

## Background

The 2026 ISASP is built specifically to measure student progress aligned to the 2024 Iowa Academic Standards in English Language Arts and Mathematics. After all schools in the state complete the ISASP administration, a **standard setting study** will be held from June 8–12, 2026 to set **new performance levels**:

- Below Grade-Level Expectations
- Approaching Grade-Level Expectations
- Meeting Grade-Level Expectations
- Exceeding Grade-Level Expectations

The proposed performance levels, which will determine how many students met expectations on the newly aligned ISASP, will go before the State Board of Education for consideration. Once approved, results that describe student-level performance will be available after this approval.

## Updated Performance Level Descriptors and Standard Setting

Performance level descriptors are descriptions of the knowledge and skills expected by students. There will be updated performance level descriptors to articulate the performance levels of below, approaching, meeting, and exceeding grade-level expectations. They reflect increasing expectations for students across the levels.

## 2026 ISASP OnDemand Reports

2026 ISASP OnDemand Reports were posted for schools and districts **on April 15, 2026**. Some of the information typically provided on the OnDemand Reports will not be available. The table below summarizes the available scores and appropriate uses by testing area.

Type of Score	Use	ELA	Mathematics	Science
<b>Scale Score</b>	Track student growth across years and establish goals for subsequent years	✓	✓	✓
<b>Performance Level</b>	Understand student performance relative to grade-level expectations	NA*	NA*	✓
<b>Domain Score (including Writing Rubric Scores)</b>	Compare relative strengths and weaknesses	✓	✓	✓
<b>Depth of Knowledges Scores</b>	Evaluate ability to interact with levels of cognitive complexity	✓	✓	✓

*\*Available after approval of the standard setting process by the Iowa Department of Education and State Board of Education.*

## Use of Scale Scores

The underlying vertical scale has been retained for 2026 ISASP. The student's overall performance reported as a Scale Score on a previous version of ISASP can be directly compared to the 2026 version (e.g., a "500" Scale Score is a "500" Scale Score). This scale allows the ability to track student growth across years and establish goals for subsequent years. So, the differences between Scale Scores retain the same meaning.

Justification for retaining the vertical scale is linked to the reporting domains and overall constructs of English Language Arts and Mathematics. Changes to the 2026 ISASP test specifications included lengthening the tests to better reflect the 2024 Iowa Academic Standards while retaining the same domain reporting categories.

## Use of Domain Performance

ISASP student performance in the Iowa Core Domains is classified as Low, Middle, or High. All items that appeared on the 2026 ISASP forms had been field tested in the state of Iowa in previous years.

To support the 2026 OnDemand Reports, the field test results were used to estimate state-level performance in each domain. Based on these expected score distributions, cut scores were found so that approximately 20% of students will be classified as High, 20% will be classified as Low, and approximately 60% of students will fall into the Middle category.

## Use of Performance Level Descriptors and Cut Score Ranges

Performance level descriptors and cut score ranges for English Language Arts and Mathematics that were established in 2019 are **only** valid for use and interpretation on ISASP scores earned through 2025.

Updated performance level descriptors and cut score ranges for the 2026 ISASP in English Language Arts and Mathematics and will be **made available later in 2026**.