

Why Should My Child Take the State Assessment?

What is my child tested on in the spring?

Each spring, schools give the statewide assessments in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics to students in grades 3 – 9 and science in grades 5, 8, and 10. This test provides students the opportunity to show their understanding of important skills in these subject areas 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.

What assessment will my student take in the spring?

DEED administers the following required assessments:

- Performance Evaluation for Alaska's Schools (PEAKS): students in grades 3-9 in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics; students in grades 5, 8, and 10 in science
- Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM): for students with significant cognitive disabilities take DLM instead of PEAKS, students in grades 3-9 in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics and students in grades 4, 8, and 10 in science
- ACCESS for ELLs: students identified as English Learners in grades K-12



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 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, including whether to participate in statewide testing. Please check with your district for more information.

More information can be found on the department's [Assessment webpage](https://education.alaska.gov/assessments) (<https://education.alaska.gov/assessments>). We also encourage you to view DEED's video on [Assessments: Why Are They Important?](https://vimeo.com/193465985) (<https://vimeo.com/193465985>).