

## ILLINOIS SCIENCE ASSESSMENT

The Illinois Science Assessment (ISA) is a new and innovative assessment. It is aligned to the new Illinois Learning Standards in Science (ILS-Science) which are based on the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). The new standards, and the new assessment, go beyond asking students to memorize facts. Both ask students to “answer” questions with facts and be able to explain why and support their answers with evidence and reasoning. The new standards ask students to engage with science with integrated and interrelated concepts. The charts below shows the two state established performance levels. The average 2016 and 2017 score in District 99 score was 307. The average 2016 and 2017 score in the State of Illinois was 300.

Performance Level	Performance Level Descriptors
<b>Level 2 307 - 400 Proficient</b>	Work at this level meets the standard. It is acceptable work that demonstrates application of essential knowledge and skills. Minor errors or omissions do not detract from the overall quality.
<b>Level 1 200 - 306 Not Proficient</b>	Work at this level does not meet the standard. It shows partial, but inconsistent application of knowledge and skills.

**What does this mean?** The ISA is a requirement in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). It is a tool that helps ensure high-quality science instruction in Illinois. ESSA requires that states test students in science once in each of the following grade spans: 3-5, 6-9, and 10-12. In high school, Illinois tests students who are enrolled in “Biology, \*Biology Advanced Studies, \*Advanced Placement (AP) Biology, and/or \*International Baccalaureate (IB) Biology but do not already have a full year’s credit in one of these courses. The assessment is approximately one hour in duration. Test results are a high-level indicator of science performance. The score ranges indicate a student’s proficiency on this exam, but **must be used in combination with other data points** in order to determine a student’s overall proficiency in science. The ISA results are intended to serve as a large-scale snapshot to inform instruction and assessment at the classroom, school, and district levels.

### **Start a conversation:**

You can use these results to begin a conversation with your child, teacher, or school administrators about science. Below are some topics and questions you may use in discussion with teachers, principals, and others in your school.

### **What questions could I ask teachers or administrators at my child's school?**

- **Questions about science education in the school:**
  - As a parent or guardian, what should I expect from an ILS-aligned classroom?
  - How has science education changed with the application of the Illinois Learning Standards?
  - Do the standards align from grade to grade as my student progresses through school?
  - How will the new science standards prepare my child for college and/or career?
  - What changes have schools made to align current curriculum with the new science standards?
    - How will science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) be incorporated within the science curriculum?
  
- **Questions about changes for my child:**
  - What is three-dimensional learning and how will it affect my child?
  - What different skills and competencies will my child be required to learn within the scope of the new standards?
  - What can we do at home to prepare, encourage, improve, and advance my child's performance regarding these standards?

### **What questions should I ask my child?**

- **Ask your child to explain a natural experience.**
  - Ask them why they think their explanation is true.
  - Ask them to provide evidence (facts, data, observations, etc.) for their response.
  - Ask them to provide an explanation (reasoning) about why their evidence supports the original idea.

(All three aspects are very important for showing proficiency.)

- **Have fun exploring scientific phenomena together!**
  - Ask yourself and your child the “why” surrounding scientific phenomena. The fun of science is analyzing evidence and formulating reasoning!

**Resources:**

- Illinois State Board of Education, College and Career Readiness Division, Science Resources: <https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Science.aspx>
- Resources to help parents with NGSS: <https://www.nextgenscience.org/parentguides>
- Understanding the Standards: <https://www.nextgenscience.org/understanding-standards/understanding-standards>

## **FAQ Illinois Science Assessment (ISA)**

### **1. Do colleges and universities see ISA scores?**

No, ISA scores are not shared with colleges or universities.

### **2. How can students find their scores?**

Scores are in [Home Access Center](#) under the test summary tab.

### **3. Is the Illinois Science Assessment required?**

The State of Illinois requires students enrolled in Biology to take the assessment.

### **4. When is the ISA administered?**

Each year, the Illinois State Board of Education designates a spring testing window. Schools must administer the assessment during that window.

### **5. Do students need a calculator to take the test?**

A calculator is not required but may be used on the test. Calculators are not provided, so students need to bring their own. Students will be instructed to clear the memory in their calculator before taking the test.

### **6. If a student is absent do they have to make-up the test?**

Yes, absent students are scheduled to make up the test.