

**The Illinois State Board of Education is Seeking Flexibility from the U.S. Department of Education for
the 2019-20 Illinois Science Assessment for High School Students
November 2019**

When did Illinois adopt its current science standards?

- Illinois' current science standards became effective in February 2014 and are based on the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS).
- Forty-one experts, including three Illinois educators, wrote the NGSS. State-level committees in 26 states reviewed the learning benchmarks.
- These groups confirmed that the design and development of the NGSS were guided by the best available evidence to ensure that students who meet these standards are prepared for postsecondary education and careers in the 21st century.
- The NGSS can be viewed at [23 Illinois Administrative Code 1 Appendix D](#).

What is the current Illinois Science Assessment (ISA)?

- Illinois' current science assessment was first administered in May 2016.
- The ISA is aligned to the Illinois Learning Standards for science.
- The last administration was March 1 to April 30, 2019.
- Students in grades 5, 8, and first-year Biology I classes took the assessment.

What is the new Illinois Science Assessment?

- Illinois' new science assessment will be administered March 2 through April 30, 2020.
- The new ISA is better aligned to the Illinois Learning Standards for science in both content and science and engineering practices (SEP).
- Students in grades 5, 8, and 11 will take the assessment.
- The new ISA will cover life science, physical science, and earth space science as the primary content domains while also incorporating the SEP throughout.

Why is ISBE seeking flexibility by applying for a waiver?

- Illinois is seeking flexibility for the grade 11 assessment due to complex changes in both the test blueprint (design) and the student populations taking the assessment (shifting from course sampling to census grade 11 testing).
- Flexibility will release ISBE from reporting grade 11 performance results. However, ISBE will hold districts accountable for reaching their 95.0 percent participation rates to ensure credible sampling of the new ISA.

What would occur if this flexibility is requested?

- Illinois would administer and report ISA results for grades 5 and 8 as in any other year.
- Illinois would test grade 11 and report only participation for the 2020 administration.
- Illinois would use the grade 11 assessment data to prepare for an operational test in 2021, following which results would be reported in full.

How can I give my input on this flexibility request?

- Public comment, which will be taken only by email at ISAWaiver@isbe.net, will be accepted November 4 through December 1, 2019.
- Direct questions to Daniel Brown by calling Student Assessment at (866) 317-6034.