

**Alaska**

## Alaska High School Graduation Qualifying Exam (HSGQE)

**Part I: Policy Trends**

<b>Type of test</b>	Comprehensive standards-based
<b>Purpose</b>	To meet a state mandate
<b>Major changes in exit exam policy since the 2007-08 school year or any pending changes</b>	A bill to remove the HSGQE as a graduation requirement by July 1, 2011 was presented to the state legislature as SB 109. However, it did not pass both houses of the legislature. The HSGQE is still a graduation requirement.
<b>Status of state's decision regarding the Common Core State Standards and impact of that decision on exit exam policies</b>	The state has opted <i>not</i> to adopt either set of Common Core State Standards.
<b>Test used by colleges or universities for undergraduate admission?</b>	No
<b>Year first administered</b>	2000
<b>Year diplomas first withheld</b>	2004 for most students (delayed from 2001)
<b>Subjects tested</b>	Reading, writing, mathematics
<b>Types of questions</b>	Multiple choice, constructed response
<b>Grade first administered</b>	10 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Grade(s) exam aligned to</b>	8 <sup>th</sup> -10 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Number of retakes allowed before end of grade 12</b>	Two per year
<b>Retakes after grade 12</b>	Two per year indefinitely
<b>Does the state have reciprocity with other states?</b>	Transfer students who have passed all subtests of another state's high school graduation exam in reading, English, and mathematics may submit passing scores.

<b>Exit exam used for No Child Left Behind?</b>	As of 2005-06, Alaska no longer uses the HSGQE to meet NCLB high school testing requirements, but instead uses the Grade 10 Standards-Based Assessment.
<b>Same cut score for graduation and NCLB?</b>	Not applicable
<b>Evaluations of state exit exam</b>	The test vendor produces a technical report each year. This technical report is available on request.
<b>State test contractor</b>	Data Recognition Corporation
<b>Does the state provide students with alternate paths to graduation?</b>	No
<b>Alternate paths to graduation specifically for English language learners</b>	No. However, accommodations are available for English language learners. The participation guidelines as well as the list of accommodations available to ELL students is available online at <a href="http://www.eed.state.ak.us/tls/assessment/participation_guidelines/ParticipationGuidelinesSept2007.pdf">http://www.eed.state.ak.us/tls/assessment/participation_guidelines/ParticipationGuidelinesSept2007.pdf</a>
<b>Alternate paths to graduation specifically for students with disabilities</b>	<p>Students with disabilities who do not pass the High School Graduation Qualifying Examination by their sophomore year may be allowed to take an alternative assessment program, which consists of the modified or non-standardized version of the exam. Students with disabilities may use the HSGQE with modifications with state approval. The non-standardized HSGQE consists of an extensive collection of work that reflects competency in each of the state standards tested in the HSGQE.</p> <p>The modified assessment is scored by the vendor. The state convenes a committee of three from the field for each content area to review the non-standardized assessment. Two out of three approvals determine whether a student who takes the non-standardized HSGQE meets the state standards.</p> <p>If a student has been ruled not to meet the standards, the modified assessment can be rescored. The non-standardized assessment allows for the student to resubmit additional documentation.</p> <p>Accommodations are available for students with disabilities. The participation guidelines as well as the list of</p>

accommodations available to students is available online at [http://www.eed.state.ak.us/tls/assessment/participation\\_guidelines/ParticipationGuidelinesSept2007.pdf](http://www.eed.state.ak.us/tls/assessment/participation_guidelines/ParticipationGuidelinesSept2007.pdf)

In the 2008-09 school year, 481 students (24%) took the modified HSGQE, and in the 2009-10 school year, 500 (22%) took the modified exam.

**Who makes decisions on whether a student is eligible to use alternate paths?**

The individualized education program (IEP) team determines the alternate path for students with disabilities. Alternate paths do not exist for regular education students or students with limited English.

**How are students identified as eligible for alternate paths to graduate?**

The IEP team will determine whether an alternate path is the appropriate path for a student with disabilities. The IEP team will then apply to the department for approval. Forms are available on the department website: <http://www.eed.state.ak.us/tls/assessment>

**When calculating the graduation rate for adequate yearly progress (AYP) purposes, does the state count students taking alternate paths together with graduates who passed the high school exit exams?**

As of 2005-06, Alaska no longer uses the HSGQE to meet NCLB high school testing requirements, but instead uses the Grade 10 Standards-Based Assessment. So the HSGQE is not used for calculating AYP. Students receiving regular diplomas on the traditional path are counted the same as students receiving regular diplomas on an alternative path.

**How many full-time equivalent staff in the state department of education are involved in implementing alternate paths?**

One

**Types of assistance the state provides for all districts to raise *initial* pass rates for all students on the high school exit exam**

The state offers technical assistance to help:

- Teachers administer the exam, which includes online assistance and train-the-trainer workshops;
- All teachers prepare students for the exam, which includes online assistance;
- Schools implement comprehensive school reform, which includes online assistance and specialist(s) in the state education agency;
- Districts improve formative uses of assessment, which includes online assistance and specialist(s) in the state education agency; and
- All districts improve the instructional leadership

provided by administrators, which includes field-based specialists.

The state also provides state-developed benchmark/formative assessments and exam preparation materials for students.

**Types of assistance or remediation the state provides for all districts to help students who have failed to pass the exit exam**

The state does *not* provide assistance or remediation to all districts to help students who have failed to pass the exit exam.

**Does the state provide funding for remediation?**

Yes. Districts are expected to use funding for mandated remediation.

**Are districts mandated by law to provide remediation?**

Yes. State regulation mandates a district to provide remediation to a student who has not passed one or more subtests of the state high school graduation qualifying examination after the fall administration of the HSGQE in the student's 11<sup>th</sup>-grade year.

Remediation must begin no later than the start of the second semester of the student's 11<sup>th</sup>-grade year and continue as necessary for the student to pass all subtests of the HSGQE. Nothing prevents a district from offering remediation at an earlier time.

**Are students required to participate in remediation?**

No

**Part II: Student Performance**

**Initial pass rates, 2008-09**

<b>Percentage of Students Passing on the First Try in 10<sup>th</sup> grade, 2008-09</b>			
<b>Student Group</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Writing</b>	<b>Math</b>
All students	90%	79%	80%
Caucasian	96%	86%	89%
African American	89%	76%	72%
Hispanic	89%	76%	77%
Asian	89%	81%	78%
Alaska Native/ American Indian	76%	61%	64%
Two or More Races	94%	80%	82%
English language learners	58%	45%	42%

Migrant	80%	66%	71%
Students with disabilities	60%	36%	41%
Free or reduced-price lunch eligible	81%	66%	67%
<b>Passing score (scale of 100-600)</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>304</b>	<b>328</b>

Note: These data were retrieved from the Alaska State Department of Education Web site at <http://www.eed.state.ak.us/tls/assessment/results/2009/StatewideHSGQE.pdf> on May 25, 2010.

**Denominator used to calculate these rates:** Number of eligible 10<sup>th</sup> grade students on first day of testing.

### Initial pass rates, 2009-10

Percentage of Students Passing on the First Try in 10 <sup>th</sup> grade, 2009-10			
Student Group	Reading	Writing	Math
All students	84%	74%	77%
Caucasian	93%	81%	85%
African American	74%	62%	58%
Hispanic	83%	74%	76%
Asian	79%	77%	80%
Alaska Native/ American Indian	68%	59%	61%
Two or More Races	83%	70%	74%
English language learners	38%	41%	39%
Migrant	78%	70%	71%
Students with disabilities	45%	29%	35%
Free or reduced-price lunch eligible	73%	63%	65%
<b>Passing score (scale of 100-600)</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>304</b>	<b>328</b>

Note: Data provided by the Alaska State Department of Education.

**Denominator used to calculate these rates:** Number of eligible 10<sup>th</sup> grade students on first day of testing.

**Cumulative pass rates** Alaska does not have cumulative pass rates available for 2008-09 or 2009-10 at this time.

Student Group	State Graduation Rates	
	2008-09	2009-10
All students	68%	NA
White	74%	NA
African American	60%	NA
Latino	64%	NA
Asian	70%	NA
Alaska Native or American Indian	55%	NA
English Language Learners	49%	NA
Students with disabilities	44%	NA
Free or reduced-price lunch eligible	60%	NA

**Note:** These data were retrieved from the Alaska State Department of Education Web site on May 25, 2010 at <http://www.eed.state.ak.us/reportcard/2008-2009/reportcard2008-09.pdf>

**Current state graduation rate calculation formula for AYP purposes.**

Alaska uses the Leaver Rate.