

2025-26 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 identifies all assessment requirements for districts and nonpublic schools, per federal law and Iowa code, during the 2025-2026 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) Applies to public districts.	Per ESSA:* Reading and mathematics in grades 3-8, 10 and 11. Science in grades 5, 8 and 10. Per Iowa Code:* Reading and mathematics in grades 3-11. Science in grades 5, 8 and 10.	Per state statute, tests will be administered during the last quarter of the year. March 9-May 8, 2026	All students in these grades are to take this assessment. The exception is students taking the state alternate assessment.
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 10.	Fall Phase 1: Sept. 8-Oct. 31, 2025 Fall Phase 2: Nov. 3-Dec. 19, 2025 Spring Phase 1: Feb. 2-March 27, 2026 Spring Phase 2: March 30-May 15, 2026	For students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) who meet qualifications for participating in Iowa's alternate assessments.

Purpose	Required Assessment	Legal Citation	Grades Required	Testing Window	Comments
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 sections 1111(b)(2)(G)(i) and (ii); 1112(e)(3)(a) and (b); and 3113(b)(2)	ELPA21 Summative: Assessment for all K-12 English learners (ELs).	ELPA21 Summative: Feb. 2-March 27, 2026	100% participation is expected for ELPA21 and Alt ELPA Summative assessments. This requirement includes testing ELs with disabilities.
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 sections 1111(b)(2)(G)(i) and (ii); 1112(e)(3)(a) and (b); and 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. 2-March 27, 2026	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 sections 1111(b)(2)(G)(i) and (ii); 1112(e)(3)(a) and (b); and 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. <i>Note:</i> 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 parent notification 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 sections 1111(b)(2)(G)(i) and (ii); 1112(e)(3)(a) and (b); and 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 advanced 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 Applies to public districts, community partners, and Shared Visions Preschool grantees.	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. 12-Nov. 24, 2025 Winter: Nov. 25, 2025-March 2, 2026 Spring: March 3-May 29, 2026	The Spring Checkpoint is required 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 provide a complete data set for IDEA-DA processes.
Literacy Screening and Progress Monitoring	Early literacy universal screening and progress monitoring assessment	Iowa Code 279.68	All students K-6 and continued for those who are persistently at risk.	Fall: Aug. 25–Sept. 26, 2025 Winter: Jan. 5–Feb. 6, 2026 Spring: April 20-May 29, 2026	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	Alt Literacy Screening and Progress Monitoring: Administered for students with significant cognitive disabilities in K-6 and continued for those students persistently at risk.	Fall: Sept. 24-Oct. 3, 2025 Winter: Jan. 26-Feb. 6, 2026 Spring: May 11-29, 2026	For students with an IEP who meet the qualifications for participating in Iowa's alternate assessments.
Mathematics Screening and Progress Monitoring	(New) Mathematics universal screening and progress monitoring assessment	Iowa Code 279.68A	All students K-6 and continued for those who are persistently at risk.	Fall: Aug. 25–Sept. 26, 2025 Winter: Jan. 5–Feb. 6, 2026 Spring: April 20-May 29, 2026	Districts may use any approved universal screening assessment to meet this requirement.
Mathematics Screening and Progress Monitoring for students with significant cognitive disabilities	Mathematics Alternate Assessment Screener (beginning 2026-2027 school year)	Iowa Code 279.68A IDEA	Alt Mathematics Screening and Progress Monitoring: Administered for students with significant cognitive disabilities in K-6 and continued for those students persistently at risk.	Fall: Aug. 25–Sept. 26, 2025 Winter: Jan. 5–Feb. 6, 2026 Spring: April 20-May 29, 2026	

Purpose	Required Assessment	Legal Citation	Grades Required	Testing Window	Comments
	Diagnostic literacy assessment	Iowa Code 256D(1)(b)(1) Applies to public districts.	All K-3 students.		The required early literacy universal screening measures under Iowa Code 279.68 may be used to meet this requirement.
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 public districts and accredited nonpublic schools.	Applies to the course, not grade level.	At the end of the course.	
Summative Civics Assessment	Civics assessment (beginning 2026-2027 school year)	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.
Summative Civics Assessment for students with significant cognitive disabilities	Civics alternate assessment (beginning 2026-2027 school year)	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. Frequency: <i>Required at least once every 3 years.</i>	AEA Learning Online	This training module highlights the importance of test security and provides guidance on how to ensure test security before, during, and after the administration of the assessment.
State of Iowa Test Security Training for Test Coordinators	Audience: Test coordinators. Frequency: <i>Required at least once every 3 years.</i>	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.

Federally Mandated Assessment Training Requirements

ISASP Training

Name of Training	Audience and Frequency	Location	Summary
ISASP Test Coordinator Overview	Audience: ISASP test coordinators. Frequency: <i>Required every year.</i>	ISASP Portal: https://iowa.pearsonaccess.com/training-mods/	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 (PearsonAccess ^{next} and TestNav8), as well as the next steps and tasks coordinators can complete.
ISASP Technology Readiness	Audience: ISASP technology staff. Frequency: <i>Highly recommended every year.</i>	ISASP Portal: https://iowa.pearsonaccess.com/training-mods/	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, PearsonAccess ^{next} , infrastructure setup, infrastructure trial, next steps and support.
ISASP Test Security Training *Meets the test security training requirement*	Audience: ISASP test coordinators and test administrators/ proctors Frequency: <i>Required every year.</i>	ISASP Portal: https://iowa.pearsonaccess.com/training-mods/	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.

Name of Training	Audience and Frequency	Location	Summary
ISASP Test Administration Training	Audience: ISASP test coordinators and test administrators/ proctors Frequency: <i>Required every year for test coordinators.</i> <i>Recommended for test administrators/ proctors.</i>	ISASP Portal: https://iowa.pearsonaccess.com/training-mods/	The purpose of the required test administration module is to provide district and school coordinators with a refresher on the functionalities within PearsonAccess ^{next} . This training provides additional information on setting up testing and the critical tasks required to prepare for ISASP administration.
ISASP Reports Overview	Audience: ISASP test coordinators and teachers Frequency: <i>Recommended every year.</i>	ISASP Portal: https://iowa.pearsonaccess.com/training-mods/	The purpose of this training module is to provide an overview of the types of reports available, how to access reports in PearsonAccessnext and the printing and ordering of reports.
Scribe Training	Audience: Scribes Frequency: <i>Highly recommended at least once every 3 years.</i>	AEA Learning Online	This training module emphasizes the importance of test security for all individuals and provides guidance 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: <i>Required every year.</i>	Dynamic Learning Maps: https://educator.kiteaai.org/AART/training.htm	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: https://dynamiclearningmaps.org/professional-development	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
<p>ELPA21 Summative Test Administration Training for New Test Administrators</p> <p>ELPA21 Summative Test Administration Training for Experienced Test Administrators</p>	<p>Audience: All test administrators/proctors</p> <p>Frequency: <i>Required every year.</i></p>	<p>Accessed through the ELPA21 training system or AEA Learning Online.</p> <p>Available in December.</p>	<p>This is required training for all educators who will have responsibility for administering the ELPA21 Summative assessment to English learners.</p> <p>Test administrators new to ELPA21 must take 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.</p>
<p>Alt ELPA Summative Test Training for Test Administrators</p> <p>Alt ELPA Refresher Training for Experienced Test Administrators</p>	<p>Audience: All test administrators/proctors.</p> <p>Frequency: <i>Required every year.</i></p>	<p>Accessed through the ELPA21 training system or AEA Learning Online.</p> <p>Available in December.</p>	<p>Alt ELPA Summative Training is required for all new test administrators prior to administering the assessment. Test administrators who have completed initial training in a previous year may take the shorter training for experienced test administrators.</p> <p><i>Note:</i> The Alt ELPA Summative requires two educators to administer. Both are required to complete Alt ELPA Summative Training.</p>
<p>ELPA21 Dynamic Screener Training</p> <p>ELPA21 Dynamic Screener Training for Experienced Test Administrators</p>	<p>Audience: Test administrators.</p> <p>Frequency: <i>Required every year.</i></p>	<p>Accessed through the ELPA21 training system or AEA Learning Online.</p> <p>Available in August.</p>	<p>This training is required for all educators responsible for administering the ELPA21 Dynamic Screener and the Alt ELPA Screener to potential English learners.</p> <p>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.</p>
<p>Alt ELPA Screener Training</p>	<p>Audience: Test administrators.</p> <p>Frequency: <i>Required every year.</i></p>	<p>Accessed through the ELPA21 training system or AEA Learning Online.</p> <p>Available in August.</p>	<p>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.</p>

State Mandated Assessment Training Requirements

Name of Training	Audience and Frequency	Location	Summary
Administering assessments for ELI requirements (Iowa Code 279.68)	<p>Audience: All users of the assessments.</p> <p>Frequency: <i>Prior to initial administration, and recommend updating at least annually.</i></p>	Specific to the assessments used by the district. For example, FastBridge assessments have training modules in the training and resources tab in the FastBridge system	Prior to administering the first assessment, 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)	<p>Audience: All users of the assessment.</p> <p>Frequency: <i>Required every year.</i></p>	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®	<p>Audience: All users of the assessment.</p> <p>Frequency: <i>Every 3 years.</i></p>	In the Develop Area of My Teaching Strategies GOLD website .	<p>It is highly recommended that teaching staff complete the Interrater Reliability Certification (IRC) to support the reliable use of GOLD®.</p> <p>Teaching assistants who have completed MyTeachingStrategies® GOLD® Introduction and Interrater Reliability Certification may complete preliminary leveling if the lead teacher and administrator agree.</p>