



Information for Families

Beginning in the 2010–2011 school year, Delaware's state assessments in reading, mathematics, science, and social studies will be delivered online instead of paper-and-pencil test booklets.



Benefits of Online Testing

- ✓ *Immediate results for students*
- ✓ *Students can take tests multiple times*
- ✓ *Testing takes less time*

Why are Delaware's state assessments moving online?

- Online tests provide teachers and students with immediate feedback about student performance. Teachers can use the information to adjust instruction to meet students' needs.
- Online testing will provide more flexibility for schools to schedule testing over more than one day, if necessary.

How are online tests different from paper-and-pencil test booklets?

- Unlike the paper-and-pencil test booklets, the online tests for the 2010–2011 school year will be adaptive. This means that the online tests will adjust to each student's knowledge and skills and provide a more accurate measure of a student's performance. Every time a student answers a question, the response helps determine the next question that the student must answer. The online test also records which questions students have already answered and gives them different questions if they take the test more than once.
- Students may start a test, complete a portion of it, and then go back and finish it on another day. This allows students to take as much time as they need to complete a test.

For more information

Visit the DCAS website <http://de.portal.airast.org> or contact the Delaware Department of Education at (302) 735-4090.





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What computer skills will students need to take the online tests?

- Students can use a mouse or keyboard, or both, to take the online tests. They are not required to demonstrate mastery of keyboarding skills to participate. Students will click their answers for multiple-choice questions and can use their index fingers to type short answers. Other questions involve drawing or moving objects on the computer screen.
- Students will also have access to a number of tools to help them during the test, such as the ability to:
 - ◆ Zoom in on both text and graphics
 - ◆ Pause the test
 - ◆ Highlight reading passages
 - ◆ Access to online calculators and formula sheets during the mathematics tests
 - ◆ Strike out answer options for multiple-choice questions
 - ◆ Mark questions for review
- A training test is available for families to try out the online testing system at <http://de.portal.airast.org>. To use the training test, you will need to install a free Mozilla Firefox browser on your home computer. A link to download the browser can be found on the website with the training test.
- Practice tests are available by subject and grade level. Students will see sample items, prepare to take the tests, and learn how to use the test tools by taking these practice tests.

How will accommodations be provided for students with disabilities and English language learners?

Most accommodations that have been provided to students with disabilities and English language learners on previous state tests will also be available for the Delaware Comprehensive Assessment System (DCAS). Therefore, decisions for your child concerning accommodations that were chosen by ELL, 504, and IEP teams during the 2009–2010 school year will continue to be used for the fall administration of the DCAS.

Since the assessment is now online, a few new accommodations have been added. This means that in some cases, teams may need to meet in order to determine if additional accommodations are needed by your child. The list of all accommodations for the DCAS will be available online in the *Guidelines for Inclusion* in early August. For more information, please contact your child's school.

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