

# Delaware Smarter ELA/Literacy, Mathematics, and DCAS Science and Social Studies Assessment Interpretive Guide



## Understanding Your Child’s Test Scores Spring 2016

### What is the Smarter Assessment?

The Smarter Assessments measure students’ mastery of the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts/Literacy and Mathematics for grades 3–8.

The assessments include:

- Writing at every grade.
- New question types that require students to think more deeply and solve more complex problems.
- Performance tasks such as reading several different documents and writing short essays based on them.
- Computer-adaptive technology that makes the assessments more accurate.

The Smarter Assessment represents only one of several measures to gauge academic progress.

### What is the purpose of the DCAS?

The Delaware Comprehensive Assessment System (DCAS) is a statewide standardized testing program tied to the Delaware content standards, which define the knowledge and skills required for our children to succeed beyond high school. DCAS Social Studies is administered to students in grades 4 and 7; DCAS Science is administered to students in grades 5, 8, and 10. DCAS is designed to

- help schools and districts determine whether children are making progress on meeting standards; and
- help the state learn how schools and districts are ensuring that children are meeting the standards.

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*Disclaimer: The data in the Family Report sample are for display purposes only and do not represent actual results. The student’s name on the sample is fictitious, and any similarity to an actual student name is purely coincidental.*

**Cover Letter** The front page of your child's score report includes an important letter from the Delaware Secretary of Education, Steven Godowsky, summarizing the contents of the report and encouraging you to be an active participant in your child's education.

## Smarter ELA/Literacy, Mathematics, and DCAS Science Assessment

### Dear Parent/Guardian,

This report is provided to share information on the progress Elliot made in English language arts/literacy and mathematics this past school year. Delaware's goal is for all students to make progress each year so they graduate from high school ready to succeed in college or careers of their choosing. This year students in grades 3-8 took the Smarter Assessments that provide you, your child and your child's teachers with valuable information about their strengths and areas needing attention. These assessments provide an "academic checkup," measuring academic progress and whether they are on track to meet that goal.

This report also describes the content of the tests. Unlike multiple choice tests of the past, these assessments put more emphasis on writing, solving problems and critical thinking. They were created specifically to measure students' progress toward mastery of Delaware's academic standards.

In addition, your child took either a computer-based science or social studies assessment and this report describes the knowledge being assessed and ideas for activities that will support continued learning. I encourage you to read this report closely and discuss with your child what he is learning in class. I also urge you to talk to your child's teachers about how you can support your child's continued learning. You can visit [www.DelExcels.org](http://www.DelExcels.org) to find out more about the Smarter Assessments and link to practice tests.

Sincerely,



Steven H. Godowsky, Secretary of Education

**Your Child's Score** Inside the report, you will see your child's score in ELA/literacy and mathematics. Students in grades 4, 5, 7, and 8 will additionally have a score in social studies or science.

### How did Elliot do on the English Language Arts/Literacy Assessment?

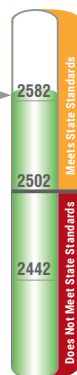
# 2600

#### How does this compare?

Elliot's ELA/Literacy score is 2600. This score is **higher** than the average score of fifth graders in his school, **higher** than fifth graders in his district, and **higher** than fifth graders statewide.

	Average Score
State Average	2500
District Average	2540
School Average	2580

Elliot's Score: 2600



**Level 4** The student has **exceeded the achievement standard** and demonstrates advanced progress toward mastery of the knowledge and skills of state standards in English language arts/literacy.

**Level 3** The student has **met the achievement standard** and demonstrates progress toward mastery of the knowledge and skills of state standards in English language arts/literacy.

**Level 2** The student has **nearly met the achievement standard** and may require further development to demonstrate the knowledge and skills of state standards in English language arts/literacy.

**Level 1** The student has **not met the achievement standard** and needs substantial improvement to demonstrate the knowledge and skills of state standards in English language arts/literacy.

### How Did Elliot Do in the Different Areas of the Assessment?

Reading

**Comparison Scores** Your child's score is compared with the average score for your child's school, the school district, and the state of Delaware.

**Achievement Levels** If your child's score is a 3 or 4, then your child met Delaware's proficiency standards in that subject. If your child's score is a 1 or 2, then your child did not meet Delaware's proficiency standards in that subject.

If your child has a score for ELA/literacy or mathematics in the box above but does not have information reported below for the different areas of the assessment, this means that your child started but did not finish the test.

### How did Elliot do on the Mathematics Assessment?

# 2620

Elliot's Score: 2620

**How does this compare?**  
Elliot's Mathematics score is 2620. This score is **higher** than the average score of fifth graders in his school, **higher than fifth graders** than fifth

**Bar Chart** Your child's score in each area of the test is displayed in the bar chart. Pale red signifies Below the Standard, yellow signifies At/Near the Standard, and green signifies Above the Standard.

Average Score
2500
2540
2580

**Score Information** The report shows how your child performed in each area of each subject tested. This section describes what your child is able to do in each of area.

**Above Standard** (✔) Your child's test results show that he/she understands and is able to apply his/her knowledge to the standards in a specific content area for his/her grade.

**Below Standard** (⚠) Your child's test results show that he/she has not yet met the standards in a specific content area for his/her grade.

**At/Near Standard** (◻) Your child's test results may be near or just below the standard, but the result is not clearly meeting the standard.

**Level 1** The student has not met the achievement standard and needs substantial improvement to demonstrate the knowledge and skills of state standards in mathematics.

### How Did Elliot Do in the Different Areas of the Assessment?

#### Concepts & Procedures



**Below Standard for this Area**

Student has difficulty explaining and applying mathematical concepts and interpreting and carrying out mathematical procedures with precision and fluency.

#### Problem Solving/Modeling and Data Analysis



**At/Near Standard for this Area**

Student may be able to solve a range of complex well-posed problems in pure and applied mathematics, making productive use of knowledge and problem solving strategies. Student may be able to analyze complex, real-world scenarios and may be able to construct and use mathematical models to interpret and solve problems.

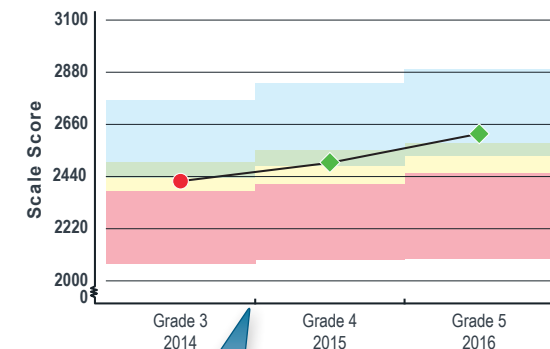
#### Communicating Reasoning



**Above Standard for this Area**

Student can clearly and precisely construct viable arguments to support their own reasoning and to critique the reasoning of others.

### Elliot's Mathematics Progress



#### Legend

- Level 4
- Level 3
- Level 2
- Level 1
- Student Score Met Standards
- Student Score Did Not Meet Standards

This chart reports your student's performance for each school year. The shaded areas in multiple colors indicate the scale score range in each achievement level. Each mark on the graph represents your student's score and indicates whether they met the standards that year.

Visit <http://delexcels.org> to find resources and information about how you can support your child's learning at home.

**Trend Chart** The report shows your child's performance on the test this year compared to performance on the same subject in previous years. The shaded areas shown in the chart correspond to the four Achievement Levels of the test. A green diamond indicates a year in which your child met the achievement standard. A red circle indicates a year in which your child did not meet the standard.

**DCAS Social Studies or Science** In addition to ELA/literacy and mathematics, fourth and seventh graders will receive a score in social studies, and 5<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders will receive a score in science. Note that these subjects have different Achievement Levels from ELA/literacy and mathematics.



Smarter ELA/Literacy, Mathematics, and DCAS Science Assessment

### How did Elliot do on the Science Assessment?

# 600

#### How does this compare?

Elliot's Science score is 600. This score is **higher** than the average score of fifth graders in his school, **higher** than fifth graders in his district, and **higher** than fifth graders statewide.

	Average Score
State Average	409
District Average	390
School Average	415

Elliot's Score: 600

620

435

400

352

100

**Advanced** – Students consistently demonstrate understanding of fifth grade Science concepts including scientific investigations, forces and energy, and ecology.

**Meets Standard** – Students frequently demonstrate understanding of fifth grade Science concepts including scientific investigations, forces and energy, and ecology.

**Below Standard** – Students partially demonstrate understanding of fifth grade Science concepts including scientific investigation, forces and energy, and ecology.

**Well Below Standard** – Students minimally demonstrate understanding of fifth grade Science concepts including scientific investigations, forces and energy, and ecology.

To see the complete grade-specific performance level descriptions and expectations, please view Science PLDs at <http://de.portal.airast.org/resources>.

#### Science Score Information

Students took DCAS Science once during the spring testing window; it is not tested in the fall testing window. DCAS Science is not tested in the previous grade, so no comparison is available with the previous year.

#### Science Categories Being Assessed in Grade Five

##### Earth Science

Earth Science focuses on the solar system, cycles related to the motion of the Earth and Moon, components of Earth, and changes to Earth's surface.

##### Life Science

Life Science focuses on structure and function relationships, matter and energy transformations, life cycles, heredity, and ecology.

##### Physical Science

Physical Science focuses on properties of materials, mixtures and solutions, conservation of matter, forms of energy, energy transfer, and forces.

#### Next Steps for Elliot Based on His Performance This Year

The following activities may help improve your child's knowledge and skills:

- Have your child design an experiment that examines unbalanced and balanced forces. Have him use materials that show push and pull forces or the effect of the force of gravity.
- Have your child design an experiment that shows the states of matter at different temperatures. Ask him to explain how particle arrangement and energy affect the state of matter.
- Have your child illustrate common structures found in plants or animals and explain what functions those structures provide for the life of the organism.
- Discuss with your child different scenarios that may affect a population of plants or animals. Ask him to predict the outcomes for that population.
- Have your child design a model that shows the orbital and rotational motion of the Earth and Moon. Ask him to describe how these motions affect the appearance of the Moon from Earth.
- Have your child design an experiment that shows how weathering, erosion, or deposition occurs. Ask him to explain how human activity can contribute to shaping Earth.

**Reporting Categories** The report provides descriptions of the skills assessed in each content area. These skills and reporting categories vary by grade and subject.

**Next Steps** The next steps recommendations are based on your child's overall performance level in each subject. The activities are chosen to cover the content assessed in each subject. Parents are encouraged to use these recommended activities to help improve and maintain their child's knowledge and skills in the subject area.

## Glossary of Terms/Definitions

**Achievement Level:** A proficiency level that corresponds to a score range determined by groups of Delaware educators and parents. Cut scores for achievement levels differ by grade and subject

**Score:** A numerical value that is on a common scale so that children's scores can be compared over time and across grade levels

**Standards:** Expectations for what Delaware children should know and be able to do

**Subject:** Grade-level content (ELA/literacy, mathematics, social studies, science) that is assessed

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Are my child's scores good enough?

While it is the goal of the school to have your child achieve at the highest level possible, at a minimum, children are expected to perform at the Meets Standard level in each subject at each grade level.

### How are students prepared for online testing?

A practice test is available for families to try out the online testing system at <http://de.portal.airast.org>. To use the practice test, you will need to install a free Mozilla Firefox browser on your home computer. The latest version of Adobe Flash must also be installed on the computer. A link to download the browser can be found on the website with the practice test.

### How are accommodations provided for students with disabilities and English language learners?

Most accommodations that are provided to students with disabilities and English language learners in classes are also available for the Delaware System of Student Assessments (DeSSA). Therefore, decisions for your child concerning accommodations that were chosen by ELL, 504, and IEP teams during the school year will continue to be used for the administration of the DeSSA. For more information, please contact your child's school.

## Additional Resources

Visit <http://de.portal.airast.org>  
for more information on DE reports.