Setting High Expectations for Iowa Students on the Iowa Learning Expectations and Academic Development Assessment

About the Iowa Learning Expectations and Academic Development Assessment

The Iowa Learning Expectations and Academic Development Assessment is a new test that replaces the Iowa Statewide Assessment of Student Progress (ISASP). The Iowa Learning Expectations and Academic Development Assessment provides information about whether a student has mastered the foundational skills required for their grade level.

- It was developed by Iowa Testing Programs at the University of Iowa in collaboration with Iowa educators.
- It was first given to students in the spring of 2026 to align to the new Iowa Academic Standards in English language arts and mathematics adopted by the State Board of Education in 2024 and first implemented in the 2024-25 school year.
- It is given in the following subjects and grade levels:
  - Mathematics: Grades 3–11
  - English language arts, including reading and writing: Grades 3–11
  - Science: Grades 5, 8 and 10 (starting in 2027, students will be assessed in grades 5, 8 and 11).
- It has four new achievement levels: Below, Approaching, Meeting and Exceeding Grade-Level Expectations. Previously, student performance on the ISASP included three achievement levels: Not Yet Proficient, Proficient and Advanced.
- It better represents what is being taught in Iowa classrooms and how students are progressing toward being able to do grade-level work because it matches the new Iowa Academic Standards.

What the New Expectations Mean for Students, Families and Educators

Because Iowa raised the bar for what students are expected to know and be able to do, the state is also changing the way progress and achievement are measured on the Iowa Learning Expectations and Academic Development Assessment.

The following four new performance levels will provide a more accurate understanding of student abilities, and better inform student supports.

- Below Grade-Level Expectations: Student does not yet show understanding of the needed grade-level knowledge and skills and is performing below the level needed to be on track for future learning.
- Approaching Grade-Level Expectations: Student demonstrates some understanding of the needed grade-level knowledge and skills and is on a path to being able to complete the grade-level work needed for future learning.
- Meeting Grade-Level Expectations: Student demonstrates full understanding of the grade-level knowledge and skills they need to complete the grade-level work and is on track for future learning.
- Exceeding Grade-Level Expectations: Student consistently demonstrates a deep understanding of the grade-level knowledge and skills and is able to complete grade-level work at a higher level than would be expected in order to be on track for future learning.

How to interpret Iowa Learning Expectations and Academic Development Assessment results for 2026 and beyond

The Iowa Learning Expectations and Academic Development Assessment results create a new baseline to measure future progress on the statewide assessment, which will change how we look at student performance. The 2026 results should not be compared to previous years because the Iowa Learning Expectations and Academic Development Assessment is a new test that is aligned to Iowa's new challenging academic standards with new material being tested, new questions and the new achievement levels, which are different from the previous assessment.

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