Family Guide to Understanding RICAS

RI Comprehensive Assessment System – Spring 2023

RIDE Rhode Island Department of Education

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What is RICAS?

RICAS is an annual assessment taken by Rhode Island students in grades 3-8 in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics. It is the same assessment as the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) for ELA and mathematics.

Students demonstrate critical thinking abilities and application of knowledge in both English language arts (ELA) and mathematics, including (for ELA) their ability to make connections between reading and writing**.**

Student performance on the assessment gives a signal of student readiness for the next grade level based on the content standards for their current grade level.

What is the test like?

Students take two sessions each of ELA and mathematics. All sessions are untimed, so students can take the time they need to work productively.

ELA	Mathematics
Read passages and respond to questions about what was read	Interact with scenarios, math problems, and questions
Write short and essay answers in response to reading	Demonstrate understanding of math concepts and apply math skills
Students encounter both literary (e.g., fiction) and informational (e.g., nonfiction) texts	Use math tools (e.g., calculators, equation editor, gridded response)

Item and question types

Item types include multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, "technology enhanced" questions like drag-and-drop, and written responses/essays. While RICAS is designed to be given on a computer, there is a paper version available for students with accommodations.

Students can gain experience with item types found on the test through the online or paper practice tests for their grade level. Practice tests also allow students with accommodations to become familiar with text-to-speech and other tools. You can access the ELA Practice Test or Mathematics Practice Test online through the RICAS Resource Center.

📄 ELA	🔢 Mathematics

Why are RICAS results important?

RICAS gives teachers, students, and families information about student progress, school performance, and how to improve teaching and learning. The performance standards for RICAS signal students' readiness for the next grade level.

When and how are RICAS results reported?

RICAS results are reported in the fall of the same calendar year the assessment took place. State-, district-, and school-level results are made available to the general public: data that are released in aggregate form (groups) make it possible to see how schools, districts, and the state are doing while keeping individual student results confidential. Student-level information is only accessible by certain educators and an individual student's family.

Public Aggregate Results
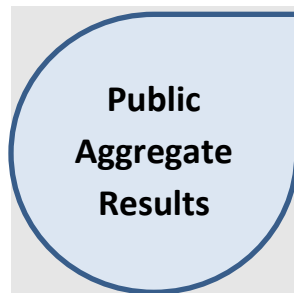
- Posted on the Rhode Island Assessment Data Portal (www.ride.ri.gov/RIADP).
- School, district, and state levels in aggregate form: reporting averages for groups of students protects student confidentiality.
- Families, community members, and educators can review this data.
- Review how schools are doing, including comparing between schools within and across districts.

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Educator Access to Inform Instruction	• Educators receive access to the results of the students they teach. • Only accessible through a confidential, secure login system. • Educators analyze student results to help them better support the students– whether that means refining their instructional practices or adjusting curricular decisions.

Student Results for Families	• The family of each student receives their student's RICAS results in the form of the individual student score report (ISR). • ISRs are provided to families from the student's school district. • Districts also retain a PDF copy of the student's ISR and can securely transfer that to a student's family or use it to re-print the ISR if a duplicate is needed.

More Information about ISRs

RIDE has created a guide to help families understand the individual student score report (ISR) they receive, which is posted on the RIDE website under RICAS.

The ISR has been translated into multiple languages to support access by families whose primary language may not be English. ISRs include the following information, explained in more detail in the guide:

- general information about this year's administration
- student scale score and achievement level for ELA and mathematics
- student past performance on previous RICAS administrations (if applicable)
- achievement comparison with the school/district/state
- student growth percentile (SGP; see next page) and average growth for the school, district, and state
- reporting category points earned and student performance on individual test questions

RICAs Spotlight Videos:
- On the front page of the ISR is a QR code that links to a personalized video that explains that student's results. This video walks through the different parts of the ISR and explains what each means.
- The QR code on back page of the ISR leads to www.ride.ri.gov/Families.
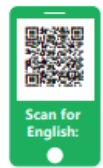
Spring 2023 RICAS
Individual Student Report

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Name:	**District:**
SASID:	**School:**
Date of Birth:	**Grade:**

This report provides your child's results from the 2023 Rhode Island Comprehensive Assessment System (RICAS) tests in English Language Arts (reading and writing) and mathematics.

Information from the RICAS, in combination with other academic and social measures, will help educators assess grade level placement, design specialized instruction, set learning goals, and monitor progress. These tests will allow schools, districts, and RIDE to identify where we need to take action to improve teaching and learning.

These tests help guide critical work to improve outcomes for students. We hope understanding your child's comprehension of ELA and mathematics knowledge and skills will empower you as an advocate for your child. For more information on how to better understand the results, visit https://ride.ri.gov/instruction-assessment/assessment/assessment-results.

For each subject, the report shows:
- Your child's score between 440 and 560

Scan for a personalized video about your child's results.

Scan for English:

Scan for Spanish:

performed compared to other students who scored similarly

Use your phone's camera to scan one of the QR codes to view your child's video score report.

Your Child's Overall Results

English Language Arts	Mathematics
Achievement Level	Achievement Level
Score (Score range: 440–560)	Score (Score range: 440–560)
Growth Percentile	Growth Percentile
Details on page 2	**Details on page 3**

Did you know that establishing family routines can help your child succeed?
Make a habit of setting up designated times for homework, reading, mealtimes, family conversations, bedtime, and leaving for school each day.

What do I do next?
After reviewing this report, it is critical that you attend family-teacher conferences **and discuss with your child's teachers your questions and concerns**. Don't be afraid to speak up. Children whose families stress the value of education are more likely to find it important, as well.

**How can I support my child's education?**
- School attendance matters, *every single day*. Missing just two days of school a month is chronically absent, so make it a priority to get your child to school on time daily.
- Establish daily reading routines, let your child see *you* read, and encourage your child to read for fun all year long.
- Get involved and stay connected to your child's school, however and whenever you can.
- Share your voice! Help improve your child's school by participating in SurveyWorks every year.
- Start a conversation. Ask questions. Talk to your child about what they're learning, and show an interest in the subjects that excite them.

Remember, you are also your child's teacher, and you play an important role in setting your child up for success.

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# What do these assessment terms mean?

Student Scale Score

- A student receives a scale score between 440 and 560 based on their performance on the test.

- The score indicates how well the student meets the expectations for their grade level, and corresponds to a particular performance level.
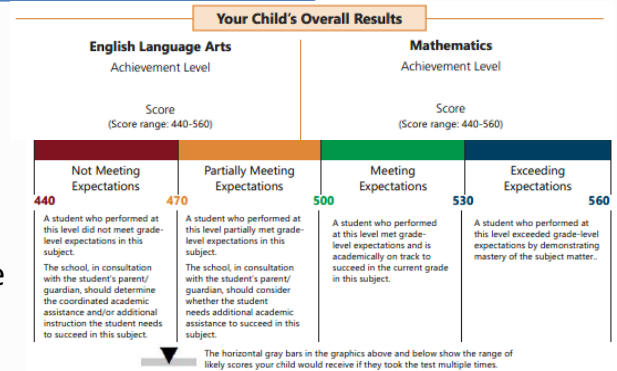
Achievement Level

- RICAS uses four performance levels to describe how well students meet the expectations for their grade level: Not Meeting Expectations, Partially Meeting Expectations, Meeting Expectations, and Exceeding Expectations.
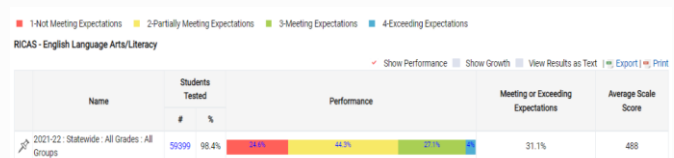
- Meeting Expectations means that students are able to demonstrate grade level expectations; while Exceeding Expectations means that students are showing mastery of the grade level expectations in that content area.

Student Growth Percentile (SGP)

- On a scale of 1 (least growth) to 99 (most growth), the SGP describes a student's learning over time compared with their academic peers (other Rhode Island students in the same grade who had similar scores on previous state level tests).
- For example, if a student has an SGP of 80, we can say that student showed more growth between state assessments than 80 percent of their academic peers.

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How are reporting categories helpful?

Each content area has reporting categories that correspond to the content domains (topics) of our state's content standards: the RI Core Standards for ELA/Literacy and RI Core Standards for Mathematics.

For example, ELA has 3 reporting categories: Reading, Language, and Writing. Mathematics has 4-5 reporting categories that vary by grade level, but may include domains like Number & Operations, Measurement & Data, and Geometry.

Students received points per item out of the total for each category for their grade level.

Educators and families can then see how well a student performed in those areas in the reporting category and item-level information section of a student's ISR.

How can I know how students did on particular test questions or items?

- Each item has a total number of points possible for a student to earn.
- The points possible are based on item complexity: items such as essays or items with multiple parts have more points possible because there are more elements (knowledge, skills) that a student is asked to demonstrate.
- On items with multiple points, students can earn partial credit based on performance (e.g., raw score 2 on a 3-point item).

Every year, RIDE releases some of the items from the test for public viewing and use. Computer-based released items may be found on the RICAS Resource Center or in the RICAS Digital Item Library.
Paper-based testing released items can be found at www.ride.ri.gov/RICAS-Released-Items.
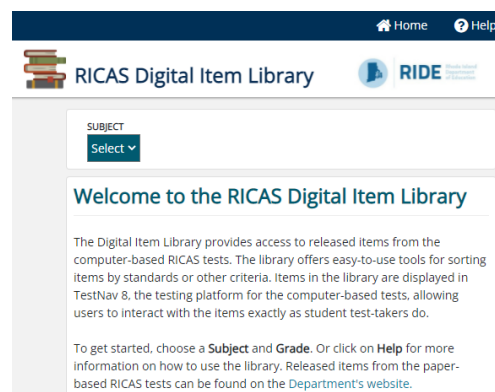
How can RICAS results be used?

RICAS is a valid and reliable measure of student performance and can help us understand how our schools are doing in preparing our students with the skills and knowledge they will need to be successful in postsecondary education and careers.

The aggregate results displayed on the Assessment Data Portal and in the Item Analysis Tool provide an indicator of each school's or district's performance. This can support discussions about where the school or district is doing well and where there is a need for improvement.

When reviewing your student's ISR, look closely at where your student's score falls within the achievement level. If your student's score is not close to Meeting Expectations, talk with your student's teacher for that content area (ELA or mathematics) about how you can work together to help your student catch up.
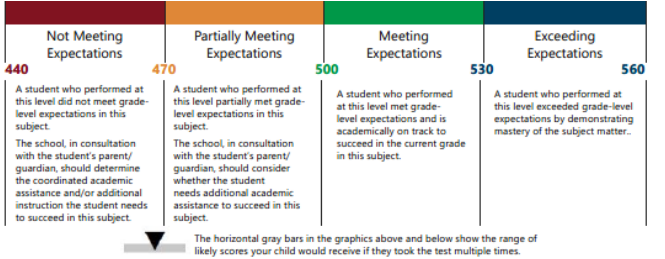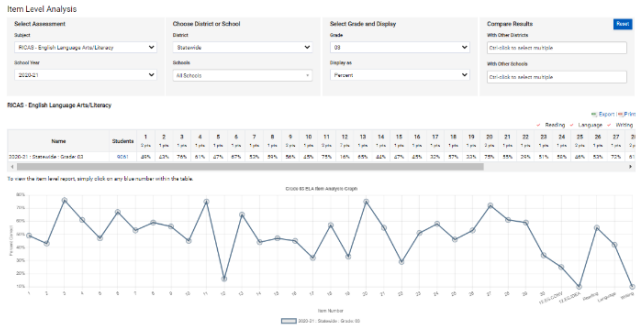

Item-level information can be used – in conjunction with released items, item descriptions, and other materials – to see where a student is succeeding and where they may need additional support to enhance specific content area skills needed to master grade-level standards.

Assessment reporting is a different calculation than school and district accountability, though accountability does include measures based on students' proficiency in ELA and mathematics on Rhode Island's state assessments. For more information, please go to www.ride.ri.gov/Accountability.

Where can I learn more about RICAS results?

Scanning the QR code on your student's ISR will bring you to RIDE's Resources for Families page at www.ride.ri.gov/Families. This page provides answers to frequently asked questions about content standards, curriculum, and RI's statewide assessments. It also includes resources about student growth percentiles, the RICAS ISRs translated into multiple languages, and the RICAS ISR Guide for Families in the www.ride.ri.gov/Assessment-Families section.
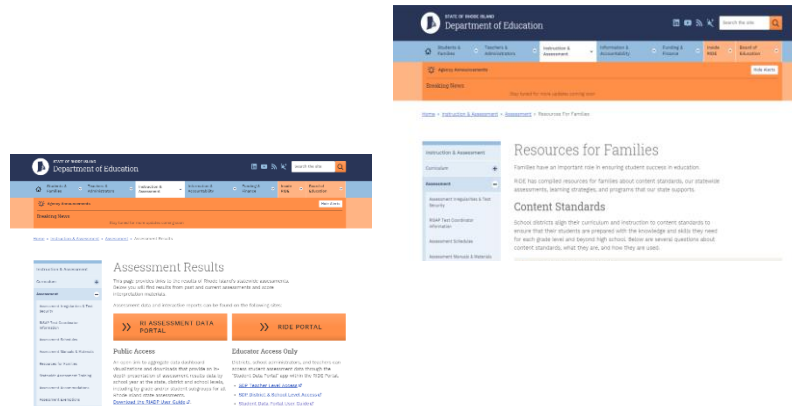
RIDE's Assessment Results page includes links to the Assessment Data Portal, as well as supporting materials for current and past assessment results (www.ride.ri.gov/Assessment-Results).
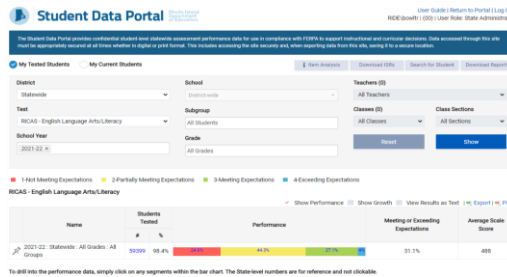
The Assessment Data Portal (www.ride.ri.gov/RIADP) displays school and district performance for all state assessments.

The RICAS Resource Center provides access to released items and practice tests on their student resources page at http://ricas.pearsonsupport.com/student/.