

Illinois Science Assessment (ISA)

<https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Illinois-Science-Assessment.aspx>

Frequently- Asked Questions

Updated 01/08/2018

1. Is ISA required to be administered during the current school year?

Answer: Yes. The federal government requires public schools to assess students in science.

2. Who must test?

Answer: In a public school district, ISA will be administered to students enrolled in grade 5 and grade 8 at their respective grade level. The high school assessment for students enrolled in grades 9-12 will be course-based and correspond to the content of Biology I.

3. Specifically, which high school students must test?

Answer: As indicated in ISBE's Student Information System (SIS), high school students enrolled in one of the following four science courses must test:

- 03051A000 Biology
- 03052A000 Biology—Advanced Studies
- 03056A000 AP Biology
- 03057A000 IB Biology

4. How does ISBE identify and Roster students for the ISA?

Answer:

- For grades 5 and 8, ISBE identifies students based on their enrollment in said grades and, if not identified as taking DLM-AA in the previous school year, rosters them to their respective default section (5-default or 8-default). If a student in grade 5 or 8 is newly identified as taking the DLM-AA as the appropriate state assessment, then staff may mark the student record in IWAS, Assessments, with a Reason for No Valid Test Attempt (RNVTA) of 06 to indicate the student does not need to take the assessment.
- For grades 9-12, ISBE identifies students with a course assignment in any of the four courses identified above.
 - ISBE then searches SIS to determine whether the student has a full year credit, earned prior to the current school year, in any of the four courses identified above and removes them from the dataset.
 - ISBE then removes students that took the DLM-AA during the previous school year.
 - For those remaining in the dataset, ISBE rosters high school students for the ISA and defaults to sections by state course code and section number in SIS.
 - If staff question a student's first year biology student status, districts must review the SIS data for errors and/or student transcripts to search for a full year credit (prior to the current school year). If credit is accepted at the high school, then staff may mark the student record in IWAS, Assessments, with a Reason for No Valid Test Attempt (RNVTA) of 06 to indicate the high school student does not need to take the assessment.
 - If a student in grades 9-12 is newly identified as taking the DLM-AA as the appropriate state assessment, then staff may mark the student record in IWAS, Assessments, with a Reason for No Valid Test Attempt (RNVTA) of 06 to indicate the high school student does not need to take the assessment. *Note: DLM-AA testing is grade-based, and only those in grade 11 take DLM-AA science, regardless of course assignment.*

5. Can the ISA high school science courses be adjusted like they can be for PARCC high school tests for ELA/L and mathematics (i.e., may more courses be mapped and may some courses be removed)?

Answer: No.

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6. When will ISA be administered?

Answer: March 1, 2018 (earliest) - April 30, 2018 (last day to test)

7. In what format will ISA be administered?

Answer: ISA is administered online unless in situations of accommodation called for in an IEP, 504, or EL plan. Paper assessments are available via ISBE-Teach Help Menu. However, the student responses MUST be transcribed into ISBE-Learn using the student's Access Code in order to be submitted for scoring. Otherwise, the student will be counted as not tested for participation.

8. How will the test be administered?

Answer: ISA will continue to use the same open-source technology utilized during the 2017 administration.

9. On what standards is ISA based?

Answer: ISA is based on the Illinois Learning Standards in Science, incorporating the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). The State Board adopted these standards in 2014. See <https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Science-Learning-Standards.aspx> for more details.

10. How do the Illinois Learning Standards in Science, incorporating the NGSS and adopted in 2014 by ISBE, relate to the Illinois Learning Standards in Science adopted in 1997?

Answer: The Illinois Learning Standards in Science, incorporating the NGSS, replaced the previous science standards that were adopted in 1997. The NGSS are the most comprehensive science standards that Illinois has ever had. They are more rigorous and detailed as they integrate the content of science with the practices of science. However, there are many similarities between the two sets of standards. For example, the Engineering Standard aligns well to the 1997 Illinois Learning Standard 11B, Technological Design. If students are designing and building models, plus testing and retesting those models, they are meeting the Engineering Standard found in the NGSS.

11. How was the ISA developed?

Answer: For 2017, ISBE plans to use the same test map fielded for the 2016 cycle. The item counts and estimated time to administer (1 hour) will be the same as 2016.

Background: The Illinois State Board of Education entered an item-sharing agreement with the Office of the State Superintendent in the District of Columbia and is working in partnership with D.C. to build the ISA. This partnership allows Illinois to utilize the existing work of D.C., which administered a science exam based on the Next Generation Science Standards in 2015, and leverage both entities' resources to develop a high-quality test.