

ONE-PAGER

WHAT'S DIFFERENT ABOUT ASSESSMENTS THIS YEAR?

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted most aspects of education in the 2020-2021 school year, including annual statewide assessment. As a result, the process for student test taking and the results from this year's tests may look very different than previous school years.

This resource is intended to provide more context about the factors that may have impacted the results.

Learning disruptions

Students experienced various learning disruptions this school year, which may include reduced instructional time, limited access to internet and technology to allow full participation in remote learning, and lack of learning supports such as tutoring and afterschool programming. It's likely the impact of these learning disruptions was uneven. Some students, such as students from low-income families or English learners, were likely hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic due to having fewer resources and supports.

Test modifications

Many states had to make changes to tests this school year to accommodate test taking from home, shifting school schedules during the pandemic, health and safety requirements, and other outside influences. This may have involved reducing the test length, removing certain test prompts and tasks, and/or increasing or decreasing test taking time. Modifying the actual test complicates comparison, and experts agree that scores from tests administered in person cannot be meaningfully compared with those administered remotely¹.

Participation rates

Some students were able to take tests this school year while others weren't due to safety concerns, challenges with technology, or other interferences. This means that some participation rates for districts, schools, or student groups are lower than in past years. As participation rates decrease, challenges with interpreting results increase. In addition, the wide availability of different learning settings—in-person, remote learning, or hybrid—means that students had varying access to take tests. Thus, some student groups will be overrepresented in the results and others may be underrepresented.

Due to these factors and many more challenges experienced during the pandemic, school districts may not be able to make direct comparisons within or across years using 2021 assessment data. However, we can use this year's results, combined with other data, as a temperature check to better track and address COVID-19 school recovery.

WHAT'S DIFFERENT ABOUT ASSESSMENTS THIS YEAR?

RESULTS MAY BE IMPACTED BY

LEARNING DISRUPTIONS



- Reduced instructional time
- Remote learning technology challenges
- Lack of learning supports such as tutoring or after school programming

TEST MODIFICATIONS



- Increased or reduced test length
- Changes to test content
- Remote test administration

PARTICIPATION RATES



- Fewer students testing
- Some student groups over/underrepresented

While we may not be able to use 2021 test scores to compare student achievement, we can still use them as a temperature check to better track and address COVID-19 school recovery.

