



Building Educational Success Together

Fairbanks North Star Borough School District
520 Fifth Avenue Fairbanks, Alaska 99701
(907) 452-2000 x11201 www.k12northstar.org/BEST

March 1, 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.

You can help your child prepare for the type of questions and technology used on the tests. PEAKS practice tests are now available for ELA, math, and science. To access these practice tests, copy the link below into **Google Chrome**; no other browser will support this webpage <https://wbte.drcredirect.com/AK/portals/ak>. Please note that the audio versions are for special needs text-to-speech accommodation only. Computers with Google Chrome are available to use anytime at BEST.

BEST students will take the PEAKS and science assessments during the following test windows depending on family first letter of last name:

- April 2, 2019 9am-12pm, English Language Arts, Grades 3-9, Families A-L
- April 3, 2019 9am-12pm, Math, Grades 3-9, and Science, Grades 4,8,10, Families A-L
- April 4, 2019 9am-12pm, English Language Arts, Grades 3-9, Families M-Z
- April 5, 2019 9am-12pm, Math, Grades 3-9, and Science, Grades 4,8,10, Families M-Z
- April 24-25 12pm-4pm, Make up days for all students, all grades, all tests

On the testing days, students will report to the BEST office, and we will direct them to testing rooms. Please have your students arrive no later than 8:45am on the designated testing days. When picking up students from BEST, please sign them out before leaving.

Enclosed 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 BEST or call the Department of Teaching and Learning at 452-2000 ext. 11422.

Sincerely,

Leah Sansone
BEST Homeschool Testing Coordinator

Why Should My Child Take the State Assessment?



What is my child tested on in the spring?

Each spring, schools give the statewide assessment to students in grades 3 – 10. This test provides 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 assessment 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 DEED give a statewide assessment?

First, we want to be able to inform parents, educators, policy makers, the community, and businesses how our schools and districts are performing. Second, after we have determined how our schools are performing, we want to identify schools in the most need of school improvement efforts. Third, we want to ensure there is equity in education. Our 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, including whether to participate in statewide testing. Please check with your district for more information.

More information can be found at education.alaska.gov/tls/assessments/. We also encourage you to view DEED's video on [Assessments: Why Are They Important?](#).