resources. However, they also understand that it is now their responsibility to rise to this challenge and support our students in meeting these new performance standards and becoming successful. They agree this is a positive move forward to help Oregon align with national expectations of college and work readiness.

Is there anything I can do to help my student?



Talk to your student's teachers to see if there are any skill-building lessons you might help with at home. Your encouragement of your child's success and achievements will go a long way in supporting his/her efforts. Please take the time to talk with your child's teachers and school staff about these changes and how to best support your child's learning.

