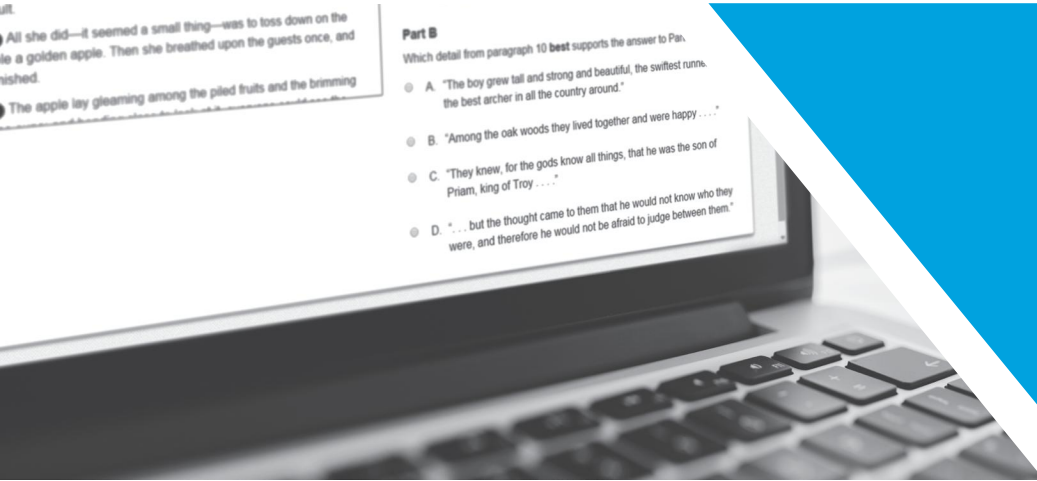


Spring



ILLINOIS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION



Illinois Science Assessment Parent Score Report Interpretation Guide

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1.0 General Information for Parents and Educators

1.1 Background

The Illinois Science Assessment (ISA) assesses the progress of students in grades 5 and 8 in meeting the Illinois Learning Standards (ILS) in Science incorporating the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). Illinois transitioned, in 2025, to the ACT® as the high school assessment for science.

1.2 ISA Assessment

The primary purpose of the ISA is to allow students to demonstrate what they know and can do in science; assist educators in supporting student learning; make use of technology in assessments; advance accountability at all levels; and provide a measure of college and career readiness for students.

The ISA was administered in either computer-based testing (CBT) or paper-based testing (PBT) format. Each assessment represents a grade band, with the grade 5 ISA sampling content and skills from the grades 3 – 5 ILS and the grade 8 ISA sampling content and skills from the grades 6 – 8 ILS.

1.2.1 ILS in Science

The ILS in Science include Performance Expectations (PEs) which define what students should know and be able to do as a result of instruction and study. The PEs consist of the integration of three dimensions: Science and Engineering Practices (SEPs), Disciplinary Core Ideas (DCIs), and Crosscutting Concepts (CCCs). The integration of these three dimensions provides students with a context for the content of science, how science knowledge is acquired and understood, and how the sciences are connected through concepts that have universal meaning across the disciplines. The test items that comprise the ISA reflect at least two of the three dimensions. Students demonstrate their acquired skills and knowledge by answering selected-response and constructed-response items.

1.2.2 Performance Expectation Illustration

A **Disciplinary Core Idea (DCI)**, a **Science and Engineering Practice (SEP)**, and a **Crosscutting Concept (CCC)** weave together to form a holistic standard that incorporates scientific content, scientific practices, and scientific thinking.

Performance Expectations (PEs) reflect the intersection of the three dimensions.

An annotated example of a grade 5 Physical Science PE is provided below.

5-PS1-2: **Measure and graph quantities to provide evidence that regardless of the type of change that occurs when heating, cooling, or mixing substances, the total weight of matter is conserved.**

Science and Engineering Practice

Crosscutting Concept

Disciplinary Core Idea

National Research Council (2012)
A Framework for K-12 Science Education: Practices, Crosscutting Concepts, and Core Ideas. National Academies Press.

1.3 Confidentiality of Reporting Results

Individual student performance results on the ISA are confidential and may be released only in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (20 U.S.C. Section 1232g). Aggregated student performance data are made available to the public and do not contain the names of individual students or teachers.

1.4 Purpose of this Guide

This guide provides information on the individual student reports provided for ISA results. Section 2.0, which outlines and explains elements of the individual student report, may be shared with parents. This section will help parents understand their child's test results.

Sample reports included in this guide are for illustration purposes only. They are provided to show the basic layout of the report and the information it provides. Sample reports do not include actual data from any test administration.

2.0 Understanding the Illinois Science Assessment Individual Student Report (ISR)

2.1 Types of Scores on the ISA Individual Student Report

Student performance on the ISA is described on the individual student report using scale scores and performance levels. Scale scores are used to classify the student's performance into one of the four performance levels. Each performance level represents a range of the score scale. State average results are included in relevant sections of the report to help parents understand how their child's performance compares to that of other Illinois students.

2.1.1 Scale Score

A scale score is a numerical value that summarizes student performance. Not all students respond to the same set of test items, so each student's raw score (actual points earned on test items) is adjusted for the slight differences in difficulty among the various forms and administrations of the test. The resulting scale score allows for accurate comparison across test forms and administration years within a grade or course and content area. ISA reports provide overall scale scores for science, which determine a student's performance level. ISA scale scores range from 700 to 900 for all tests.

For example, a student who earns an overall scale score of 800 on one form of the grade 8 science assessment would be expected to earn an overall scale score of 800 on any other form of the grade 8 science assessment. Furthermore, the student's overall scale score and level of mastery of concepts and skills would be comparable to another student who took the same assessment the previous year or following year.

Additionally, ISA offers domain level scale scores for each of the three domains: Life, Physical, and Earth/Space with a range for domain scale score of 300 to 500. To provide context for the domain scale score, state percentile ranks are also provided. Note that each of the three domains is scaled independently (i.e., generated separately). This means it is not appropriate to sum or average the three domain scale scores or their associated percentile ranks.

2.1.2 Performance Level

Each performance level is a broad, categorical level defined by a student's overall scale score and is used to report overall student performance by describing how well students met the expectations for their grade level/course. Each performance level is defined by a range of overall scale scores for the assessment. There are four performance levels for the Illinois Science Assessment:

- Level 4: Above Proficient
- Level 3: Proficient
- Level 2: Approaching Proficient
- Level 1: Below Proficient

Students performing at levels 3 and 4 are proficient or above proficient and have demonstrated readiness for the next grade level. Additional information pertaining to the test performance levels can be found in [Appendix A](#).

Performance Level Descriptors (PLDs) describe the knowledge, skills, and understanding that students should know and be able to demonstrate at each performance level at each grade level/course. PLDs are available at <https://www.isbe.net/pages/Performance-Level-Descriptors.aspx>.

2.1.3 Percentile Rank

A percentile rank indicates how a student domain scale score compares to other Illinois students who took the ISA the same year. The percentile rank indicates where the student’s domain scale score falls in comparison to other Illinois students for that domain. They indicate the percentage of scores equal to or less than the student’s score. For instance, if a student’s Life Science domain scale score falls in the 55th percentile, the student’s achievement is the same as or better than 55 percent of other Illinois students who took the ISA in the same grade that year

2.2 Sample Individual Student Report (ISR)

[Firstname Lastname]
 ID: XXXXXXXXXX Grade X
 District X School X

Science Assessment Report

SPRING 20XX

B

The Illinois Science Assessment (ISA) checks how well your student is learning the skills and knowledge expected for their grade in science. These expectations are called the Illinois Learning Standards. You can view the standards here:
<https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Science-Standards.aspx>.

C

FIRSTNAME's Score 859	<p style="text-align: center; margin: 0;">Above Proficient</p> <p style="margin: 0;">The student showed strong understanding on this assessment and could apply what was learned in this subject. This performance is evidence that the student is well prepared and on track to meet the academic expectations of the next grade.</p>
---	---

D

Below Proficient	Approaching Proficient	Proficient	Above Proficient
700	770	812	900

The margin of error tells us that if your student took this exact test again tomorrow, their score might be a few points higher or lower—not because they learned something new or forgot things, but because tests can only estimate what someone knows. Think of it as a range.

State Average	738
District Average	719
School Average	722

E

To view a personalized video about FIRSTNAME's results and to learn more about the assessment, use the QR code shown to the right, or visit familyportal.pearson.com/il.

For a different format of your student's ISR, contact ISBE at assessment@isbe.net.

Page 1 of 2

[Firstname Lastname]

ID: XXXXXXXXXX

A CLOSER LOOK AT THREE AREAS OF SCIENCE READINESS

The overall science score on the front page shows how your student performed on the Illinois Science Assessment as a whole. The three domain scores below show performance in the major areas of Life Science, Physical Science, and Earth/Space Science.

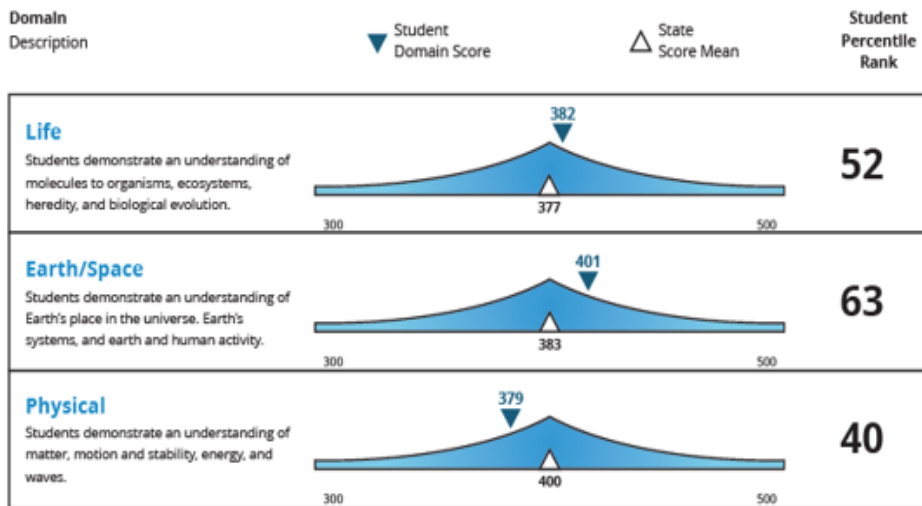
The overall score and the domain scores are reported on different score scales, so the numbers will not match—and that is expected. The overall score uses a 700-900 scale, while each domain score uses a 300-500 scale. Because these scores measure different aspects of science learning, the overall score and the domain scores should not be compared.

All three domain scores use the same 300-500 scale, but each domain measures different skills and content, so the domain scores should also not be compared to one another.

Each domain includes a percentile rank, which shows how your student's performance compares to other Illinois students in that subject area. For example, a percentile of 60 means your student scored as well as or better than 60% of students statewide. Percentile ranks show relative standing for each domain and should not be averaged.

Together, the overall science score and domain results provide a clearer picture of your student's science learning.

F



G

Your Next Steps



Questions for Your Student's Teacher(s)

- What is my student learning in Science this year?
- How is my student measuring against grade level expectations?
- How can I use this information to support my student?
- What resources do you recommend for my student?



Resources for you and Your Student

- Find family reporting resources at <https://il.mypearsonsupport.com/family-portal/>.
- Learn more about the performance of your student's peers at illinoisreportcard.com.
- To learn more about the IAR assessment, visit isbe.net/isa.

2.3 Description of Individual Student Report

2.3.1 General Information

A. Identification Information

An Individual Student Report lists the student's name, date of birth, state student ID, grade level when assessed, district name, and school name.

B. Description of Report

The description of the report provides the content area (science) assessed and assessment year. A link to the ILS for Science, which the test is designed to measure, is also provided.

2.3.2 Overall Assessment Scores

C. Your Student's Score

This section of the report provides the overall scale score achieved by the student as well as a description of the performance level associated with that scale score.

D. Graphical Representation of Overall Performance: Overall Scale Score and Performance Level

This graphic illustrates the four performance levels and shows where the student's overall scale score falls along the full performance scale. The student's score is marked by a black triangle, which visually indicates the performance level achieved. The margin of error, also known as the standard error of measurement, is shown by a bracket. This bracket represents the estimated range in which the student's true score would likely fall if the assessment were taken multiple times.

The scale score ranges associated with each performance level are shown in the graphic. A complete list of scale score ranges for each performance level can be found in [Appendix B](#). Also included are the average scale score for the state, district, and school.

E. Family Portal

The Individual Student Reports include information for parents to access student reports and report explanation videos via the IL Family Portal. The Family Portal can be accessed at <https://familyportal.pearson.com/il>.

2.3.3 Science Readiness

F. Three Areas of Science Readiness

This section provides information on how the student performed in each of the three major areas, or domains, of science: Life Science, Earth/Space Science, and Physical Science. Both a scale score and percentile rank are provided for each domain. A different score scale (300–500) is used to report domain performance. Each domain is scaled independently, meaning scores for each of the domains should not be compared, nor should domain scale scores be compared to the student's overall ISA scale score. The percentile rank provides insight into how the student performed in each domain relative to other Illinois students who took the ISA the same school year.

A graphic representation of the three science domains is provided, along with a brief description of each domain. The student’s domain scale score is shown above with a blue triangle, while the mean (or average) scale score achieved by all Illinois students is shown below with a white triangle. On the righthand side of each graphic the percentile rank associated with the student’s scale score is displayed. Because the percentile ranks are based on the domain scale score, and each domain is scaled independently, percentile ranks should not be averaged. For each science domain, the percentile rank shows how the student’s performance in that domain compares to all Illinois students who took the same test.

G. Your Next Steps

This section provides guidance for how parents can use the report to start a discussion with their child’s teacher(s). It is important for parents and educators to have regular check-ins to ensure students are learning the necessary skills to stay on track. This information can also help to identify the child’s strengths and challenges so that parents and educators can work towards supporting the student’s academic progress.

3.3 Sample School Performance Level Summary Report

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE LEVEL SUMMARY											Grade 5	
CONFIDENTIAL - DO NOT DISTRIBUTE												
											A SAMPLE SCHOOL SAMPLE DISTRICT ILLINOIS SPRING 2026	
SCIENCE												
Grade 5 Assessment, 2025–2026												
Purpose: This report describes group achievement in terms of average scale scores and performance levels.	B Number of Valid Scores	C Average Scale Score	Performance Levels								Total Proficiency: Levels 3 & 4	
			Level 1 Below Proficient		Level 2 Approaching Proficient		Level 3 Proficient		Level 4 Above Proficient		#	%
			#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%		
State	999,999	999	999,999	999.9%	999,999	999.9%	999,999	999.9%	999,999	999.9%	999,999	999.9%
District	999,999	999	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%
School	999,999	999	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%
Gender												
Female	99,999	999	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%
Male	99,999	999	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%
Non-Binary/Undesignated	99,999	999	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%
Ethnicity/Race												
Hispanic or Latino	99,999	999	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%
American Indian or Alaska Native	99,999	999	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%
Asian	99,999	999	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%
Black or African-American	99,999	999	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%
Middle Eastern or North African	99,999	999	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	99,999	999	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%
White	99,999	999	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%
Two or more races	99,999	999	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%
Not Indicated	99,999	999	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%
Economic Disadvantage												
No	99,999	999	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%
Yes	99,999	999	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%
Students with Disabilities												
IEP	99,999	999	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%
504	99,999	999	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%
Neither IEP Nor 504	99,999	999	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%	99,999	99.9%

Appendix A: Performance Level Descriptors

Performance Level Descriptors (PLDs)

Performance levels provide meaning to the scale score by classifying student achievement. Performance Level Descriptors (PLDs) outline what students who score within each level typically know and demonstrate related to the grade-level standards. Students achieving a lower performance level demonstrate less mastery of the grade-level standards than those at the higher performance levels. Students who perform at a higher level demonstrate master of the content and skills described in the lower level as well as many of the concepts and skills described in their level.

Policy PLDs are broad classifications of student performance that provide high-level insight into how well a student is meeting grade-level expectations based on the ILS. Policy PLDs do not change based on the grade or content area/course. Detailed PLDs provide more nuanced information about the grade-specific knowledge and skills students within each level typically demonstrate; they articulate how student mastery and reasoning increase along the performance continuum. Detailed PLDs are unique to each grade and content area/course and are based on the specific grade-level standards. To review the detailed PLDs for the ISA, go to <https://www.isbe.net/pages/Performance-Level-Descriptors.aspx>.

Policy Performance Level Descriptors

Level	Performance within this range...
Above Proficient	... demonstrates knowledge and application of the assessed Illinois Learning Standards that is above proficient for this subject and grade. Performance in this range is strong evidence that students are prepared for the academic demands of the next grade and are progressing toward the academic expectations of the next grade, which serve as a foundation for the pursuit of college and/or a career.
Proficient	... demonstrates proficient knowledge and application of the assessed Illinois Learning Standards for this subject and grade. Performance in this range is evidence that students are prepared for the academic demands of the next grade and are progressing toward the academic expectations of the next grade, which serve as a foundation for the pursuit of college and/or a career.
Approaching Proficient	... demonstrates knowledge and application of the assessed Illinois Learning Standards for this subject and grade that is approaching proficient . Performance in this range is evidence that students may need additional support (the nature and manner of which must be informed by multiple sources of information) to demonstrate success with the academic demands of the next grade, which serve as a foundation for the pursuit of college and/or a career.
Below Proficient	... demonstrates knowledge and application of the assessed Illinois Learning Standards that is below proficient for this subject and grade. Performance in this range is strong evidence that students may need additional support (the nature and manner of which must be informed by multiple sources of information) to demonstrate success with the academic demands of the next grade, which serve as a foundation for the pursuit of college and/or a career.

Appendix B Scale Score Ranges

Scale Score Ranges

Grade 5 Science			
Below Proficient Cut	700	Below Proficient Range	700 - 769
Approaching Proficient Cut	770	Approaching Proficient Range	770 - 811
Proficient Cut	812	Proficient Range	812 - 855
Above Proficient Cut	856	Above Proficient Range	856 - 900

Grade 8 Science			
Below Proficient Cut	700	Below Proficient Range	700 - 769
Approaching Proficient Cut	770	Approaching Proficient Range	770 - 811
Proficient Cut	812	Proficient Range	812 - 855
Above Proficient Cut	856	Above Proficient Range	856 - 900