

# Delaware Department of Education FAQs

## Impact on Assessment 2021



### **Why did students take assessments this school year during a pandemic?**

Delaware was federally required to administer a statewide assessment. The state assessments can provide critical information about individual student performance and about where we need to better support students, educators, and schools across our state.

Our goal is to use the results to help COVID-19 school recovery efforts so we can create a stronger and more equitable education system.

### **If assessment scores decreased in some areas of the state, does this mean that students learned less this year?**

The COVID-19 pandemic has reshaped most aspects of education in the 2020-2021 school year, including assessments. As a result, scores from this year's assessments may look different than in previous school years.

Factors such as learning location changes, absenteeism, and student participation rates may have impacted school and district results.

### **If assessment scores increased in some areas of the state, does this mean that students learned more than we expected this year?**

The gains reflected in the district and school-level results could be due to a number of reasons, including uneven student participation or a decrease in participation rates, and do not present a whole picture of academic performance.

### **Is it appropriate to compare school assessment results from this year to previous years?**

The many factors and challenges experienced during the pandemic do not allow for direct comparisons of school level scores to previous year's results. Instead, it is recommended that 2021 assessment results be used in combination with other data sources as a baseline for evaluating school recovery needs and accelerated learning plans for students.

### **Why did fewer students participate in the state assessment?**

Assessment participation rates vary across districts and schools and may have changed due to health and safety concerns associated with in-person testing or other factors.

Even though the state's participation rates are lower than in past years, the assessment results, when combined with other data, present an opportunity to inform the type of supports students and schools need to be successful.

### **What does a low score mean? Will a low score impact my child?**

In any year, a single test score does not provide a complete or precise measure of student achievement. We encourage parents to consider their child's results within the context of the variety of potential learning disruptions they may have encountered.



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The State will utilize the information gained from the assessment as an important temperature check that allows us to better track and address student recovery in the short and long term. The results will be used to help direct COVID-related recovery efforts supported by state and federal relief funds.

### **How will states, district leaders, and educators use the assessment results?**

Assessment results are just one of a number of strategies that we are conducting to evaluate COVID-19 school recovery and create a stronger and more equitable education system.

Results are being used to inform our ongoing work to support schools and improve educational outcomes for students. For example, schools and educators will be able to pinpoint areas where they need to accelerate student learning. State leaders also gain valuable information and can better direct attention and resources to the districts, schools, and focus areas that most need it.

Assessment results will not be used to judge educators.

### **How should parents use the assessment results to support their children?**

Parents will receive an individual student report that will detail a student's performance. The results can provide a helpful temperature check for where their child is excelling as well as where they may need more support. We encourage parents to consider their child's results along with other school-based assessments and feedback from your child's teacher(s).

### **Given this year's assessment results, what changes will you make for next school year?**

We now have new information about areas where students and schools need support. We also know from the participation data who did and did not take the assessment due to COVID-19 learning conditions. We will consider all of this in context of the decisions we make moving forward to support students.

### **Where can I view the assessment results?**

For more information, visit the Delaware Open Data Portal: <https://data.delaware.gov/>