Demystifying the IAR

How It's Built
What's New
How to Help Your Students Shine

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Illinois — Assessment of Readiness

- **The Illinois Assessment of Readiness (IAR) is the state assessment and accountability measure for Illinois students enrolled in a public school district.**

- **IAR assesses the Illinois Learning Standards and is administered in English language arts and mathematics to students in Grades 3-8.**

Illinois Assessment of Readiness

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IAR Item Development Cycle

Y1

SUMMER 1	DEC. 2	DEC. 3	MAY 4	SEPT. 5
Development Planning	ELA Text Review*	Item Writing	Item Review*	Test Form Construction

Y2

MAR. 6	JUNE 7	AUG. 8	SPRING 9	SUMMER 10
Field Testing	Rangefinding*	Data Review*	Operational Testing	Reporting

The * indicates a stage that incorporates educator committees

Stage 1 [Year 1]: Development Planning

The IAR test bank is examined to determine areas of need.

The goal is to have items with a variety of complexity levels for each Evidence Statement to meet blueprint specifications for each grade-level.

Test Design Information

IAR Evidence Statements

Evidence Tables and Evidence Statements describe the knowledge and skills that an assessment items or task elicits from students. These are aligned directly to the Illinois Learning Standards.

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Stage 3 [Year 1]: Item Writing

Item writers create items based on the item bank status, addressing Evidence Statements to the specifications set forth by ISBE.

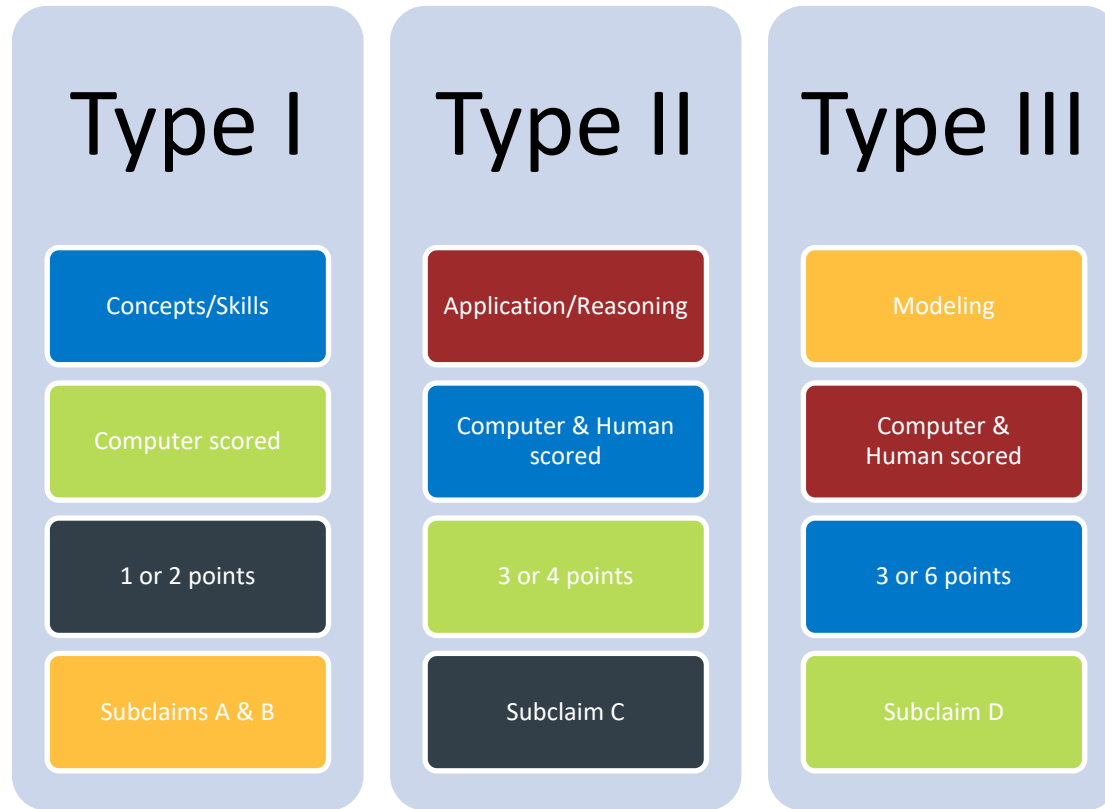A content team reviews and edits items for quality assurance.

ISBE content specialists review each item, making edit suggestions to adhere to ISBE's style guide, item specifications, rubric formats, interaction models, and writing guidelines.

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Stage 3 [Year 1]: Math Claims Structure

To stay on track for college and career readiness, students need to learn a wide range of skills, content knowledge, and critical-thinking abilities at every grade level as set forth in the Standards for Mathematical Content with connections to the Standards for Mathematical Practice.

- **Sub-Claim A: Major Content**
- **Sub-Claim B: Additional & Supporting Content**
- **Sub-Claim C: Mathematical Reasoning** - constructing viable arguments, critiquing the reasoning of others, and/or attending to precision when making mathematical statements. (MP.3,6)
- **Sub-Claim D: Mathematical Modeling** - applying knowledge and skills articulated in the standards for the current grade/course (MP.1,2,4,5,7,8).

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Stage 3 [Year 1]: Math Item Writing

Type I

- Concepts/Skills
- Computer scored
- 1 or 2 points
- Subclaims A & B

Type II

- Application/Reasoning
- Computer & Human scored
- 3 or 4 points
- Subclaim C

Type III
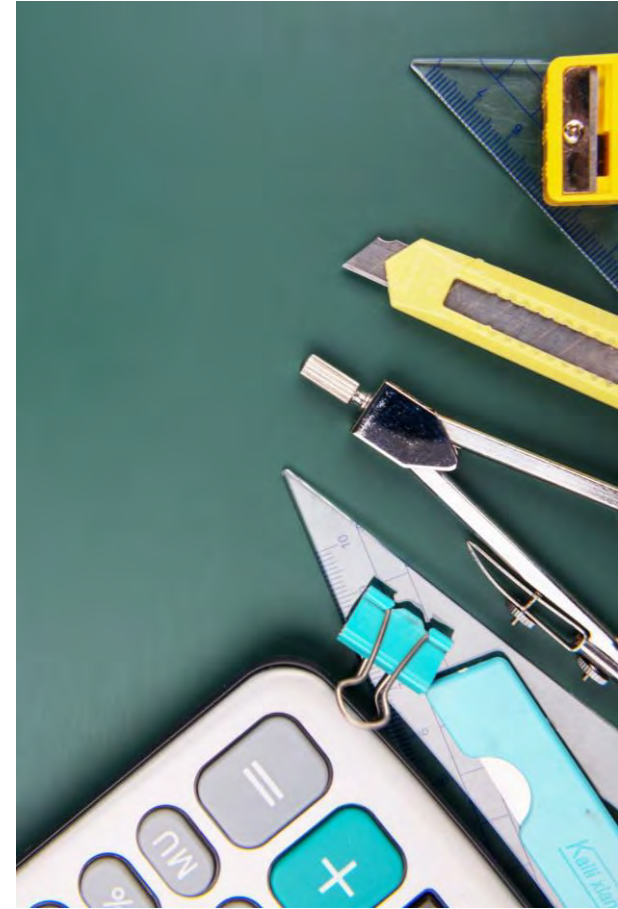
- Modeling
- Computer & Human scored
- 3 or 6 points
- Subclaim D

Three Item Types

All items are aligned to the Career and College Readiness Standards & the Standards for Mathematical Practice.

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Stage 3 [Year 1]: Math Item Writing

- **Multiple choice**

- **Multi-select**

- **Fill-in the blank**

- **Drag-and-drop**

- **In-line choice**

- **Constructed response**

- **Drawing tool**

Stage 4 [Year 1]: Item Review

Committees of IL educators provide feedback on items for eligibility for potential use on the IAR. IL educators bring grade-level classroom and other instructional expertise and experience to thoughtful and meaningful discussions about each of the newly-developed items.

A committee reviews each item through a **Content** lens.

A separate committee reviews each item through a **Bias & Sensitivity** lens.

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Stage 4 [Year 1]: Content Item Review

Content Item Review Committees:

- Evaluate each item through a content lens, looking for content flaws such as irregularities, cluing, multiple keys, and standards alignment issues.
- Make recommendations based on expertise.
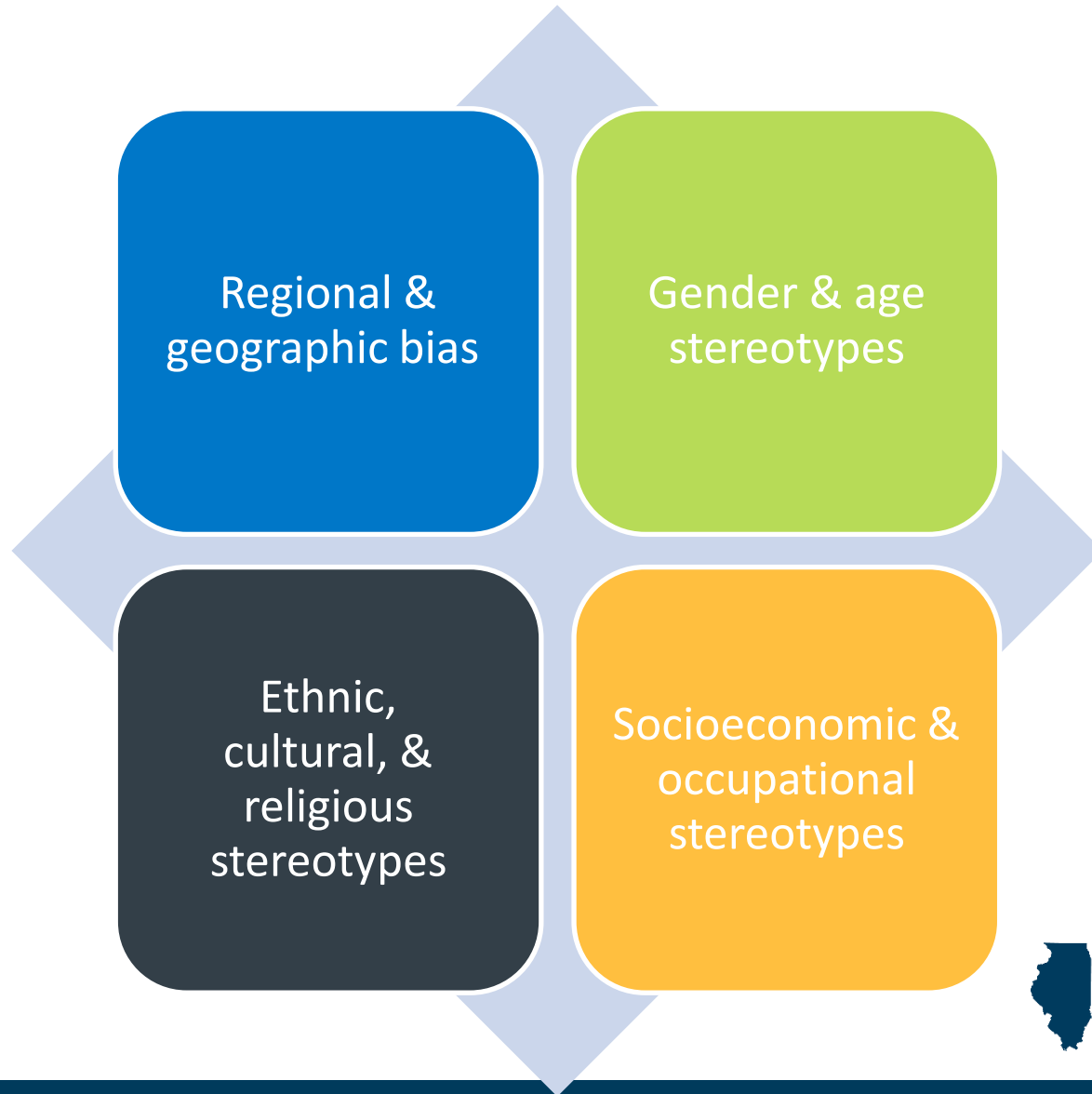 - The items are revised to reflect the committees' recommendations.

Stage 4 [Year 1]: Bias Item Review

Items are evaluated by committees of educators for **bias and sensitivity**.

o Bias that ***prevents*** members of a group from demonstrating that they possess the knowledge and skills being measured.

o Language or content that ***advantages*** members of a group in demonstrating that they possess the knowledge and skills being measured.

o Content that ***highlights*** a potential bias or sensitivity that could lead to disengagement.

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Stage 4 [Year 1]: Bias and Sensitivity Item Review

Regional & geographic bias

Gender & age stereotypes

Ethnic, cultural, & religious stereotypes

Socioeconomic & occupational stereotypes

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Stage 5 [Year 1]: Test Construction

Using the Operational Test Forms Construction Specifications, items are selected and sequenced for administration. This is a complex, interactive task that requires both content and psychometric expertise.

Online (54 per grade)	Paper-Based Form	Large Print	Read Aloud
Human Reader	Human Signer	ASL	Braille
Spanish Paper	Spanish Large Print	Spanish Human Reader	Text to Speech

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Stage 5 [Year 1]: Test Construction

M4 Test Information Curve
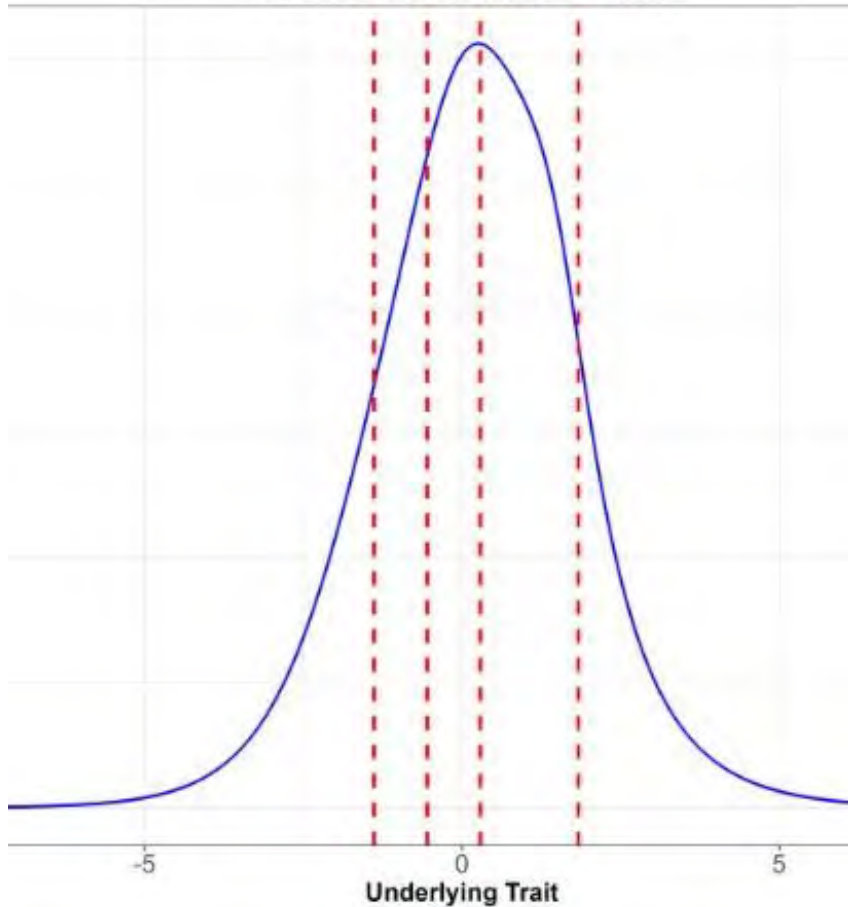
Each form is constructed to be psychometrically equivalent to other forms, both current and past, based on a normal distribution curve.

Test Characteristic Curves (TCCs)

Test Information Function (TIF) Curves

Conditional Standard Error of Measurement (CSEM) Curves

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Stage 5 [Year 1]: Math Test Blueprint

Items	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
Type 1 Items						
1 point	24	20	20	18	20	20
2 points	3	5	5	5	5	4
Type 1 Totals	27	25	25	23	25	24
Type 2 Items						
3 points	2	2	2	2	2	2
4 points	1	1	1	1	1	1
Type 2 Totals	3	3	3	3	3	3
Type 3 Items						
3 points	2	2	2	2	2	2
6 points	1	1	1	1	1	1
Type 3 Totals	3	3	3	3	3	3

The table represents a sample. Item counts could vary slightly among forms.

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Stage 5 [Year 1]: Math Test Construction

Illinois Assessment of Readiness Grade 6 Mathematics Blueprint												
Illinois Learning Standards **Domain[1]**	**Sub-Claim/Reporting Category**											
	Major Content **39%**			**Additional and Supporting Content** **19% points**			**Reasoning** **19% points**			**Modeling** **23% points**	
	Standards	**Evidence Statements**	**MP**	**Standards**	**Evidence Statements**	**MP**	**Standards**	**Evidence Statements**	**MP**	**Evidence Statements**	**MP**
Ratios and Proportional Relationships	6.RP.1; 6.RP.2; 6.RP.3a; 6.RP.3b; 6.RP.3c; 6.RP.3d	6.RP.1; 6.RP.2; 6.RP.3a; 6.RP.3b; 6.RP.3c-1; 6.RP.3c-2; 6.RP.3d	MP.1 MP.2 MP.3 MP.4 MP.5 MP.6 MP.7 MP.8	—	—	MP.1 MP.2 MP.4 MP.5 MP.7	6.RP.A	6.C.8.1	MP.2 MP.3 MP.4 MP.5 MP.6 MP.7	6.D.1* 6.D.2 (5.NBT.B) (5.NF) (5.MD) (5.G.A) 6.D.3*	MP.1 MP.2 MP.4 MP.5 MP.7
The Number System	6.NS.1; 6.NS.5; 6.NS.6a; 6.NS.6b; 6.NS.6c; 6.NS.7a; 6.NS.7b; 6.NS.7c; 6.NS.7d; 6.NS.8	6.NS.1-2; 6.NS.5; 6.NS.6a; 6.NS.6b-1; 6.NS.6b-2; 6.NS.6c-1; 6.NS.6c-2; 6.NS.7a; 6.NS.7b; 6.NS.7c-1; 6.NS.7c-2; 6.NS.7d; 6.NS.8		6.NS.2; 6.NS.3; 6.NS.4	6.NS.2; 6.NS.3-1; 6.NS.3-2; 6.NS.3-3; 6.NS.3-4; 6.NS.4-1; 6.NS.4-2		6.NS.1; 6.NS.6; 6.NS.7; 6.NS.8	6.C.2; 6.C.3; 6.C.4; 6.C.5			
Expressions and Equations	6.EE.1; 6.EE.2a; 6.EE.2b; 6.EE.2c; 6.EE.4; 6.EE.5; 6.EE.6; 6.EE.7; 6.EE.8; 6.EE.9	6.EE.1-1; 6.EE.1-2; 6.EE.2a; 6.EE.2b; 6.EE.2c-1; 6.EE.2c-2; 6.EE.4; 6.EE.5-1; 6.EE.5-2; 6.EE.6; 6.EE.7; 6.EE.8; 6.EE.9		—	—		6.EE.3; 6.EE.4; 6.EE.9; 6.EE.B	6.C.1.1; 6.C.6; 6.C.7; 6.C.8.2			
Geometry	---	---		6.G.1; 6.G.2; 6.G.3; 6.G.4	6.G.1; 6.G.2-1; 6.G.2-2; 6.G.3; 6.G.4		---	---			
Statistics and Probability	---	---		6.SP.1; 6.SP.2; 6.SP.3; 6.SP.4; 6.SP.5	6.SP.1; 6.SP.2; 6.SP.3; 6.SP.4; 6.SP.5		---	---			
The integrated evidence statements in this row reflect content from across grade 6 standards and are not unique to a single domain. See the evidence statements for more detail.				6.Int.1							

Sample test blueprint

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Stage 6 [Year 2]: Field Testing - Math

- Each item is placed on a form for field testing.

- For **Math**, the field test items are scattered throughout each unit of the assessment, indistinguishable from the operation items that will be scored. All students answer field test items, and they are not part of the operational scoring.

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Stage 7 [Year 2]: Rangefinding

A committee of Illinois educators meets to review student responses to hand-scored field test items and expand them into full scorer training sets for operational scoring. Each item has a unique rubric.

Typically, reviewers evaluate multiple student responses to identify aspects that contribute to the overall score.

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Stage 8 [Year 2]: Data Review

Two focuses of Data Review:

1. Content

2. Bias/Sensitivity

Committees of educators ascertain the viability of field-test items for operational testing.

Stage 8 [Year 2]: Content Data Review

Content Data Review focuses on several statistics that can indicate the overall usefulness of a test item, primarily the p-value and the polyserial.

The p-value is calculated as the proportion of test takers who answered a specific item correctly.

The polyserial describes the relationship between a student's performance on the item and his/her/their performance on the test form as a whole. A high polyserial correlation indicates that students who performed better on the item achieved higher scores on the test form than those who performed poorly on the item.

Stage 8 [Year 2]: Bias Data Review

Bias data review focuses on statistics that estimate differences between important student groups on a test item.

Differential Item Functioning (DIF) data review uses DIF stats.

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Stage 8 [Year 2]: Bias Data Review

Committees of educators review student response data from field tested items and determine if a student population was disproportionally or unfairly advantage or disadvantaged.

Native American/White
Hispanic/White
Asian/White
African-American/White
Students with multi-race/White
Pacific-Islanders/White
ELLs/NonELLs
Students with disability/Students without disabilities
**Female/Male**
Economically disadvantaged/Not disadvantaged

DIF Stats

Alignment	Item	Scoring	Stats	Point Dist	DIF	Vote

Differential Item Functioning

Comparison	Flag	Focal	Ref
native american...	C-	138	8328
female/male		8060	8132
black/white		2333	8328
ELL/Not ELL		661	15288
asian/white		1024	8328
hispanic/white		3778	8328

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Stage 9 [Year 2]: Operational Testing

An item is ready to be used on an operational form after a thorough three-year process.
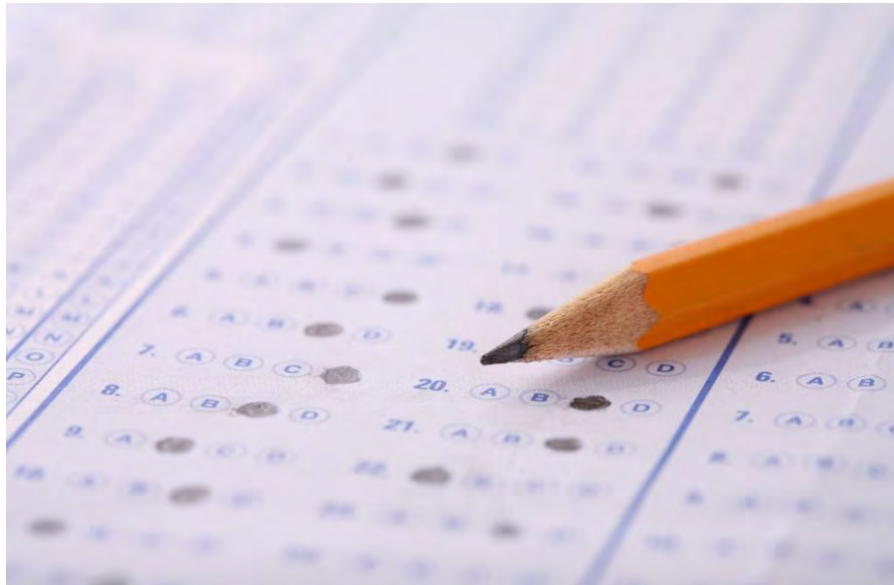
Stage 10 [Year 2]: Reporting

IAR Item Development Cycle

Interested in participating on a committee?
2026 IAR Committee Recruitment Survey

What's New?

- New Administrative Platform (2025)
  - Illinois Administration Platform replaces Pearson Access Next
  - TestNav is still the testing platform
  - Students will not notice a difference
- Drawing Tool (2026)
  - Visual Reasoning
  - Optional for students
- New Performance Level Descriptors (2025)
  - Summary
  - Detailed
  - Samples to Success
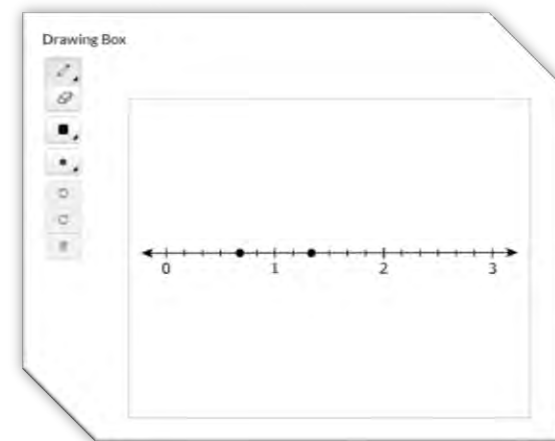
How to Help Your Students Shine

- Constructed Response Items
  - Test Scoring Expectations
    - Common places of error
  - Sample Student Responses
    - Give students a copy of the item and rubric
    - Ask students to answer the item
    - Have students grade sample student responses using the rubric

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Helpful Resources

- www.lsbe.net/IAR
- CLICK ON "TEST DESIGN"
  - Blueprints
  - Evidence Statements
- Released Items
- Practice TestNav (IAR Testing Platform)
- IAR Digital Item Library
- Student Readiness Tool

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Questions?

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