



**ALASKA
SCIENCE
ASSESSMENT**

The FACTs about Alaska's Summative Assessment

Data Recognition Corporation (DRC) is the test vendor who administers the statewide summative assessments for grades 3-9 in English language arts (ELA), math and grades 4, 8, and 10 in science. The assessments were administered for the first time in spring 2017.

The **purpose of a summative assessment** is to evaluate student learning at the end of an instructional unit, like a school year. A summative assessment is a chance for students to demonstrate their skills and knowledge.

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 assessment 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](https://education.alaska.gov/akstandards/standards/AKStandards_ELAandMath_080812.pdf)

(https://education.alaska.gov/akstandards/standards/AKStandards_ELAandMath_080812.pdf) adopted in 2012. The ELA and math content assessments will contain questions selected specifically by DRC to measure Alaska's college- and career-ready standards.

The Alaska Science Assessment is be administered on DRC's test engine; however, this test is not new. Alaska science standards have not changed recently and the assessment remains the same from the previously administered Standards Based Assessment (SBA) that was used from 2008-2015.

Student and educator preparation resources are available to districts. 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 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](https://education.alaska.gov/assessments/peaks/StudentPreparation) (<https://education.alaska.gov/assessments/peaks/StudentPreparation>).

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

Student supports for students with disabilities and English learners are provided. Student supports are available for PEAKS and Alaska Science assessments. For more information about allowable Universal Tools 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](https://education.alaska.gov/assessments/accommodations) (<https://education.alaska.gov/assessments/accommodations>).

DEED values educator's input and expertise. As development of the PEAKS assessments continues, Alaska educators from all districts will be invited to contribute to the process via opportunities such as item review and development.

More information can be found on the [PEAKS webpage](https://education.alaska.gov/assessments/peaks) (<https://education.alaska.gov/assessments/peaks>).

