

Dr. Michael Johnson  
Commissioner



Department of Education  
and Early Development

www.Education.Alaska.Gov

Juneau, Alaska

STATE OF ALASKA

PRESS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**September 5, 2019**

### **DEED Releases 2019 Statewide Assessment Results**

*Results Highlight Opportunities to Improve Student Achievement*

JUNEAU -- Statewide, district, school, and subgroup level results from the Performance Evaluation for Alaska's Schools (PEAKS) assessment and the Alaska Science Assessment are now available online. School districts have until September 25 to distribute student-level reports to parents and educators.

Approximately 76,400 students participated in the spring 2019 administration of PEAKS and the Alaska Science Assessment. PEAKS and the Alaska Science Assessment are statewide summative assessments designed to provide important data for parents, educators, policy makers, communities, and businesses about how Alaska's schools and districts are performing. This information informs school improvement efforts at the state and local levels, and helps ensure there is equity in education for all students. Assessments are one piece of the larger education system, and Alaska's statewide summative assessments are one part of a balanced assessment system.

PEAKS assesses students in grades 3-9 on the state's current English language arts and mathematics standards, adopted in 2012. PEAKS was first administered in spring 2017. The Alaska Science Assessment assesses students in grades 4, 8, and 10 on the state's science standards. The spring 2019 administration assessed students on the now-former science standards, adopted in 2006. Starting in 2022, students will be assessed on Alaska's revised science standards that were adopted in June 2019.

Students score on a scale that is divided into four levels of achievement: advanced, proficient, below proficient, and far below proficient.

"While I am pleased to see pockets of improvement from year to year, we must not be satisfied with our results. The 2019 PEAKS results show a large achievement gap still exists and the work to improve outcomes for all students must continue," said Alaska Education Commissioner Dr. Michael Johnson.

According to Tamara Van Wyhe, Director of Innovation and Education Excellence, "The department is focusing our efforts and aligning our support to school districts on the five measurable goals in Alaska's Education Challenge aimed at increasing student achievement, including the importance of reading proficiency in the early grades. Additionally, this fall we will be rolling out an enhanced online reporting system with school-level profiles to provide parents

and the public with more information about our schools and the factors that affect student achievement. School improvement is a complicated endeavor, and DEED is committed to providing timely and relevant information, resources, and leadership to schools and districts across the state as they focus on continuous improvement and growth.”

“It will take the involvement of all Alaskans working together to ensure every student has an equitable opportunity to learn and succeed,” added Commissioner Johnson.

Overall, 39.2 percent of students scored at a proficient level in English language arts, 35.7 percent of students scored at a proficient level in mathematics, and 44.6 percent of students scored at a proficient level in science.

Highlights:

- The 2017 grade 4 student class achieved growth over three years in English language arts proficiency
  - Grade 4: 38.8 percent proficient in 2017
  - Grade 5: 41.1 percent proficient in 2018
  - Grade 6: 45.5 percent proficient in 2019
- English learners achieved an increase in English language arts AND math proficiency
  - English language arts: 8.6 percent proficient in 2018 to 9.9 percent proficient in 2019
  - Math: 11.9 percent proficient in 2018 to 13.0 percent proficient in 2019
- Grade 9 students in 2019 achieved a 5.2 percent increase in math proficiency than grade 9 students the year prior. This was the second year the grade 9 math PEAKS assessment emphasized Algebra 1 concepts.
- The 2017 grade 8 student class achieved growth over two years in science proficiency
  - Grade 8: 46.9 percent in 2017
  - Grade 10: 53.6 percent in 2019

To learn more about Alaska’s Education Challenge, visit the [Alaska's Education Challenge webpage](#).

Resources to help the public understand PEAKS are available on the [PEAKS webpage](#). 2019 PEAKS and Alaska Science Assessment results are available on [DEED’s Assessment Results webpage](#).

Contact: Isaac Paulson, Assessments Administrator, at [isaac.paulson@alaska.gov](mailto:isaac.paulson@alaska.gov) or at 907-465-8431.

*The Alaska Department of Education and Early Development provides information, resources, and leadership to support over 130,000 students in 505 public schools across the state of Alaska. The mission of the department is to ensure an “**Excellent Education for Every Student Every Day.**”*

###

**Media Contact:** [Erin Hardin](#), Special Assistant, (907) 465-2803