



HARRISBURG SCHOOL DISTRICT Office of Curriculum & Instruction

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Dear Parent or Guardian:

Enclosed you will find a summary of your student's results on the Smarter Balanced assessments in the subject areas of English Language Arts and Math. Also enclosed, if applicable, are his or her results on the Dakota STEP, which is the assessment for science given in grades 5, 8 and 11.

One of the important features of the Smarter Balanced assessments is that they can help us determine whether your child is on track for college and career readiness. Much like an annual medical check-up, the assessments allow you, and your child's teachers, to make informed decisions regarding any potential issues that may arise in your child's education.

Here's what you need to know about the Smarter Balanced reports:

- There are two separate reports: One for English Language Arts and one for Math.
- Each report contains your student's scale score, as well as an average score for the school and district for the particular test and grade. This gives you some sense of how your child is performing compared to other students, but please understand that this is only a small piece of the puzzle. A measure of a child's ability should not, and is not, based on a single assessment.
- Each report contains a breakdown of how your child performed in specific areas, called "claims." With each claim, you will see a symbol indicating whether performance was below, at, or above the standard for that grade and subject. This breakdown helps us identify areas of strength and need.

The score report for the Dakota STEP Science test, if applicable, provides your child's score, achievement level and a description of the achievement level relative to his or her performance on the grade 5, 8, or 11 science exam. We are also sending home simple parent guides that provide more detailed information about each assessment and score report to help you better understand what these reports mean.

Thank you for the privilege of educating your child. Please contact us if you have any questions about this report, or any other aspect of your child's education.

Sincerely,

Dr. Michael Amolins
6-12 Curriculum Director
K-12 Testing Coordinator
Harrisburg School District



Parents' Guide to the Dakota STEP Science

The Dakota State Test of Educational Progress Science (Dakota STEP) is South Dakota's annual statewide assessment of student progress, administered to students in grades 5, 8, and 11 each spring in the area of Science. The Dakota STEP Science is included in the assessment system used in South Dakota as required by No Child Left Behind (NCLB).

WHAT IS THE DAKOTA STEP SCIENCE?

The assessment is a multiple choice test which provides feedback to educators, students and parents regarding students' academic achievement and mastery of South Dakota's science academic content standards. Dakota STEP Science results are not used in making grade promotion decisions or high school graduation decisions.

WHY WAS THE DAKOTA STEP SCIENCE DEVELOPED?

The Dakota STEP Science was developed to meet the science requirement of NCLB. It also serves as one benchmark to measure student achievement. The test was created with the help of South Dakota educators. It was designed to:

- Establish high expectations for the education of South Dakota students
- Help schools and teachers identify weaknesses in their curriculum and improve instruction in those areas
- Help teachers and parents monitor achievement
- Improve the accountability of the state's educational system

WHEN IS DAKOTA STEP SCIENCE ADMINISTERED?

Dakota STEP Science testing takes place in the spring of each school year. The total time required for the administration of the tests varies by grade and takes between 1.5 and 2 hours. Testing may be spread out over several days, and school districts set their own testing schedules.

WHAT DO MY CHILD'S TEST SCORES MEAN?

You will receive an individual student report from your child's school that explains how he or she did on the Dakota STEP Science. This report will provide your child's scale scores, achievement level and achievement level definitions in science.

The scale is different at each grade level. There are four levels of student achievement based on scale scores:

- **Advanced** – A student performing at this level exceeds expectations. The student is able to perform the content standards for the grade at a high level of difficulty, complexity or fluency.
- **Proficient** – A student performing at this level meets expectations. The student is able to perform the content standards for the grade at the level of difficulty, complexity, or fluency specified by the standards.
- **Basic** – A student performing at this level performs below expectations. The student is able to perform some of the content standards for the grade below the level of difficulty, complexity or fluency specified by the grade level standards.
- **Below Basic** – A student performing at this level is unable to perform the content standards for the grade, therefore, no description is provided for this performance level.

The goal is to have all students perform at the Proficient or Advanced level.

The Dakota STEP Science results provide one piece of information about your child's achievement. To obtain a more complete picture, daily class work, and other learning activities should be considered.



Smarter Balanced Assessment Interpretive Guide

Individual Student Report

How did my student perform on the English Language Arts/Literacy test?

Test: Smarter Balanced Summative ELA/Literacy Grade 4

Year: 2014-2015

Name: Jackson, Cynthia K.

Legend: Claims Performance Levels



Claims Performance Levels Legend

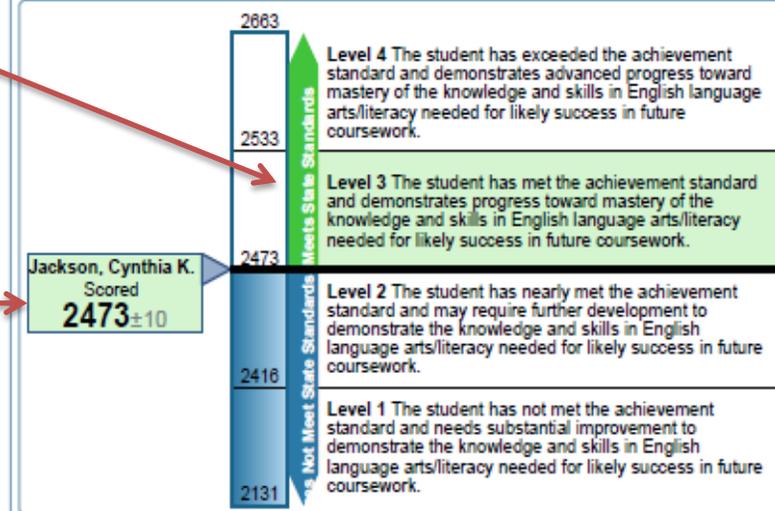
Test Name, Subject & Grade Level

Student Test Performance

Name	SSID	Scale Score	Achievement Level
Jackson, Cynthia K.	99996702	2473 ±10	Level 1

Achievement Level Levels 3 and 4 are considered performing at or above proficiency.

Scale Score and Overall Performance



Comparison Scores

Name	Average Scale Score
TestDISTRICT12 (9998)	2382 _{±16}
TestSCHOOL9 (9998_9000)	2382 _{±16}

Average School and District Scores for Tested Grade and Subject

Student's Scale Score

Student Performance on Claims

Claim	Performance	Claim Description
Reading	✓	Student can read closely and analytically to comprehend a range of increasingly complex literary and informational texts.
Listening and Speaking	○	Student may be able to employ effective speaking and listening skills for a range of purposes and audiences.
Writing	⚠	Student has difficulty producing effective and well-grounded writing for a range of purposes and audiences.
Research/Inquiry	✓	Student can engage in research and inquiry to investigate topics, and to analyze, integrate, and present information.

Claim Description Indicates student performance on groups of test questions that measure similar skills.

See the Claims Performance Levels Legend for interpretation of the symbols.

Note: This is only a sample, not an actual student report.



Smarter Balanced Assessment Interpretive Guide

Key Terms

Achievement Level – There are 4 levels indicating progress toward meeting the expectation of content mastery and college and career readiness.

Average Scale Score provides data about the average performance of students in the school and district for the tested grade and subject.

Claims are groups of test questions that measure similar skills.

Claims Performance describes student performance as “below standard”, at/near standard”, or “above standard”.

ELA is the English Language Arts/Literacy assessment and includes reading, listening & speaking, writing and research/inquiry skills.

Mathematics is the Mathematics assessment and includes concepts & procedures, problem solving, and communicating reasoning.

Scale Score is the score assigned to the student based on his/her results on the Smarter Balanced assessment. Scores range from 2000 to 3000.

Standard Error of Measurement indicates the range of possible scores if a student took the same test a number of times.

NOTE: The Smarter Balanced assessment includes two components: 1) The Computer Adaptive Test is given online and adapts to each student’s ability. 2) The Performance Task is a collection of questions and activities connected to a single theme or situation. Students write short essays for ELA and solve multi-step problems on one topic for math.

Scale Score:

Demonstrated as 2473±10 in this example, this is the student’s Scale Score with Standard Error of Measurement – meaning that if the student took the test 10 times, he/she would likely get a score between 2463 and 2483 each time the test was taken.

Achievement Level Descriptors:

Level 4 The student has exceeded the achievement standard and demonstrates advanced progress toward mastery of the knowledge and skills in English language arts/literacy or mathematics needed for likely success in future coursework.

Level 3 The student has met the achievement standard and demonstrates progress toward mastery of the knowledge and skills in English language arts/literacy or mathematics needed for likely success in future coursework.

Level 2 The student has nearly met the achievement standard and may require further development to demonstrate the knowledge and skills in English language arts/literacy or mathematics needed for likely success in future coursework.

Level 1 The student has not met the achievement standard and needs substantial improvement to demonstrate the knowledge and skills in English language arts/literacy or mathematics needed for likely success in future coursework.

Claims:

English/Language Arts	Mathematics
Reading	Concepts & Procedures
Listening & Speaking	Problem Solving and Modeling & Data Analysis
Writing	Communicating Reasoning
Research/Inquiry	

Claims Performance Levels Key:

Below Standard  At/Near Standard  Above Standard 

College and Career Readiness: The goal of the assessment is to provide information on a student’s progress of being college and career ready as a high school graduate. Grade 11 students scoring 3 or 4 are considered ready for credit-bearing courses at South Dakota’s public universities.