2026-27 Required Student Assessments and Training

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to summarize expectations for academic student assessments in Iowa schools.

The table below outlines all assessment requirements for districts and nonpublic schools, as mandated by federal law and Iowa Code, for the 2026-27 school year.

Federal Requirements

Purpose	Required Assessment	Legal Citation	Grades Required	Testing Window	Comments
State academic assessment	Iowa Statewide Assessment of Student Progress (ISASP)	Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Iowa Code §§ 256.7(21)(b)(2) and 279.60(3)	Per ESSA: Reading and mathematics in grades 3-8, 10 and 11. Science in grades 5, 8 and 11. * Per Iowa Code: Reading and mathematics in grades 3-11. Science in grades 5, 8 and 11. *	Per state statute, tests will be administered during the last quarter of the year. March 8-May 7, 2027	All students in these grades are to take this assessment. The exception is students taking the state alternate assessment. Applies to public districts and schools receiving ESA funds.
State alternate assessment	Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM)	ESSA Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)	Reading and mathematics in grades 3-11. Science in grades 5, 8 and 11.	**Fall:** Phase 1 Sept. 14-Oct. 30, 2026 **Fall:** Phase 2 Nov. 2-Dec. 18, 2026 **Spring:** Phase 1 Feb. 1-March 26, 2027 **Spring:** Phase 2 March 29-May 21, 2027	For students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) who meet qualifications for participating in Iowa's alternate assessments.
Measure of annual progress and attainment of English	English Language Proficiency Assessment for the 21st Century (ELPA21) Summative	Iowa Administrative Code 281—60.2(1) ESSA, 20 U.S.C. §§ 1111(b)(2)(G)(i) - (ii), 1112(e)(3)(A) - (B), 3113(b)(2)	ELPA21 Summative: Assessment for all K-12 English learners (ELs).	ELPA21 Summative: Feb. 1-March 26, 2027	100% participation is expected for ELPA21 and Alt ELPA Summative assessments. This requirement includes testing ELs with disabilities.

Purpose	Required Assessment	Legal Citation	Grades Required	Testing Window	Comments
Measure of annual progress and attainment of English of learners with significant cognitive disabilities	Alternate English Language Proficiency Assessment (Alt. ELPA) Summative	Iowa Administrative Code 281—60.2(1) ESSA, 20 U.S.C. §§ 1111(b)(2)(G)(i) - (ii), 1112(e)(3)(A) - (B), 3113(b)(2)	Alt ELPA Summative: Assessment for K-12 English learners with significant cognitive disabilities that takes the place of the general ELPA21 Summative requirement.	Alt. ELPA Summative: Feb. 1-March 26, 2027	100% participation is expected for ELPA21 and Alt ELPA Summative assessments. This requirement includes testing ELs with disabilities.
Identification of English learners	ELPA21 Dynamic Screener	Iowa Administrative Code 281—60.2(1) ESSA, 20 U.S.C. §§ 1111(b)(2)(G)(i) - (ii), 1112(e)(3)(A) - (B), 3113(b)(2)	ELPA21 Dynamic Screener: Administered to all K-12 students new to a district whose Home Language Survey indicates a prominent use of a language other than English in the home. **Note:** Transfer students previously screened in another Iowa district do not need to be re-screened.	ELPA21 Dynamic Screener: Year-round, as needed This screening is part of the statewide entrance procedures for identifying English learners.	Screening, identification, and notification to parents of program placement must occur within the first 30 days of enrollment.
Identification of English learners	Alt ELPA Screener	Iowa Administrative Code 281—60.2(1) ESSA, 20 U.S.C. §§ 1111(b)(2)(G)(i) - (ii), 1112(e)(3)(A) - (B), 3113(b)(2)	Alt ELPA Screener: Administered in place of the general screener for English learners with significant cognitive disabilities.	Alt ELPA21 Dynamic Screener: Year-round, as needed. This screening is part of the statewide entrance procedures for identifying English learners.	Alt. ELPA Screener requires advance approval. Contact the Iowa Department of Education Assessment Team for more information.

* The Iowa School Performance Profiles is an ESSA-required report. Thus, grade 9 is not included in the report, even though it is required by the Iowa Code to be assessed.

State Requirements

Purpose	Required Assessment	Legal Citation	Grades Required	Testing Window	Comments
Preschool assessment	Teaching Strategies GOLD®	Iowa Code § 279.60(1) Child Development Coordinating Council Policy	All PK or 4-year-old students in a Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program, Early Childhood Special Education Program, or Shared Visions Preschool Program.	**Fall:** Aug. 13-Nov. 20, 2026 **Winter:** Nov. 21, 2026-March 5, 2027 **Spring:** March 6-May 28, 2027	The Spring Checkpoint is required to be completed for all children in SWVPP and those with IEPs. This requirement began in the 2021-2022 school year to provide checkpoint data for all preschool children across the state and to establish a comprehensive data set for IDEA-DA processes. Applies to public districts, community partners, and Shared Visions Preschool grantees.
Literacy Screening and Progress Monitoring	Early literacy universal screening and progress monitoring assessment	Iowa Code § 279.68	All students screened in K-6; continued progress monitoring for those who are persistently at risk.	**Fall:** Aug. 31-Oct. 2, 2026 **Winter:** Jan. 4-Feb. 5, 2027 **Spring:** April 19-May 28, 2027	Districts may use any approved universal screening assessment to meet this requirement.
Literacy Screening and Progress Monitoring for students with significant cognitive disabilities	Early Literacy Alternate Assessment (EL AA)	Iowa Code § 279.68 IDEA	K-6 students with significant cognitive disabilities; continued for those who are persistently at risk.	**Fall:** Sept. 21-Oct. 2, 2026 **Winter**: Jan. 25- Feb. 5, 2027 **Spring:** May 10-28, 2027	For students with an IEP who meet qualifications for participating in Iowa's alternate assessments.
Mathematics Screening and Progress Monitoring	Mathematics universal screening and progress monitoring assessment	Iowa Code § 279.68A	All students screened in K-6; continued progress monitoring for those who are persistently at risk.	**Fall:** Aug. 31-Oct. 2, 2026 **Winter:** Jan. 4-Feb. 5, 2027 **Spring:** April 19-May 28, 2027	Districts may use any approved universal screening assessment to meet this requirement.

Purpose	Required Assessment	Legal Citation	Grades Required	Testing Window	Comments
Mathematics Screening and Progress Monitoring for students with significant cognitive disabilities	Mathematics Alternate Assessment Screener	Iowa Code § 279.68A IDEA	K-6 students with significant cognitive disabilities; continued for those who are persistently at risk.	**Fall:** Sept. 21-Oct. 2, 2026 **Winter:** Jan. 25- Feb. 5, 2027 **Spring:** May 10-28, 2027	For students with an IEP who meet qualifications for participating in Iowa's alternate assessments.
Diagnostic literacy assessment	Refer to the early literacy universal screening measures outlined in Iowa Code 281.62.	Iowa Code § 281.62	All K-3 students.		The required early literacy universal screening measures under Iowa Code 279.68 may be used to meet this requirement. Applies to public districts.
Summative Assessment for U.S. Government course	End-of-unit assessment for students taking one-half unit of a U.S. Government course.	Iowa Code § 256.11(5)(b)	Applies to course, not grade level.	At the end of the course.	Applies to public districts and accredited nonpublic schools.
(New) Summative Civics Assessment	Civics assessment	Iowa Code § 280.9A	Required for graduation		A score of at least 60% is considered a passing score and will fulfill this requirement. Students may retake the assessment as many times as necessary to obtain a passing score.
(New) Summative Alternative Civics Assessment	Civics alternate assessment	Iowa Code § 280.9A	Required for graduation		A score of at least 60% is considered a passing score and will fulfill this requirement. Students may retake the assessment as many times as necessary to obtain a passing score.

Training for Federal and State Mandated Assessments

General Training Requirements for all Federal and State Assessments

Name of Training	Audience and Frequency	Location	Summary
State of Iowa Test Security Training	**Audience:** Test administrators/ proctors and test coordinators **not administering ISASP** Frequency: Required at least once every 3 years.	AEA Learning Online	This training module includes the importance of test security and ways to ensure test security before, during and after the administration of the assessment. **This will not complete the requirement for taking ISASP Test Security Training.**
State of Iowa Test Security Training for Test Coordinators	Audience: Test coordinators not administering ISASP Frequency: Required at least once every 3 years.	AEA Learning Online	This training module supports district and school assessment coordinators in creating an assessment policy and plan that adheres to the guidelines outlined in the *State of Iowa Test Security Manual*. **This will not complete the requirement for taking ISASP Test Security Training.**

Federally Mandated Assessment Training Requirements

ISASP Training

Name of Training	Audience and Frequency	Location	Summary
ISASP Test Coordinator Overview	**Audience:** ISASP test coordinators **Frequency:** Required every year.	ISASP Portal	The purpose of this training module is to support district and/or school coordinators in preparing for online and paper testing. The training includes an overview of the ISASP Portal and Pearson's assessment platforms (PearsonAccessNext and TestNav8), as well as the next steps and tasks coordinators can complete.
ISASP Technology Readiness	**Audience:** ISASP technology staff **Frequency:** Highly recommended every year.	ISASP Portal	The purpose of this training module is to equip technology staff with the knowledge to assess a school's readiness to administer online tests to students. Topics include technology resources, components of online testing, TestNav8, ProctorCache, PearsonAccessNext, infrastructure setup, infrastructure trial, next steps, and support.

Name of Training	Audience and Frequency	Location	Summary
ISASP Test Security Training *Meets the test security training requirement*	**Audience:** ISASP test coordinators and test administrators/ proctors **Frequency:** Required every year.	ISASP Portal	The purpose of the required test security module is to provide all test administrators/proctors and test coordinators with information regarding test security, accessibility and the administration of the ISASP assessments. **This is the test security training that must be completed prior to ISASP testing.**
ISASP Test Administration Training	**Audience:** ISASP test coordinators and test administrators/ proctors **Frequency:** Required every year for test coordinators. Recommended for test administrators/ proctors.	ISASP Portal	The purpose of the required test administration module is to provide district and school coordinators with a refresher on the functionalities PearsonAccessNext available in PearsonAccessNext. This training provides more information on how to set up testing and the critical tasks required to prepare for ISASP administration.
ISASP Reports Overview	**Audience:** ISASP test coordinators and teachers **Frequency:** Recommended every year.	ISASP Portal	The purpose of this training module is to provide an overview of the types of reports available, how to access reports in PearsonAccessNext, and how to print and order reports.
Scribe Training	Audience: Scribes. **Frequency:** Highly recommended at least **once every 3 years**.	AEA Learning Online	This training module emphasizes the importance of test security for everyone and provides guidelines for scribes during federally mandated assessments.

DLM Training

Name of Training	Audience and Frequency	Location	Summary
DLM Required Assessment Training	**Audience:** DLM test administrators/proctors **Frequency:** Required every year.	Dynamic Learning Maps	DLM has new and returning training for teachers who administered the DLM assessments the prior year.
DLM Optional Training	**Audience:** DLM test administrators/proctors **Frequency:** When appropriate.	Dynamic Learning Maps	DLM Professional Development Modules cover a range of topics, including DLM Fundamentals, English language arts, math and science.

ELPA21 Training

Name of Training	Audience and Frequency	Location	Summary
ELPA21 Summative Test Administration Training for *New* Test Administrators ELPA21 Summative Test Administration Training for *Experienced* Test Administrators	**Audience:** All test administrators/proctors **Frequency:** Required every year. Available in December.	**New:** Accessed through the ClearCourse Learning Management System hosted by Cambium on the Iowa ELPA21 portal.	This is required training for all educators responsible for administering the ELPA21 Summative assessment to English learners. Test administrators who are new to ELPA21 must complete the initial training module series. Test administrators who have completed the initial training in a previous year may take the shorter training option for experienced test administrators.
Alt ELPA Summative Test Training for *New* Test Administrators Alt ELPA Refresher Training for *Experienced* Test Administrators	**Audience:** All test administrators/proctors **Frequency:** Required every year. Available in December.	**New:** Accessed through the ClearCourse Learning Management System hosted by Cambium on the Iowa ELPA21 portal.	Alt ELPA Summative Training is required for all new test administrators before administering the assessment. Test administrators who have completed initial training in a previous year may take the shorter training for experienced test administrators. Note: The Alt ELPA Summative requires two educators to administer. Both are required to complete Alt ELPA Summative Training.
ELPA21 Dynamic Screener Training for *New* Test Administrators ELPA21 Dynamic Screener Training for *Experienced* Test Administrators	**Audience:** Test administrators **Frequency:** Required every year. Available in August.	**New:** Accessed through the ClearCourse Learning Management System hosted by Cambium on the Iowa ELPA21 portal.	This training is required for all educators responsible for administering the ELPA21 Dynamic Screener and the Alt ELPA Screener to potential English learners. All new test administrators take the ELPA21 Dynamic Screener Training. Test administrators who have completed the initial screener training in a previous year may take the shorter training option for experienced test administrators.
Alt ELPA Screener Training	**Audience:** Test administrators **Frequency:** Required every year. Available in August.	**New:** Accessed through the ClearCourse Learning Management System hosted by Cambium on the Iowa ELPA21 portal.	All test administrators who administer the Alt ELPA Screener must take the Alt ELPA supplemental training in addition to the general ELPA21 Dynamic Screener training.

State Mandated Assessment Training Requirements

Name of Training	Audience and Frequency	Location	Summary
Administering assessments for ELI requirements (Iowa Code 279.68)	**Audience:** All users of the assessments. **Frequency:** Prior to initial administration, and recommend updating at least annually.	Specific to the assessments used by the district. For example, FastBridge assessments include training modules in the Training and Resources tab within the FastBridge system.	Prior to administering the first assessment, all users must complete the required training for the assessment as defined by the assessment vendor. It is strongly recommended that users frequently refresh their administration and scoring knowledge. Some assessments (such as the FastBridge suite of measures) have an assessment certification process.
Early Literacy Alternate Assessment (EL AA)	**Audience:** All users of the assessment. **Frequency:** Required every year.	AEA Learning Online	Prior to administering Iowa's Early Literacy Alternate Assessment, teachers are required to take training that reviews the assessment requirements and any changes from the previous administration.
Teaching Strategies GOLD®	**Audience:** All users of the assessment. **Frequency:** Required every three (3) years.	In the Develop Area of My Teaching Strategies GOLD website.	It is highly recommended that teaching staff complete the Interrater Reliability Certification (IRC) to support reliable use of GOLD®. Teaching assistants who have completed the MyTeachingStrategies GOLD® Introduction and Interrater Reliability Certification may complete preliminary leveling, if the lead teacher and administrator agree.