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STATE OF OKLAHOMA

To: Superintendents, District Test Coordinators, and Special Education Directors

From: Maridyth McBee, Assistant State Superintendent of Assessment and Accountability
Rene Axtell, Assistant State Superintendent of Special Education Services

Date: February 5, 2013

RE: Transition from the Oklahoma Modified Assessment Program (OMAAP), Grades 3-8 and End-of-Instruction (EOI)

The Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE) has been in a state of transition to the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessments since the adoption of the new common core state standards in the Spring of 2009. The purpose of this memo is to clarify changes which will occur regarding the assessment options for students with disabilities. These changes will have an impact upon Individualized Education Programs (IEP), testing and student results.

1. *The US Department of Education under the requirements for the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) will not include the modified assessment as an option for accountability purposes with the implementation of the Common Core:*

- Assessments must be aligned with the Oklahoma's college- and career-ready standards. Because the high-quality assessments that the OSDE is developing through PARCC will better measure the achievement of students with disabilities, there will no longer be a need to use alternate assessments based on modified academic achievement standards.

Accordingly, students with disabilities who may currently be eligible for **alternate assessments based on modified academic achievement standards** must be included in the high-quality assessments based on **grade-level academic achievement standards** that SEA will administer no later than the 2014-2015 school year. In developing its high-quality assessments, the SEA should consider how its general assessments will be accessible to all students to minimize participation in alternate assessments (ESEA Flexibility FAQ August 3rd, 2012, C-15).

2. A change in rigor:

- Under direction from the United States Department of Education (USDE), the State assessments have continued to require Oklahoma students to use higher level thinking skills. The OCCT and OMAAP assessments have increased the cognitive demands on students from previous years.
- Upon receiving the USDE Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) waiver, standards and objectives were renamed the **Oklahoma C³ Standards**. These standards require higher expectations for all students; including students with disabilities. Students with disabilities need access to the general core curriculum in terms of assessment and instruction. This can only be accomplished through using appropriate accommodations offered through daily instruction and the assessment of content knowledge. Modifying the curriculum and assessments does not provide access to the general core curriculum. Accommodations fully address disability related needs while modifications lower academic and achievement expectations.
- Given these considerations, the Oklahoma State Department of Education must begin planning on the elimination of the Oklahoma Modified Alternate Assessment Program (OMAAP) in order to appropriately support students with disabilities through access to the general core curriculum.

What do these changes mean for Oklahoma students with disabilities and assessments during SY 2013-14?

- Instruction should focus on the new **Oklahoma C³ Standards**.
- Placement decisions should focus on the least restrictive environment that affords a student access to the **Oklahoma C³ Standards** and core content curriculum.
- Instructional and Assessment Accommodations should focus on providing appropriate access that do not decrease learning expectations.
- Achieving Classroom Excellence (ACE) requirements will still be in place for all students with disabilities. The OSDE will provide additional options for students that previously took an OMAAP and were unsuccessful. These additional options are currently being developed and will go before the State Board of Education on February 28, 2013. After the Board of Education meeting, additional communication will be sent outline the timeline for OMAAP elimination.

Cc: Janet Barresi, State Superintendent of Public Instruction