

Alaska's Summative Assessments



The FACTS:

The **purpose of a summative assessment** is to evaluate student learning at the end of an instructional unit, like a school year. Summative assessment is a chance for students to demonstrate the skills and knowledge they have acquired over a school year. Alaska's statewide summative assessments are administered in grades 3-9 in math and English language arts (ELA) and in grades 4, 8, and 10 in science.

A statewide summative assessment is important for three reasons. First, these assessments provide information for parents, educators, policy makers, the community, and businesses about how Alaska's schools and districts are performing. Second, results from the assessments provide information to help all schools improve. Third, information from statewide assessments helps to ensure there is equity in education for all students. DEED's mission is to provide an excellent education to every student every day.

The summative assessment Alaska administers is called Performance Evaluation for Alaska Schools, or PEAKS. The PEAKS assessments are intended to measure the skills and concepts in the [Alaska English Language Arts and Mathematics Standards](#) adopted in 2012. The ELA and mathematics content assessments contain questions to measure Alaska's college-and-career-ready standards.

Alaska partners with Data Recognition Corporation (DRC) to administer PEAKS and the Alaska Science Assessment. DRC provides test items from their college- and career-ready item bank, a secure test engine, a test administration portal, and customer service to assist districts and schools in implementing technology.

Recourses to help students and educators prepare for PEAKS are available. Online Tools Training (OTT) and Student Tutorials are available to aid students and teachers in preparing for the computer-based assessment. The purpose of the OTT and Student Tutorials is to familiarize students with the testing platform and to give them an opportunity to experience the computer-based test environment



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and practice using the technology. For students taking the paper-based assessment, grade-level specific item samplers are available for each content area. These item samplers provide examples of items that students may encounter when taking the assessment. The item samplers, information about the OTT and Student Tutorials, and an Educator Guide to Student Preparation are all available on the [Student Preparation webpage](#).

The ELA assessment contains a Text-Dependent Analysis (TDA) item in which students will formulate a written response based on a prompt using specific evidence from a set of reading passages. TDA resources for educators can be found on the [PEAKS webpage, Text-Dependent Analysis \(TDA\) tab](#).

Student supports for students with disabilities and English learners are provided. Student supports are available for the PEAKS and Alaska Science assessments. For more information about allowable tool for all students as well as accommodations, please refer to the *Participation Guidelines for Inclusion of Students in State Assessments, December 2017* and the *Handbook for the Participation Guidelines* available on the [DEED Accommodations webpage](#).

DEED values educator's input and expertise. Alaska educators from all districts were invited to participate in an alignment study that ensures the alignment of the assessment to the ELA and math standards, as well as review items created specifically for Alaska.

More information about Alaska's summative assessment can be found on the [PEAKS webpage](#)

Types of Assessments

Summative Assessment: designed to provide information regarding the level of student, school, or program success at an end point in time. Summative tests are administered after the conclusion of instruction. The results are used to fulfill summative functions, such as to: 1) reach an evaluative judgment about the effectiveness of a recently concluded educational program; 2) arrive at an inference about a student's mastery of the curricular aims sought during an in-class instructional sequence; 3) determine a grade for a course; or 4) meet local, state, and federal accountability requirements. Assessments referred to as summative can range from large-scale assessment systems, such as the annual assessments administered across the state, to district-wide assessment systems or tests, to classroom summative tests created by teachers. These tests are also called "outcome assessments."

Interim Assessment: typically administered periodically throughout the school year to fulfill one or more of the following functions: 1) predictive (identifying students' readiness for success on a later high-stakes tests); 2) evaluative (to appraise ongoing educational programs); and 3) instructional (to supply teachers with individual student performance data). The tests are also called "benchmark," "interim benchmark," or "common."

Universal Screening Assessments: periodically conducted, usually two or three times during a school year, to identify students who may be at risk, to monitor student progress, or to predict students' likelihood of success on meeting or exceeding curricular benchmarks. Universal screening tests are typically brief and conducted with all students at a particular grade level. They focus on target skills (for example, phonological awareness) that are highly predictive of future outcomes. These assessments are used along with other information to identify students who need more frequent or intensive opportunities to learn a skill.

Formative assessment: a process used by teachers and students during instruction that provides feedback to adjust ongoing teaching and learning to improve students' achievement of intended

instructional outcomes. The critical features of effective formative assessment include: 1) clearly identified learning goals and criteria for success; 2) clearly articulated sub-goals and learning progressions; 3) evidence of learning elicited during instruction; 4) descriptive feedback provided to students and self; and 5) peer-assessment.

Definitions from "Distinguishing Formative Assessment from Other Educational Assessment Labels" CCSSO Formative Assessment for Students and Teachers (FAST) State Collaborative, 2012

Alaska's English Language Arts Standards



The FACTS:

In 2012, the State Board of Education & Early Development adopted academic standards for English Language Arts and Mathematics. Academic standards help teachers ensure their students have the skills and knowledge they need to be successful by providing clear, consistent expectations and goals for student learning.

The standards do not tell teachers how to teach nor do the standards place limits on local curriculum. The standards do not preclude the use of culturally relevant lessons. In fact, teaching the standards in the context of local cultures is one of the best ways to present them.

Standards Structure

The English Language Arts Standards include four content areas: reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language. Within each content area are grade-specific standards that designate what students should be able to do by the end of that grade. They leave room for local school districts to determine how the goal of each standard will be met as well as any additional topics that should be addressed.

Reading Standards

Emphasis is placed on the foundational skills of reading (phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension) through fifth grade. By fifth grade, students are expected to have mastery of those skills, which can be utilized through their academic career. The expectation is that by that point they would have mastery of those skills, which can be accessed throughout their academic career.

The standards expect that students read increasingly complex texts so that by the end of high school they are ready for the demands of college-level and career-level reading. Students are expected to read challenging informational texts in subjects such as social studies and science, as well as literature.

Writing Standards

The cornerstone of the writing standards is the ability to write logical argument based on sound reasoning and relevant evidence. Students are expected to conduct research and write about what they learned in short, focused projects and longer in-depth projects.

Speaking and Listening Standards

Oral uses of language are common in postsecondary education and the workplace. The standards for speaking and listening expect students to gain, evaluate, and present complex information, ideas and evidence through speaking and listening.

Language Standards

The language standards encourage students to develop their vocabulary through conversation, direct instruction and reading. Language standards provide a framework for students that help build their ability to communicate with greater precision and complexity.

Literacy Standards

For grades 6-12 there are standards for literacy in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects. These standards recognize that teachers in subjects other than English must play a role in developing students' skills in reading and writing.

Instructional Shifts in English Language Arts

In the English Language Arts Standards, there are three major shifts, or focus areas, that encourage changes in instructional practices:

- Building knowledge through **content-rich nonfiction**.
- Reading, writing, and speaking grounded in **evidence from text** –both literary and informational.
- Regular practice with **complex text** and its **academic vocabulary**.

Alaska's Mathematics Standards



The FACTS:

In 2012, the State Board of Education & Early Development adopted academic standards for English Language Arts and Mathematics. Academic standards help teachers ensure their students have the skills and knowledge they need to be successful by providing clear, consistent expectations and goals for student learning.

The Alaska Mathematics Standards are designed to promote students' ability to apply math to real-life problems. Students who have those skills will be better prepared for college, technical schools, the military, and the workforce.

The standards do not tell teachers how to teach nor do the standards place limits on local curriculum. The standards do not preclude the use of culturally relevant lessons. In fact, teaching the standards in the context of local cultures is one of the best ways to present them.

Keys to the Mathematics Standards

The mathematics standards consist of two components: Standards for Mathematical Content and The Standards for Mathematical Practices. They are designed to be taught together to provide rich math instruction.

Standards for Mathematical Content

The standards for kindergarten to grade 5 provide students with a solid foundation in whole numbers, addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, fractions, and decimals. Hands-on learning occurs in this grade span to reinforce geometry, algebra, probability and statistics.

The middle school standards provide a coherent and rich preparation for high school mathematics. Students who have mastered the mathematics skills through grade 7 will be well-prepared for algebraic concepts presented in grade 8.

The high school standards set a rigorous definition of readiness for postsecondary education and careers. Students develop a depth of understanding and the ability to apply mathematics to new situations, as college students and employees do.

Standards for Mathematical Practices

These standards stress procedural skills and conceptual understanding. They describe practices that work with the content standards to strengthen adaptive reasoning, strategic thinking, comprehension of mathematical concepts, procedural fluency (carrying out procedures flexibly and accurately), and help students see math as sensible, use and worthwhile with diligence.

Instructional Shifts in Mathematics

In the Alaska Mathematics Standards, there are three shifts, or focus areas, that encourage changes in instructional practices:

Focus: Two to four concepts focused on deeply in each grade.

Coherence: Concepts logically connected from one grade to the next and linked to other major topics within the grade.

Rigor: Fluency with arithmetic, application of knowledge to real-world situations, and deep understanding of mathematical concepts.

English Learners (ELs)



The FACTS:

Entry Requirements

Parents or guardians complete a Home Language Survey (HLS) when their child enrolls in an Alaska school for the first time. The HLS is a questionnaire that helps schools and districts identify which students might be ELs. If the answers on the HLS indicate that a language other than English has had a significant impact on the child's level of English language proficiency, the child then takes an approved screening assessment. The screening assessment will determine if the student is eligible for language assistance services. The following are approved screeners for the State of Alaska:

1. For kindergarteners
 - a. Kindergarten W-APT
 - b. WIDA MODEL for Kindergarten
2. For grades 1-12
 - a. WIDA Screener
 - b. WIDA MODEL

Language Assistance Services

Once a student is identified as eligible, districts are responsible for providing appropriate language assistance services. Appropriate EL services allow ELs to reach English proficiency and participate meaningfully in educational programs without EL support within a reasonable amount of time.

ACCESS for ELLs

Each spring, the English proficiency of identified English learners will be monitored using the ACCESS for ELLs English language proficiency (ELP) assessment by WIDA. This assessment measures students' academic English in four language domains: Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing. The assessment is aligned to WIDA's 5 English Language Development (ELD) standards:

1. Social & Instructional Language
2. Language of Language Arts
3. Language of Mathematics

4. Language of Science
5. Language of Social Studies

Students receive a score between 1.0 (Entering) and 6.0 (Reaching) in each domain and an overall composite score. Parents and guardians will receive score reports each year detailing their child's results.

Exit Requirements

Students are expected to transition out of EL programs and services as quickly as possible. Most students transition in four to seven years. In order to be exited from EL status, a student must meet specific criteria on ACCESS for ELLs, as set in Alaska Regulation. The student must have:

1. a composite score of 4.5 or higher;
2. a score of 4.0 or higher in each tested domain – reading, speaking, and listening; and
3. a score of 3.8 or higher in the writing domain.

To ensure that a student was not exited early, districts are responsible for monitoring former EL students' academic progress for four years after exiting.

English Learner Progress Indicator for the System for School Success

Each year, a growth target is calculated for each English learner. Growth targets are expected levels of growth in the student's score on ACCESS for ELLs from year to year.

The English Learner Progress indicator compares students' previous scores and current scores on ACCESS for ELLs. Students who meet or exceed their growth target are considered to have made progress. These results are reported in the System for School Success as the percentage of students who made progress.

CSI Schools – Lowest 5%



The FACTS:

After the passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), each state was required to write a plan outlining how they will evaluate how well schools are doing on a variety of indicators. The System for School Success is outlined in Alaska's State Plan and describes how DEED will create school designations and what supports these schools will receive.

Indicators within the System for School Success are:

- Academic Achievement looks at the percentage of students whose performance on the state's summative assessments demonstrate the skills and knowledge of the current grade-level content in English language arts and mathematics.
- Academic Growth looks at the percentage of students who improved or maintained from one year to the next on the statewide summative assessments in English and language arts and mathematics
- Graduation Rate looks at the percentage of students who graduated from high school with a diploma in four or five years.
- English Learner Progress calculates the percentage of English learners who meet or exceed their growth target toward attaining English language proficiency. English learners are students who have the influence of a language other than English.
- Chronic Absenteeism (School Quality/Student Success) looks at the percentage of students who missed less than 10% of the days they attended at the school.
- Grade 3 English Language Arts indicates how many students are proficient on the statewide summative assessment in English language arts.

An index value is determined for each school 10 students in a minimum of two indicators.

How is this school designation determined?

A school receives a designation of Comprehensive Support and Improvement- Lowest 5%

- When ranked according to their accountability index value, the lowest performing 5% of all Title I schools are identified as a Comprehensive Support and Improvement School (CSI (Lowest 5%)).
- CSI (Lowest 5%) schools will be identified annually.
- CSI (Lowest 5%) schools remain in this designation for a minimum of 3 years.

Exit Criteria for This Designation

To exit this designation, a school may exit after 3 years if they:

- Meet the school's long term goals or measures of interim progress for the all students groups in academic achievement in ELA and mathematics,
- Meet the 4-year graduation rate of 66 2/3%, and
- Meet English Learner Progress growth targets (as applicable).

What are CSI (lowest 5%) schools required to do?

CSI (Lowest 5%) schools will develop a school improvement plan with the input of local stakeholders (parents, school staff, community members, students, etc.) to address the six indicators, reasons for designation, and identified local needs. The plan will include interventions to improve student performance.

Supports Available for CSI (Lowest 5%) Schools

These schools have access to school improvement funds to assist in the implementation of the school improvement plan. In addition, a school improvement coach will be assigned to support school improvement efforts, as resources allow.

These schools continue to have access to all the general supports provided by the district and DEED.

CSI Schools – Graduation Rate

The FACTS:

After the passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), each state was required to write a plan outlining how they will evaluate how well schools are doing on a variety of indicators. The System for School Success is outlined in Alaska's State Plan and describes how DEED will create school designations and what supports these schools will receive.

ESSA places nationwide emphasis on the graduation of eligible students. Solely considering graduation rate, all schools are designated for Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI-Grad Rate) if they are not graduating more than $\frac{2}{3}$ of their students in four years.

A graduation rate is determined for each school based on the count of eligible students who entered the 9th grade four years prior.

How is this school designation determined?

- A school receives a designation of Comprehensive Support and Improvement-Graduation Rate (CSI (Grad Rate)) when a school's four-year graduation rate is less than or equal to $66\frac{2}{3}\%$.
- Schools are identified annually.

Exit Criteria for This Designation

A school may exit after one year if the school attains greater than a $66\frac{2}{3}\%$ graduation rate in the four-year graduation cohort.

What are CSI-Graduation schools required to do?

CSI (Grad Rate) schools will develop a school improvement plan with the input of local stakeholders (parents, school staff, community members, students, etc.) to address the low graduation rate. This plan will address the reasons for designation, identify local needs, as well as include interventions to improve graduation rates.

Support Available for CSI-Graduation Rate Schools

These schools have access to school improvement funds to assist in the implementation of the school improvement plan.

These schools continue to have access to all the general supports provided by the district and DEED.

TSI Schools



The FACTS:

After the passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), each state was required to write a plan outlining how they will evaluate how well schools are doing on a variety of indicators. The System for School Success is outlined in Alaska's State Plan and describes how DEED will create school designations and what supports these schools will receive.

Indicators within the System for School Success are:

- Academic Achievement looks at the percentage of students whose performance on the state's summative assessments demonstrate the skills and knowledge of the current grade-level content in English language arts and mathematics.
- Academic Growth looks at the percentage of students who improved from one year to the next on the statewide summative assessments in English and language arts and mathematics
- Graduation Rate looks at the percentage of students who graduated from high school with a diploma in four or five years.
- English Learner Progress calculates the percentage of English learners who meet or exceed their growth target toward attaining English language proficiency. English learners are students who have the influence of a language other than English.
- Chronic Absenteeism (School Quality/Student Success) looks at the percentage of students who missed less than 10% of the days they attended at the school.
- Grade 3 English Language Arts indicates how many students are proficient on the statewide summative assessment in English language arts.

An index value is determined for each subgroup within a school with 10 students in a minimum of two indicators.

How is this school designation determined?

A school receives a designation of Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI) when

- A school has one or more subgroups whose index value is less than or equal to the index value of the lowest 5% of Title I schools.
- A school with a subgroup that is identified as TSI for more than 3 years will then be identified as a CSI school.
- The nine subgroups of students considered within each school are:
 - African American
 - Alaska Native/American Indian
 - Asian/Pacific Islander
 - Caucasian
 - Hispanic
 - Two or More Races
 - Students with Disabilities
 - English Learners
 - Economically Disadvantaged

Exit Criteria for this Designation

A school may exit after 1 year if all subgroups within the school have an index value above the index value of the lowest 5% of Title I schools.

Supports Available for TSA Schools

A district serving a designated TSI school will develop a school improvement plan focused on the subgroup of students. This plan will include the input of local stakeholders (parents, school staff, community members, students, etc.), address the six indicators and reasons for designation, and consider local needs. The plan will include interventions to improve performance of the identified student subgroup.

These schools have access to school improvement funds to assist in the implementation of the school improvement plan, and continue to have access to general supports available to all schools.

Universal Support



The FACTS:

After the passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), each state was required to write a plan outlining how they will evaluate how well schools are doing on a variety of indicators. The System for School Success is outlined in Alaska's State Plan and describes how DEED will create school designations and what supports these schools will receive.

Indicators within the System for School Success are:

- Academic Achievement looks at the percentage of students whose performance on the state's summative assessments demonstrate the skills and knowledge of the current grade-level content in English language arts and mathematics.
- Academic Growth looks at the percentage of students who improved from one year to the next on the statewide summative assessments in English and language arts and mathematics
- Graduation Rate looks at the percentage of students who graduated from high school with a diploma in four or five years.
- English Learner Progress calculates the percentage of English learners who meet or exceed their growth target toward attaining English language proficiency. English learners are students who have the influence of a language other than English.
- Chronic Absenteeism (School Quality/Student Success) looks at the percentage of students who missed less than 10% of the days they attended at the school.
- Grade 3 English Language Arts indicates how many students are proficient on the statewide summative assessment in English language arts.

An index value is determined for each school with 10 students in a minimum of two indicators.

How is this school designation determined?

A school receives a designation of Universal Support if

- The index value is higher than school identified as the lowest 5% of Title I schools (Comprehensive Support and Intervention-lowest 5%)
- The graduation rate is higher than 66 2/3% for schools with grade 12 (Comprehensive Support and Intervention- Graduation Rate).
- The index values for each subgroup in their school is higher than schools identified as the lowest 5% of Title I schools (Targeted Support and Intervention)

Supports Available for Universal Support

- Statewide networks are aimed at connecting educators and supporting best practices in school improvement. Examples of statewide networks include the Alaska ECHO Project, Alaska Professional Learning Network (AKPLN), and AK RISE Rural Teachers Network.
- Webinars focused on school improvement topics highlight promising practices and success stories from across Alaska. In addition, technical assistance webinars for CSI and TSI schools provide additional support for continuous improvement efforts.