

Saskatchewan Student Assessment

Frequently Asked Questions For Administrators' Use

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This document is provided to school division administrators to use in responding to questions from parents, caregivers, teachers, and others with an interest in the Saskatchewan Student Assessment (SSA) program.

If questions arise that are not captured in this document, please share them in the [online survey](#), accessed through the hyperlinked text, or through the QR code.



Why is a provincial assessment program necessary?

- We want to be sure Saskatchewan students are prepared for success with the skills and knowledge they need for their futures, that they are supported with accommodations and opportunities for success and that their education is globally recognized and valued.
- Saskatchewan is the **only** province that does not have any mandatory provincial assessments for students in Grades 1 to 12. As a result, there is no consistent measurement of student achievement in Saskatchewan.
- The Provincial Education Plan Implementation Team identified the development and administration of a province-wide student assessment program as an important action to improve student outcomes.

How will a provincial assessment program benefit students, parents/caregivers, teachers, school systems and the province?

- *Students:* Students will understand how they are doing and recognize areas where they excel and/or where they require growth or support.
- *Parents/Caregivers:* In addition to regular classroom assessments, results from the Saskatchewan Student Assessment program will provide parents/caregivers with a fair and objective measure of their child's achievement on a provincial level. Parents/caregivers can collaborate with teachers to discuss strategies to meet the unique needs of their child.
- *Teachers:* Provincial assessments will inform teachers' instructional practices and curricular expectations. Assessment results may be used as part of the overall classroom-based evaluation of students' learning. Teachers may strengthen their professional practice through involvement in developing and validating assessment questions and through scoring provincial assessments.
- *System:* School divisions and educational organizations can monitor student achievement with precise, timely and consistent data to guide decisions about resource allocation and policies.
- *Province:* Developing an assessment program that works for Saskatchewan students brings the province in line with all other Canadian provinces, which already have their own assessment programs. This assessment program will provide valuable information to gauge the effectiveness of educational programs and identify areas where improvement is needed to inform policy.

How will assessments be developed?

- Assessment development will be done in collaboration with Saskatchewan teachers. School divisions will nominate interested teachers to support the following types of activities:
 - developing and validating questions for the assessments;
 - scoring English language arts written responses; and,
 - setting grade-level standards based on curriculum expectations.
- All work involving teachers will be contracted work and will occur outside of regular school hours.

Will the Grade 10 assessment be based on the new or old ELA curriculum?

- The Grade 10 assessment will be based on the new English language arts (ELA) curriculum.

When will Saskatchewan Student Assessments (SSAs) be implemented?

- Assessments will be implemented in a staged approach, with the following schedule:
 - 2025-26: Students wrote a field test in Grades 5 and 9 mathematics and in Grade 7 ELA.
 - 2026-27: Grades 5 and 9 mathematics and Grade 7 ELA assessments will be fully implemented. Students in Grade 4 will write an ELA field test. Students in Grade 10 who are taking the new ELA 10 curriculum will write a pre-field test.
 - 2027-28: Grades 5 and 9 mathematics and Grade 4 and 7 ELA will be fully implemented. All students in Grade 10 ELA will write a field test.
 - 2028-29: Full implementation of all provincial assessments, include Grades 5 and 9 mathematics and Grades 4, 7 and 10 ELA.
- The assessments will be administered in a two-week window of time at the end of May and beginning of June.
- Each of the assessments will be designed to be approximately 120 minutes and to be completed in two sittings, allowing teachers to use professional judgement regarding what works best for students and to facilitate the assessments in a way that works for their school's schedule.
- **"Field test"** means we are "testing the test." In other words, the data collected from field tests is meant to ensure the assessment questions are valid, free from bias, and effective in measuring students' understanding. *No data is collected on student performance during field tests.*
- **"Implementation"** means the assessment is being used to collect data on student performance using questions that have been field tested.

Who will participate?

- Because results from the assessments are an important indicator of future achievement, to the greatest extent possible, all students in the grade of assessment who are following the regular curriculum will be expected to authentically participate in the program, including those attending online and those attending in-person classes.

What accommodations will be provided?

- Students will have access to the same accommodations and supports during the assessment that they would have in the classroom.

How and when will assessments be scored?

- For the most part, assessments will consist of questions that are electronically administered and scored.
- English language arts assessments will include a written response that will be scored by practicing teachers using a provincial writing rubric and scoring guide. Scoring of the written responses will occur in the month following the assessment, with scores returned to the education organization after the scoring session is completed.

When will results be available?

- Results of the computer-scored portions of the assessment will provide feedback for teachers and students and may be available in as few as 48 hours after the assessment window closes. Reports for parents will be provided through the school.
- Division and provincial reports using the spring assessment data will be available in the fall of the same year, and reports can be used for division planning and included in annual reports.
- Keep in mind that when an assessment is being field-tested, student results will not be returned.

How will achievement data be reported?

- Results from the assessments will be made available to the student and parent/caregiver through the school. Reports will also be made available through the classroom teacher, the school and the school division.
- Reporting details are being developed through consultation with the sector.
- Results will not be used by the ministry as school rankings, nor to evaluate teacher performance.

How can divisions, teachers and students prepare for these assessments?

- Since the Saskatchewan Student Assessments are based on Saskatchewan curriculum, students will be prepared for the assessment by participating in daily curriculum-based classroom instruction.
- Each year, prior to the assessment, a sample assessment will be made available that will be similar in length and content to the actual assessment.
 - Teachers can choose to use the sample assessment in their classroom to prepare their students.
 - Students and parents/caregivers can choose to access the sample assessment online.
- A Platform Exploration activity will be available prior to the assessment window so that students and teachers can practise logging into the online system.

Are the Saskatchewan Student Assessments formative or summative?

- Both formative and summative assessment are enabled by the program design of the SSAs.
- SSAs are formative in that teachers can use the data to identify student strengths and areas of growth for intervention, as well as reflect on their instructional practices. Student results will be shared with their current teacher and available to their teachers in the next grade so supports can be provided as identified through assessment results.
- SSAs are summative in that they will occur at the end of the learning cycle when students have had the opportunity to learn the curriculum.

How will the provincial assessments be delivered?

- The assessments will be delivered through an online assessment platform.