



March 4, 2019

Dear Parent or Guardian,

The Performance Evaluation for Alaska's Schools (PEAKS) and the Alaska Science Assessment are statewide summative assessments that encompass English Language arts (ELA), mathematics, and science. In the spring of 2019, the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District will administer PEAKS to students in grades 3-9 and assess students' understanding of the Alaska ELA and mathematics standards adopted in 2012. Students in grades 4, 8, and 10 will also take the Alaska Science Assessment, which is a summative test that measures students' understanding of the Alaska Science Grade Level Expectations adopted in 2006.

The students at University Park will be testing on the following dates:

- 3rd Grade: April 4 (Reading) and April 11 (Math)
- 4th Grade: April 10 (English Language Arts), April 11 (Science) and April 17 (Math)
- 5th Grade: April 8 (Math) and April 10 (English Language Arts)
- 6th Grade: April 16 (English Language Arts) and April 18 (Math)

April 22-April 26 will be utilized for Make-Up Testing

Attached you will find "Why Should my Child Take the State Assessment," an informative document released by the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development (DEED). The Fairbanks North Star Borough School District also has additional information for parents available at www.k12northstar.org/Page/6352.

If you have any questions about the upcoming spring assessment, please contact me at 479-6963 or call the Department of Teaching and Learning at 452-2000 ext. 11422.

Sincerely,

What is my child tested on in the spring?

Each spring, schools give the statewide PEAKS assessment to students in grades 3 – 9, and the Alaska Science Assessment to students in grade 4, 8, and 10. These tests provide students the opportunity to show their understanding of important skills in English language arts, mathematics, and science at their grade level.

Why is assessment important in my child's education?

There are five essential questions that we ask (and answer) in regard to student learning every day in our classrooms:

1. What do we want our students to know and do? (Effective statewide standards)
2. How will we teach them? (Effective local curriculum and instruction)
3. How will we know if they learned it? (Effective assessment)
4. What will we do if they do not learn it? (Effective intervention)
5. What will we do if they already know it? (Effective enrichment)

Effective assessment is the bridge between teaching the standards and ensuring that support is available for all students. It is a key part of student learning, and everything we do should work toward this goal.

How is this assessment meaningful for my child?

The statewide assessments is a *summative* assessment, which is just one piece of a balanced assessment system. Summative assessments are designed to give information on a student's understanding of the state's English language arts, mathematics, and science standards. When administered over multiple years, this assessment is even more meaningful because it informs you on how far your child has progressed in their learning.

Why does the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) give a statewide assessment?

First, DEED wants to be able to inform parents, educators, policy makers, the community, and businesses how Alaska's schools and districts are performing. Second, after DEED has determined how schools are performing, they want to identify schools in the most need of school improvement efforts. Third, DEED wants to ensure there is equity in education. Their mission is to provide an excellent education to every student every day.

Why is it important for my child to participate in the statewide assessment?

Educators make decisions locally about how to teach Alaska's standards. With this in mind, the summative assessment is a standardized way to determine in a uniform manner how well your child's school and district are performing. Also, at the state level, we invest over a billion dollars in public education each year, and the citizens of Alaska have a right to know if that money is contributing to increased learning for students.

Parents have the right to make educational decisions for their child; please check with your district for more information.

More information can be found on DEED's website at <https://education.alaska.gov/assessments/peaks>. We also encourage you to view DEED's video on "Assessments: Why Are They Important?" at <https://vimeo.com/193465985>.