

# Alaska's Summative Assessments



## The FACTS:

The **purpose of a summative assessment** is to evaluate student learning at the end of an instructional unit, like a school year. Summative assessment is an opportunity for students to demonstrate the skills and knowledge they have acquired over a school year. Alaska's statewide summative assessments are administered in grades 3-9 in math and English language arts (ELA) and in grades 5, 8, and 10 in science.

**A statewide summative assessment is important for three reasons.** First, these assessments provide information for families, educators, policy makers, the community, and businesses about how Alaska's schools and districts are performing. Second, results from the assessments provide information to help all schools improve. Third, information from statewide assessments helps to ensure there is equity in education for all students. DEED's mission is to provide an excellent education to every student every day.

**Alaska partners with Data Recognition Corporation (DRC) to administer the Alaska Science Assessment.** DRC provides test items from their college- and career-ready item bank, a secure test engine, a test administration portal, and customer service to assist districts and schools in implementing technology.

**Alaska partners with NWEA for an innovative approach to assessment,** including summative assessments in ELA and math which comprise the Alaska System of Academic Readiness or AK STAR. For more information about AK STAR and the new innovative approach, please visit the [AK STAR webpage](https://education.alaska.gov/assessments/akstar) (education.alaska.gov/assessments/akstar).



**Resources to help students and educators prepare for summative assessments are available on DEED's assessment webpage** ([education.alaska.gov/assessments](https://education.alaska.gov/assessments)). The purpose of the student readiness resources are to familiarize students with the testing platform and to give them an opportunity to experience the computer-based test environment, item types, and practice using the technology tools.

**Student supports for students with disabilities and English learners are provided.** Student supports are available for Alaska's summative assessments. For more information about universal tools for all students as well as allowable accommodations, please refer to the *Participation Guidelines for Inclusion of Students in State Assessments*, and the *Handbook for the Participation Guidelines* available on the [DEED Accommodations webpage](https://education.alaska.gov/assessments/accommodations) (education.alaska.gov/assessments/accommodations).

**DEED values educator's input and expertise.** Alaska educators from all districts are invited to participate in valuable assessment design activities. Multiple opportunities are available, including standard setting, alignment studies, and the Assessment Advisory Panel. More information about educator participation opportunities can be found on [DEED's Educator Resources webpage](https://education.alaska.gov/assessments/educator-resources) (education.alaska.gov/assessments/educator-resources).

## Types of Assessments

**Summative Assessment:** designed to provide information regarding the level of student, school, or program success at an end point in time. Summative assessments are administered after the conclusion of instruction. The results are used to fulfill summative functions, such as to: 1) reach an evaluative judgment about the effectiveness of a recently concluded educational program; 2) arrive at an inference about a student's mastery of the curricular aims sought during an in-class instructional sequence; 3) determine a grade for a course; or 4) meet local, state, and federal accountability requirements. Assessments referred to as summative can range from large-scale assessment systems, such as the annual assessments administered across the state, to district-wide assessment systems or tests, to classroom summative tests created by teachers.

**Interim Assessment:** typically administered periodically throughout the school year to fulfill one or more of the following functions: 1) predictive (identifying students' readiness for success on a later high-stakes tests); 2) evaluative (to appraise ongoing educational programs); and 3) instructional (to supply teachers with individual student performance data). The tests are also called "benchmark," "interim benchmark," or "common."

**Universal Screening Assessments:** periodically conducted, usually two or three times during a school year, to identify students who may be at risk, to monitor student progress, or to predict students' likelihood of success on meeting or exceeding curricular benchmarks. Universal screening tests are typically brief and conducted with all students at a particular grade level. They focus on target skills (for example, phonological awareness) that are highly predictive of future outcomes. These assessments are used along with other information to identify students who need more frequent or intensive opportunities to learn a skill.

**Formative assessment:** a process used by teachers and students during instruction that provides feedback to adjust ongoing teaching and learning to improve students' achievement of intended instructional outcomes. The critical features of effective formative assessment include: 1) clearly identified learning goals and criteria for success; 2) clearly articulated sub-goals and learning progressions; 3) evidence of learning elicited during instruction; 4) descriptive feedback provided to students and self; and 5) peer-assessment.

*Definitions adapted from "Distinguishing Formative Assessment from Other Educational Assessment Labels" CCSSO Formative Assessment for Students and Teachers (FAST) State Collaborative, 2012*