

Why Should My Child Take the State Assessment?



What is my child tested on in the spring?

Each spring, schools give the statewide assessment to students in grades 3 – 10. This test provides students the opportunity to show their understanding of important skills in English language arts, mathematics, and science at their grade level.

Why is assessment important in my child's education?

There are five essential questions that we ask (and answer) in regard to student learning every day in our classrooms:

1. What do we want our students to know and do? (Effective statewide standards)
2. How will we teach them? (Effective local curriculum and instruction)
3. How will we know if they learned it? (Effective assessment)
4. What will we do if they do not learn it? (Effective intervention)
5. What will we do if they already know it? (Effective enrichment)

Effective assessment is the bridge between teaching the standards and ensuring that support is available for all students. It is a key part of student learning, and everything we do should work toward this goal.

How is this assessment meaningful for my child?

The statewide assessment is a *summative* assessment, which is just one piece of a balanced assessment system. Summative assessments are designed to give information on a student's understanding of the state's English language arts, mathematics, and science standards. When administered over multiple years, this assessment is even more meaningful because it informs you on how far your child has progressed in their learning.

Why does DEED give a statewide assessment?

First, we want to be able to inform parents, educators, policy makers, the community, and businesses how our schools and districts are performing. Second, after we have determined how our schools are performing, we want to identify schools in the most need of school improvement efforts. Third, we want to ensure there is equity in education. Our mission is to provide an excellent education to every student every day.

Why is it important for my child to participate in the statewide assessment?

Educators make decisions locally about how to teach Alaska's standards. With this in mind, the summative assessment is a standardized way to determine in a uniform manner how well your child's school and district are performing. Also, at the state level, we invest over a billion dollars in public education each year, and the citizens of Alaska have a right to know if that money is contributing to increased learning for students.

Parents have the right to make educational decisions for their child; please check with your district for more information.

More information can be found at education.alaska.gov/tls/assessments/. We also encourage you to view DEED's video on [Assessments: Why Are They Important?](#)

Frequently Asked Questions about Student Assessment Data



What data are collected when a student takes a state assessment?

Basic student information and student assessment scores are reported to the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development (DEED). “Basic student information” includes the student’s name, Alaska student ID number, and demographic information, such as gender and race/ethnicity. **DEED does not collect sensitive information such as a student’s religion, political affiliation, or Social Security number.**

How are assessment results used?

Individual student assessment data are shared with the student’s school district to provide information about how the student performed on the assessment. Only authorized school district staff that have a legitimate educational interest (such as the student’s teacher or principal) may see a student’s data.

No individual student data are reported publicly. DEED aggregates data for public reporting by providing counts and percentages of students scoring at each of the assessment’s achievement levels. When a group of students, such as a subgroup or grade level, is so small that individual students could potentially be identified, DEED suppresses the data and either reports a percentage range (e.g., 60% or more, 40% or fewer) or does not report any results at all in order to protect student privacy. These aggregated data are used when reporting the performance of groups of students in the annual Report Card. They also fulfill DEED’s reporting requirements under state and federal law without identifying individual students.

How the data will not be used!

DEED does not report individual student data to the federal government or to private parties. **DEED never sells individual student data.** Individual student information is not provided to third-party vendors to solicit goods and services.

What does DEED do to protect student data?

All student data is stored and transmitted securely. Within DEED, only the Assessments and Information Technology staff have direct access to individual student data for the purpose of calculating and reporting accountability measures. These staff sign agreements to keep data confidential and are well versed in the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the federal law that governs individual student data in much the same way as HIPAA does with medical records. Data received from the testing vendor and school districts are transmitted using secure connections and stored within DEED’s firewalled data servers. Likewise, any individual student data that need to be transmitted from DEED are sent via encrypted e-mail or through a secure data connection.