

Illinois Science Assessment (ISA)

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

Frequently- Asked Questions

Updated 10/31/2016

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. 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.
5. When will ISA be administered?
Answer: The test window is March 1, 2017 through April 28, 2017.
6. In what format will ISA be administered?
Answer: ISA will be administered in an online format only.
7. How will the test be administered?
Answer: ISA will continue to use the same open-source technology utilized during the 2016 administration.
8. 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.
9. 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.

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10. 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.