

South Dakota Assessments 2024–2025 Technical Report



south dakota
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Learning. Leadership. Service.

**Submitted to
South Dakota Department of Education
by Cambium Assessment, Inc.**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	OVERVIEW.....	1
1.1	South Dakota Assessments.....	1
2	TEST ADMINISTRATION.....	3
2.1	Testing Windows.....	3
2.2	Test Options and Administrative Roles.....	3
2.2.1	<i>Administrative Roles</i>	4
2.2.2	<i>Online Administration</i>	6
2.2.3	<i>Paper-Pencil Test Administration</i>	7
2.2.4	<i>Braille Test Administration</i>	8
2.3	Training and Information for Test Coordinators and Administrators.....	8
2.3.1	<i>Online Training</i>	8
2.3.2	<i>District Trainings</i>	11
2.4	Test Security.....	11
2.4.1	<i>Student-Level Testing Confidentiality</i>	12
2.4.2	<i>System Security</i>	13
2.4.3	<i>Security of the Testing Environment</i>	13
2.4.4	<i>Test Security Violations</i>	14
2.5	Student Participation.....	15
2.5.1	<i>Exempt Students</i>	15
2.6	Online Testing Features and Testing Accommodations.....	15
2.6.1	<i>Online Universal Tools for All Students</i>	16
2.6.2	<i>Designated Supports and Accommodations</i>	18
2.6.3	<i>Usage of Designated Supports and Accommodations</i>	30
2.7	Testing Time.....	36
2.8	Data Forensics Program.....	38
2.8.1	<i>Changes in Student Performance</i>	39
2.8.2	<i>Test-Taking Time</i>	39
2.8.3	<i>Inconsistent Item Response Pattern (Person Fit)</i>	40
2.8.4	<i>Item Response Change</i>	40

2.9	Prevention and Recovery of Disruptions in Test Delivery System	41
2.9.1	<i>High-Level System Architecture</i>	41
2.9.2	<i>Automated Backup and Recovery</i>	43
2.9.3	<i>Other Disruption Prevention and Recovery</i>	43
3	SUMMARY OF 2024–2025 OPERATIONAL TEST ADMINISTRATION	45
3.1	Student Population.....	45
3.2	Summary of Overall Student Performance.....	46
3.3	Distribution of Student Ability and Item Difficulty	60
4	VALIDITY	67
4.1	Evidence on Test Content.....	67
4.2	Evidence on Internal Structure	74
5	RELIABILITY	77
5.1	Marginal Reliability.....	77
5.2	Standard Error Curves	78
5.3	Reliability of Achievement Classification.....	81
5.4	Reliability for Subgroups	86
5.5	Reliability for Claim Scores	89
6	SCORING	92
6.1	Estimating Student Ability Using Maximum Likelihood Estimation	92
6.2	Rules for Transforming Theta to Vertical Scale Scores	93
6.3	Lowest/Highest Obtainable Scores (LOSS/HOSS).....	94
6.4	Scoring All Correct and All Incorrect Cases	95
6.5	Rules for Calculating Strengths and Weaknesses for Claim Scores.....	95
6.6	Target Scores.....	95
6.6.1	<i>Target Scores Relative to Student’s Overall Estimated Ability</i>	95
6.6.2	<i>Target Scores Relative to Proficiency Standard (Level 3 Cut)</i>	97
6.7	Handscoring.....	98
6.7.1	<i>Rater Selection</i>	98
6.7.2	<i>Rater Training, Qualification, and Scoring</i>	99
6.7.3	<i>Rater Monitoring, Feedback, and Evaluation</i>	102

6.7.4 Rater Agreement	105
6.8 Automated Scoring.....	106
6.8.1 Preject Essay Grade (PEG).....	106
6.8.2 Model Training and Validation.....	107
6.8.3 Automated Scoring Process	112
6.8.4 Human-Machine Agreement	115
6.8.5 Recommendations	118
7 REPORTING AND INTERPRETING SCORES	120
7.1 Reporting System	120
7.1.1 Dashboard.....	121
7.1.2 Aggregate Score Reports: Overall Performance	123
7.1.3 Aggregate Score Reports: Claim and Target Performance	125
7.1.4 Roster Performance Report.....	126
7.1.5 Trend Report	126
7.1.6 Individual Student Report	127
7.2 Interpretation of Reported Scores.....	131
7.2.1 Scale Score.....	131
7.2.2 Conditional Standard Error of Measurement	131
7.2.3 Achievement Level.....	131
7.2.4 Performance Category for Claims.....	132
7.2.5 Performance Category for Targets	132
7.2.6 Aggregated Scale Score	132
7.3 Appropriate Uses of Test Results	133
8 QUALITY CONTROL PROCEDURE.....	134
8.1 Adaptive Test Configuration	134
8.1.1 Platform Review.....	134
8.1.2 User Acceptance Testing and Final Review.....	135
8.2 Quality Assurance in Document Processing.....	135
8.3 Quality Assurance in Data Preparation	135
8.4 Quality Assurance in Online Test Delivery System.....	135

8.4.1 Score Report Quality Check..... 136

REFERENCES 137

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. 2024–2025 Testing Windows	3
Table 2. Summary of Tests and Testing Options in 2024–2025.....	3
Table 3. Number of Students Who Took Paper-Pencil Tests in the 2024–2025 Summative Test Administration	8
Table 4. 2024–2025 Universal Tools, Designated Supports, and Accommodations	23
Table 5. ELA/L Total Students with Allowed Embedded and Non-Embedded Accommodations	24
Table 6. ELA/L Total Students with Allowed Embedded Designated Supports	24
Table 7. ELA/L Total Students with Allowed Non-Embedded Designated Supports.....	26
Table 8. Mathematics Total Students with Allowed Embedded and Non-Embedded Accommodations...	27
Table 9. Mathematics Total Students with Allowed Embedded Designated Supports.....	28
Table 10. Mathematics Total Students with Allowed Non-Embedded Designated Supports.....	29
Table 11. ELA/L: Number of Embedded Accessibility Resource Usages (Grades 3–5).....	30
Table 12. ELA/L: Number of Embedded Accessibility Resource Usages (Grades 6–8).....	32
Table 13. ELA/L: Number of Embedded Accessibility Resource Usages (Grade 11)	33
Table 14. Mathematics: Number of Embedded Accessibility Resource Usages (Grades 3–5)	34
Table 15. Mathematics: Number of Embedded Accessibility Resource Usages (Grades 6–8)	35
Table 16. Mathematics: Number of Embedded Accessibility Resource Usages (Grade 11).....	36
Table 17. ELA/L Testing Time.....	37
Table 18. Mathematics Testing Time	38
Table 19. Participation Rates by Percentage in ELA/L Summative Assessment	45
Table 20. Participation Rates by Percentage in Mathematics Summative Assessment	45
Table 21. Number of Students in ELA/L Summative Assessment.....	46
Table 22. Number of Students in Mathematics Summative Assessment.....	46
Table 23. Descriptive Statistics and Percentage of Students in Achievement Levels for Overall and by Subgroup: ELA/L (Grades 3–5).....	48
Table 24. Descriptive Statistics and Percentage of Students in Achievement Levels for Overall and by Subgroup: ELA/L (Grades 6–8).....	49
Table 25. Descriptive Statistics and Percentage of Students in Achievement Levels for Overall and by Subgroup: ELA/L (Grade 11)	50

Table 26. Descriptive Statistics and Percentage of Students in Achievement Levels for Overall and by Subgroup: Mathematics (Grades 3–5)	51
Table 27. Descriptive Statistics and Percentage of Students in Achievement Levels for Overall and by Subgroup: Mathematics (Grades 6–8)	52
Table 28. Descriptive Statistics and Percentage of Students in Achievement Levels for Overall and by Subgroup: Mathematics (Grade 11).....	53
Table 29. ELA/L Percentage of Students in Performance Categories by Claim	59
Table 30. Mathematics Percentage of Students in Performance Categories by Claim	60
Table 31. Percentage of ELA/L Delivered CAT Tests Meeting Blueprint Requirements for Each Claim and the Number of Passages Administered (Grades 3–5).....	68
Table 32. Percentage of ELA/L Delivered CAT Tests Meeting Blueprint Requirements for Each Claim and the Number of Passages Administered (Grades 6–8).....	69
Table 33. Percentage of ELA/L Delivered CAT Tests Meeting Blueprint Requirements for Each Claim and the Number of Passages Administered (Grade 11)	70
Table 34. Mathematics Percentage of Delivered CAT Tests Meeting Blueprint Requirements for Claims and Targets (Grades 3–5).....	71
Table 35. Mathematics Percentage of Delivered CAT Tests Meeting Blueprint Requirements for Claims and Targets (Grades 6–8).....	72
Table 36. Mathematics Percentage of Delivered Tests Meeting Blueprint Requirements for Claims and Targets (Grade 11)	73
Table 37. Average and Range of the Number of Unique Targets Assessed within Each Claim Across All Delivered CAT Tests	74
Table 38. Correlations Among Claim Scores for ELA/L	75
Table 39. Correlations among Claim Scores for Mathematics	76
Table 40. Marginal Reliability for ELA/L and Mathematics.....	78
Table 41. Average Conditional Standard Error of Measurement by Achievement Levels.....	81
Table 42. Average Conditional Standard Error of Measurement at Each Achievement Level Cut and Difference of the Standard Errors of Measurement Between Two Cuts.....	81
Table 43. Classification Accuracy and Consistency	85
Table 44. Marginal Reliability Coefficients for Overall and by Subgroup: ELA/L (Grades 3–4)	86
Table 45. Marginal Reliability Coefficients for Overall and by Subgroup: ELA/L (Grades 5–6)	86
Table 46. Marginal Reliability Coefficients for Overall and by Subgroup: ELA/L (Grades 7–8)	87
Table 47. Marginal Reliability Coefficients for Overall and by Subgroup: ELA/L (Grade 11).....	87
Table 48. Marginal Reliability Coefficients for Overall and by Subgroup: Mathematics (Grades 3–4)....	88

Table 49. Marginal Reliability Coefficients for Overall and by Subgroup: Mathematics (Grades 5–6)....	88
Table 50. Marginal Reliability Coefficients for Overall and by Subgroup: Mathematics (Grades 7–8)....	89
Table 51. Marginal Reliability Coefficients for Overall and by Subgroup: Mathematics (Grade 11).....	89
Table 52. Marginal Reliability Coefficients for Claim Scores in ELA/L	90
Table 53. Marginal Reliability Coefficients for Claim Scores in Mathematics.....	91
Table 54. Vertical Scaling Constants on the Reporting Metric	93
Table 55. Cut Scores in Scale Scores.....	94
Table 56. Lowest and Highest Obtainable Scores	94
Table 57. Number of Handscored Items in 2024–2025 Smarter Balanced Summative Item Pool, by Grade and Subject.....	98
Table 58. Inter-Rater Agreement for ELA/L Short-Answer Items	105
Table 59. Inter-Rater Agreement for ELA/L Essay Items	105
Table 60. Inter-Rater Agreement for Mathematics Items	106
Table 61. Number of Items Eligible for Model Training, by Grade and Subject Area.....	108
Table 62. Initial Model Evaluation Criteria	110
Table 63. Demographic Variables and Categories.....	110
Table 64. Secondary Validation Criteria.....	111
Table 65. Summary of Secondary Validation Results, by Grade and Subject Area	111
Table 66. Summary of Live Training and Validation Results, by Grade and Subject Area	112
Table 67. Flags Currently Established.....	113
Table 68. Model Settings	114
Table 69. Human-Machine Agreement for ELA/L Short-Answer Items on Initial and Secondary Validation Samples, by Grade	115
Table 70. Human-Machine Agreement for ELA/L Essay Items on Initial and Secondary Validation Samples, by Grade	116
Table 71. Human-Machine Agreement for Mathematics Items on Initial and Secondary Validation Samples, by Grade	116
Table 72. Human-Machine Agreement for ELA/L Short-Answer Items on Live Validation Sample, by Grade.....	117
Table 73. Human-Machine Agreement for ELA/L Essay Items on Live Validation Sample, by Grade..	117
Table 74. Human-Machine Agreement for Mathematics Items on Live Validation Samples, by Grade .	118
Table 75. Types of Online Score Reports by Level of Aggregation.....	121

Table 76. Types of Subgroups 121
Table 77. Overview of Quality Assurance Reports 136

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. ELA/L Percent Proficient Across Years.....	55
Figure 2. Mathematics Percent Proficient Across Years	56
Figure 3. ELA/L Average Scale Score Across Years	57
Figure 4. Mathematics Average Scale Score Across Years.....	58
Figure 5. Student Ability—Item Difficulty Distribution for ELA/L	61
Figure 6. Student Ability—Item Difficulty Distribution by Claim: ELA/L (Grades 3–5)	62
Figure 7. Student Ability—Item Difficulty Distribution by Claim: ELA/L (Grades 6–8, 11)	63
Figure 8. Student Ability—Item Difficulty Distribution for Mathematics	64
Figure 9. Student Ability—Item Difficulty Distribution by Claim: Mathematics (Grades 3–5).....	65
Figure 10. Student Ability—Item Difficulty Distribution by Claim: Mathematics (Grades 6–8, 11).....	66
Figure 11. Conditional Standard Error of Measurement for ELA/L.....	79
Figure 12. Conditional Standard Error of Measurement for Mathematics	80
Figure 13. PEG Architecture.....	107
Figure 14. Response Routing Rules.....	113

LIST OF EXHIBITS

Exhibit 1. Dashboard: State Level	122
Exhibit 2. Dashboard: District Level	123
Exhibit 3. Detailed Dashboard: District Level.....	123
Exhibit 4. Overall Performance Summary Results for Grade 8 ELA/L: District Level	124
Exhibit 5. Overall Performance Summary Results for Grade 8 ELA/L by Gender: District Level.....	125
Exhibit 6. Claim- and Target-Level Results for Grade 5 Mathematics: District Level	126
Exhibit 7. Roster Performance Report for Grade 5 Mathematics	126
Exhibit 8. Trend Report for ELA/L: Student Level.....	127
Exhibit 9. Individual Student Report for ELA/L	128

1 OVERVIEW

This report provides a technical summary of the 2024–2025 administration of the South Dakota English-language arts/literacy (ELA/L) Assessment and the South Dakota Mathematics Assessment in grades 3–8 and 11. This report includes eight chapters, including: Overview, Testing Administration, Summary of 2024–2025 Operational Test Administration, Validity, Reliability, Scoring, Reporting and Interpreting Scores, and Quality Control Procedure. For the interim assessments, the number of students who took Interim Comprehensive Assessments (ICAs) and Interim Assessment Blocks (IABs) and their performance are provided in Appendix A, Summary of the 2024–2025 Interim Assessments. The data included in this report are based on South Dakota data for the summative assessment in ELA/L and mathematics.

While this report includes information on all aspects of the technical quality of the test administration in South Dakota, the information on item and test development, item content review, field-test administration, item data review, item calibrations, content-alignment study, standard setting, and other validity information can be found in the overall Smarter Balanced technical report. The Smarter Balanced technical report includes all aspects of the technical qualities of the assessments described in the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* (American Educational Research Association [AERA], American Psychological Association [APA], & National Council on Measurement in Education [NCME], 2014) and the requirements of the U.S. Department of Education *Peer Review of State Assessment Systems Non-Regulatory Guidance for States* (U.S. Department of Education, 2015).

1.1 SOUTH DAKOTA ASSESSMENTS

The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) has developed a next-generation assessment system in English-language arts/literacy (ELA/L) and mathematics in grades 3–8 and 11. At the time of development, South Dakota was one of 18 member states (plus the U.S. Virgin Islands) leading the development of assessments in ELA/L and mathematics.

The South Dakota English-language arts and mathematics content standards define the knowledge and skills students need to succeed in college and careers after graduating high school. The standards are tailored specifically to meet the needs of students in South Dakota, ensuring a readiness for the workforce, military service, university or technical school coursework. The standards are (1) research and evidence based, (2) aligned with college and work expectations, (3) rigorous, and (4) benchmarked in their design and content.

The South Dakota assessments are designed to measure students' comprehension and proficiency in South Dakota ELA/L standards and South Dakota mathematics standards for grades 3–8 and 11 and to provide valid, reliable, and fair test scores about student academic achievement. The assessment system includes both summative and interim assessments. The summative assessment is administered every spring to all students in tested grades, while the interim assessments are optional for districts to use. The assessments use computer adaptive testing technologies to provide meaningful feedback and actionable data that teachers can use to help students succeed.

The South Dakota assessments consist of the end-of-year summative assessment designed for accountability purposes and the optional interim assessments designed to support teaching and learning throughout the year. The summative assessments determine student achievement and track student progress toward college and career readiness in ELA/L and mathematics. The summative assessments consist of a computer-adaptive test (CAT) and a performance task (PT).

- **Computer-Adaptive Test (CAT).** The CAT is an online adaptive test that provides an individualized assessment for each student.
- **Performance Task (PT).** A PT is a task that challenges students to apply their knowledge and skills to respond to real-world problems. PTs can best be described as collections of questions and activities coherently connected to a single theme or scenario. They are used to better measure capacities such as depth of understanding, research skills, and complex analysis, which cannot be adequately assessed with selected- or constructed-response items. The computer can score some performance task items, but most are handscored.

The optional interim assessments allow teachers to monitor student progress throughout the year and provide information that they can use to improve instruction and learning. These tools are used at the discretion of schools and districts, and teachers can employ them to evaluate students’ mastery of specific concepts at strategic points during the school year. There are three types of interim assessments available as fixed-form tests:

- The **Interim Comprehensive Assessment (ICA)** tests the same content and report scores on the same scale as the summative assessments.
- The **Interim Assessment Block (IAB)** focuses on specific sets of related concepts that measure three to eight assessment targets and provide detailed information about student learning.
- The **Focused Interim Assessment Block (FIAB)** focuses on specific sets of related concepts that measure no more than three assessment targets and provide more detailed information about student learning than the IAB alone.

In spring 2015, the new statewide assessments in ELA/L and mathematics were administered for the first time to students in grades 3–8 and 11 in all South Dakota public elementary and secondary schools. American Institutes for Research delivered the assessment until the 2019-20 school year. Starting with the 2020-21 school year, Cambium Assessment, Inc. (CAI) delivered and scored the South Dakota assessments and produced score reports. Measurement Incorporated (MI) scored the handscored items.

2 TEST ADMINISTRATION

2.1 TESTING WINDOWS

The 2024–2025 South Dakota English language arts/literacy (ELA/L) and mathematics assessments testing window provided by the South Dakota Department of Education (SDDOE) spanned approximately two months for the online summative assessments and approximately seven to nine months prior to summative assessments for the interim assessments. The paper-pencil fixed-form summative assessments were administered over a three-week period during the online summative window. Table 1 shows the testing windows for both the online and paper-pencil summative and interim assessments.

Table 1. 2024–2025 Testing Windows

Tests	Grade	Start Date	End Date	Mode
Interim Comprehensive Assessments	3–8, 11	8/16/2024	3/7/2025	Online Fixed-Form
Interim Assessment Blocks	3–8, 11	8/16/2024	5/2/2025*	Online Fixed-Form
Summative Assessments	3–8, 11	3/24/2025	5/2/2025	Online Computer Adaptive
	3–8, 11	3/31/2025	4/18/2025	Paper Fixed-Form

* The Interim Assessment Blocks test window was re-opened for an additional two weeks, from May 12 to May 23, 2025, per district request.

2.2 TEST OPTIONS AND ADMINISTRATIVE ROLES

The South Dakota assessments are administered primarily online. To ensure that all eligible students in the tested grades are given the opportunity to take the South Dakota ELA/L and mathematics assessments, several assessment options were available for the 2024–2025 administration to accommodate students’ needs. Table 2 lists the testing options offered in 2024–2025. A testing option is selected by content area. Once an option is selected, it applies to all tests in the content area.

Table 2. Summary of Tests and Testing Options in 2024–2025

Assessments	Test Options	Test Mode
Summative Assessments	English	Online
	Braille	Online
	Spanish (mathematics only)	Online
	Fixed-Form (standard)	Paper
	Fixed-Form (braille)	Paper
Interim Assessments	Fixed-Form (large print)	Paper
	English	Online
	Spanish (mathematics only)	Online
	Braille	Online

To ensure standardized administration conditions, teachers (TEs) and proctors (PRs) follow procedures outlined in the *Online, Summative, Test Administration Manual* (TAM). TEs and PRs must review the TAM before testing begins to ensure that the testing room is prepared appropriately (e.g., removing certain classroom posters, arranging desks). Make-up procedures are established for any students who are absent on testing day(s). Relying on the TAM for guidance, TEs and PRs read aloud the boxed directions verbatim to students, ensuring uniform administration procedures and testing conditions.

2.2.1 Administrative Roles

The key personnel involved with test administration are Assessment Coordinators (AC), District Administrators (DAs), School Coordinators (SCs), Proctors (PRs), Teachers (TEs), and Paraprofessionals (PARAs). The main responsibilities of these key personnel are described in this section. Detailed descriptions can be found in the TAM provided online at <https://sd.portal.cambiumast.com/resources>.

Assessment Coordinator

The AC is authorized to add users to the Test Information Distribution Engine (TIDE) and to assign them any role except that of an AC. If assigned, an AC can modify student records within their district in TIDE (including accommodations, designated supports, and interim test eligibility) or submit appeals. Their primary responsibility is coordinating the administration of the South Dakota assessments in the district.

ACs are responsible for the following:

- Enter student test settings in TIDE.
- Identify students who may require designated supports and test accommodations and ensure that procedures for testing these students follow state policies.
- Monitor testing progress during the testing window and ensure that all eligible students participate in the testing process.
- Review all South Dakota ELA/L and mathematics policies and test administration documents.
- Review scheduling and test requirements with SCs, TEs, and PRs.
- Work with SCs and district technology coordinators to ensure that all systems, including the Cambium Assessment, Inc. (CAI) Secure Browser, are properly installed and functional.
- Create, update, or delete all user accounts in TIDE.
- Verify all student information and eligibility in TIDE.
- Schedule and administer training sessions for all SCs, TEs, and PRs.
- Ensure that all personnel are trained on how to properly administer the South Dakota assessments.
- Monitor the secure administration of the tests.
- Investigate and report all testing improprieties, irregularities, and breaches reported by the TEs and PRs.
- Attend to any secure material according to SDDOE policies.

District Administrator

The DA's role is assigned by the South Dakota Department of Education (SDDOE) to district-level personnel who need access to the system, mainly to access district-level data, but isn't the Assessment Coordinator.

School Coordinator

The SC's primary responsibilities are to coordinate the administration of the South Dakota ELA/L and mathematics assessments and ensure that testing within his or her school is conducted in accordance with the test procedures and security policies established by the SDDOE.

SCs are also responsible for the following:

- Establish a testing schedule with ACs, TEs, and PRs based on test administration windows.
- Work with technology staff to ensure timely computer setup and installations.
- Work with TEs and PRs to review student information in TIDE to ensure that student information and test settings for designated supports and accommodations are correctly applied.
- Create or update TE, PR and PARA accounts into TIDE.
- Enter student test settings in TIDE.
- Identify students who may require designated supports and test accommodations and ensure that procedures for testing these students follow state policies.
- Attend all district trainings and read all South Dakota policies and test administration documents.
- Ensure that all TEs and PRs attend district or school trainings and review online training modules posted on the Gateway.
- Establish secure and separate testing rooms when needed.
- Monitor the secure administration of assessments.
- Monitor testing progress during the testing window and ensure that all eligible students participate in the testing process.
- Investigate and report all testing improprieties, irregularities, and breaches reported by TEs and PRs in the school.
- Attend to secure material before, during, and after the testing window, in accordance with state policies.

Teacher and Proctor

TEs and PRs are responsible for administering the South Dakota assessments. They must be certified staff.

TEs can view student results when they are made available. This role may be assigned to teachers who do not administer an assessment but need access to student results.

The PR's role does not allow access to student results. The role is designed for PRs, such as technology staff, who administer tests but should not have access to student results.

TEs/PRs have responsibilities that include the following:

- Complete South Dakota assessment administration training.

- Read all state policies and test administration documents before administering any South Dakota assessment.
- View student information before testing to ensure that a student receives the proper assessment with the appropriate supports and accommodations. TEs and PRs also report any potential demographic data or test support errors to SCs and ACs, as appropriate.
- Administer the South Dakota ELA/L and mathematics assessments.
- Report all potential assessment security incidents to the SCs and ACs in a manner consistent with state and district policies.

Paraprofessional

A PARA is a district-managed, non-testing user who may assist a TE or PR to administer the South Dakota assessments, but a PARA cannot administer the South Dakota assessments themselves. Prior to assisting the administration of a South Dakota assessment, PARAs must sign a Non-Disclosure Agreement. PARAs are mainly responsible for assisting TE/PRs in the administration of South Dakota assessments. The PARA role does not allow access to student results.

2.2.2 Online Administration

Within the state’s testing window, schools can set testing schedules in intervals (e.g., multiple sessions) rather than in one long period, minimizing the interruption of classroom instruction and efficiently using their facilities. With online testing, schools do not need to handle test booklets and address the storage and security problems inherent in large shipments of materials to a school site.

SCs oversee all aspects of testing at their schools and serve as the main point of contact; TEs and PRs administer the online assessments only. TEs and PRs are trained in the online administration requirements and the mechanics of starting, pausing, and ending a testing session. Training materials for the assessment administration are available online. All school personnel who act as TEs and PRs are encouraged to complete the online PR Certification Course before testing begins.

To start a test session, the PR or TE must access the PR Interface of the online Test Delivery System (TDS) using his or her own computer. A session ID is generated when the test session is created. Students who are taking the assessment with the TE or PR need to enter their Statewide Student Identification (SSID) number, first name, and session ID into the Student Interface using computers provided by the school. The TE or PR then verifies that the students are taking the appropriate assessments with the appropriate accessibility features. (See Section 2.6, Online Testing Features and Testing Accommodations, for a list of accommodations.) Students can begin testing only when the TE or PR confirms the test tool settings. The TE or PR reads Section 10, Day of Test Administration, in the *Online, Summative, Test Administration Manual* to the students and walks them through the login process.

Once a student begins an assessment, he or she must answer all test questions on the current page before proceeding to the next page. Skipping questions is not permitted. For the online computer-adaptive test (CAT), students can review and edit previously answered items as long as these items are in the same test session and segment and the session has not been paused for more than 20 minutes. During an active CAT session, if a student changes his or her response to a previously answered item, the responses given earlier to all subsequent items remain the same. No new items are assigned to this student for changing his or her answers. The following provides an example of how this works.

A student pauses for 10 minutes after completing Item 10. The student then goes back to Item 5 and changes his or her answer. If the response change in Item 5 changes the item score from incorrect to correct, the student’s overall score will improve; however, the answers to Items 6–10 will not change. For performance tasks (PTs), there is no pause rule, but the same rules that apply to the CAT for reviewing and changing assessment responses also apply to PTs.

When proctoring the summative assessment, the assessment can be started in one test or component (e.g., CAT) and completed in a different component. It is recommended that students take the CAT and PT items on separate days to minimize student fatigue. For each content area, it is also recommended that students begin with the CAT items followed by the PT. The CAT assessment must be completed within 45 calendar days of the start date; after 45 days, the assessment opportunity will expire. For a PT, the assessment must be completed within 10 calendar days of the start date; after 10 days, the assessment will expire and may not be reopened.

During a test session for one or more students, TEs and PRs may pause the test for a break. It is up to the TEs or PRs to determine an appropriate stopping point; however, for the English language arts/literacy (ELA/L) and mathematics CAT, the assessment cannot be paused for more than 20 minutes to ensure the integrity of the test scores and security of the assessment items. When an assessment has been paused for more than 20 minutes, students must start a new test session and pick up where they left off. Previous responses will no longer be available for editing.

The TE or PR will always remain in the room during a test session to monitor student testing. Once the test session ends, the TE or PR will ensure that each student has successfully logged out of the system and will collect any handouts or scratch paper that students used during the assessment. Notes and handouts will be securely shredded immediately following the testing sessions.

2.2.3 Paper-Pencil Test Administration

The paper-pencil versions of the South Dakota ELA/L and mathematics assessments are provided as an alternative test administration method for students who cannot access a computer or for students with blindness or visual impairments. In South Dakota paper-pencil tests are offered in the standard, non-accommodated format, large print, and braille formats.

In any district where students are eligible to take the paper-pencil version of the test, the AC must submit a request on their behalf to the SDDOE Office of Assessment for appropriate testing materials. If the request is approved, the testing contractor ships the appropriate test booklets to the district. For ELA/L, the field (i.e., schools, districts) also receives a listening script that contains secure information needed to administer the listening session.

Separate test booklets are used for the ELA/L and mathematics assessments. Items from the CAT and the PT components are combined into one, fixed-form test booklet, including two sessions for CAT and one session for PT in both content areas. The TE or PR can break up the assessment components into separate sessions as needed.

After the student has completed the assessments, the AC returns the test booklets, answer booklets, and listening script to the testing vendor. The testing vendor scans the answer document and scores the test, including the handscored items.

Table 3. Number of Students Who Took Paper-Pencil Tests in the 2024–2025 Summative Test Administration

Subject	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 11	Total
ELA/L	9	17	15	9	14	13		77
Mathematics	9	17	15	9	14	13	1	78

2.2.4 Braille Test Administration

An adaptive braille format of the South Dakota ELA/L and mathematics assessments is available in English. In the 2017–2018 assessment administration, Smarter Balanced added the Braille Hybrid Adaptive Test (Braille HAT) for mathematics. The Braille HAT consists of a fixed-form segment, a computer-adaptive segment, and a fixed-form PT. The fixed-form segment includes items with tactile graphics, which can be embossed at the testing location or received as a package of pre-embossed materials through the SDDOE. All items on the Braille HAT are presented to the students using a Refreshable Braille Display (RBD).

The braille interface assessment is described in the following paragraphs:

- The braille interface includes a text-to-speech component for mathematics consistent with the read-aloud assessment accommodation. The Job Access with Speech (JAWS) screen reading software provided by Freedom Scientific is an essential component that students use with the braille interface.
- Mathematics items are presented to students in Nemeth Braille code via a braille embosser through the adaptive online summative assessment and a fixed-form PT.
- Students taking the summative ELA/L assessment can emboss both reading passages and items as they progress through the assessment. If a student has an RBD, a 40-cell RBD is recommended. The summative ELA/L is presented to the student with items in either contracted or non-contracted Literary Braille (for items containing only text) and via a braille embosser (for items with tactile or spatial components that an RBD cannot read).

Before administering the online summative assessments using the braille interface, TEs and PRs ensure that the technical requirements are met. The student’s computer, the TE or PR’s computer, and any supporting braille technologies used in conjunction with the braille interface are verified.

2.3 TRAINING AND INFORMATION FOR TEST COORDINATORS AND ADMINISTRATORS

ACs, DAs, and SCs oversee all aspects of testing at their schools and serve as the main points of contact, while TEs and PRs administer the online assessments. The online PR Certification Course, PowerPoint presentations, user guides, manuals, and regional trainings are used to train ACs and SCs in the online testing requirements and the mechanics of starting, pausing, and ending a test session. Training materials for the administration are online at <https://sd.portal.cambiumast.com/resources>. District and School Test Coordinators are responsible for training TEs and PRs.

2.3.1 Online Training

Multiple online training opportunities are offered to key staff through the Internet.

Proctor Certification Course

All school personnel who serve as TEs and PRs are strongly encouraged to complete an online Proctor (PR) Certification Course before administering the secure and valid assessments. This web-based course is 30–45 minutes long and covers information on testing policies and the steps for administering a test session in the online system. The course is interactive, requiring participants to start test sessions under different scenarios. Throughout the training, and at the end of the course, participants answer multiple-choice questions about the information provided. A certification of completion is provided to TEs and PRs upon successful completion of the course. The certification is tracked in TIDE and should be kept on file at the associated school.

System Tutorials

The following presentations are offered to explain how the assessment system works. Each of these presentations lasts between 60 and 90 minutes. The slides are available on the portal at <https://sd.portal.cambiumast.com/resources>.

Assessment Viewing Application (AVA). This application allows district- and school-level users to view the interim assessments (ICAs, IABs, and FIABs) for administrative or instructional purposes. The tutorial provides an overview of the AVA for the South Dakota interim assessments.

Reporting System. The reporting system enables district- and school-level users to handscore interim assessments or view their associated reports. The webinar provides an overview of the reporting system for handscoring and reporting the South Dakota interim assessments. In addition, slide notes and an additional presentation are provided as resources.

Student Interface Overview. This tutorial provides an overview of the online student interface in the test delivery system (TDS).

Technology Requirements for Online Testing. This tutorial provides an overview of the technology requirements needed on all computers and devices used for online testing, information on secure browser installation, and voice packs for text-to-speech.

Test Delivery System (TDS) Training. This tutorial prepares ACs, SCs, TEs, and PRs for the assessments by providing an overview of the PR Interface and TDS, including how to start and monitor a test session using the PR Interface.

Test Information Distribution Engine (TIDE). This tutorial provides an overview of how to navigate the TIDE system, including how to register users, enroll students, manage, and edit users/students, and process/view test invalidations.

Testing with Braille. This tutorial provides an overview of the information needed to administer an online braille test in TDS. This also includes information about the specific hardware and software requirements needed to support online braille testing.

Test Design Modules

The following training modules are designed to explain the overall test design of the South Dakota assessments:

Accessibility and Accommodations. This module covers accessibility options, including designated supports and accommodations for students taking the South Dakota assessments. It focuses on students with disabilities, students with a Section 504 Plan, and students identified as English language learners. It also provides additional information for general education students.

Universal Tools for Online Testing. This module covers embedded universal tools and designated supports for students taking the South Dakota assessments.

What is a CAT? This module describes what a computer-adaptive test is and how it works when taking ELA/L and mathematics online assessments.

What Is a Performance Task? This module presents information on performance tasks and how they work when taking ELA/L and mathematics online assessments.

All four of these training modules are available on the portal(<https://sd.portal.cambiumast.com/resources>).

Practice and Training Test Site

Separate training and practice sites are available for TEs and PRs and students. TEs and PRs can practice administering assessments and starting and ending test sessions on the PR training site, and students can practice taking online assessments on the student practice and training site. The South Dakota assessment practice tests mirror the corresponding summative assessments for ELA/L and mathematics. Each test provides students with a grade-specific testing experience, including a variety of question types and difficulty levels (approximately 30 items each in ELA/L and mathematics) as well as a performance task.

The training tests provide students and teachers with opportunities to quickly familiarize themselves with the software and navigational tools they will use for the South Dakota assessments for ELA/L and mathematics. Training tests are available for both ELA/L and mathematics and are organized by grade band (grades 3–5, 6–8, and 11), with each test containing 5–10 questions.

A student can log directly into the practice and training test site as a “Guest” without a PR-generated test session ID, or the student can log in through a training test session created by the TE or PR in the PR training site. Items in the student training test include all item types that are in the operational item pool, including multiple-choice items, grid items, and natural language items.

The practice test is available on the South Dakota portal at <https://sd.portal.cambiumast.com/families.html>.

Manuals and User Guides

All manuals and user guides pertaining to the 2024–2025 test administration can be found on the South Dakota portal at <https://sd.portal.cambiumast.com/resources>. ACs, DAs, and SCs can use these manuals and user guides to train TEs and PRs regarding test administration policies and procedures.

The *Assistive Technology Manual* provides an overview of the embedded and non-embedded assistive technology tools that can be used to help students with special accessibility needs complete online tests in TDS.

The *Braille Requirements Manual* includes information about supported operating systems and required hardware and software for braille testing. It provides information on how to configure JAWS, how to navigate an online test with JAWS, and how to administer a test to a student requiring braille.

The *Online, Summative, Test Administration Manual* provides information for TEs and PRs administering the South Dakota online summative assessments in ELA/L and mathematics. It includes screen captures and step-by-step instructions on how to administer the online tests.

The *Paper, Summative, Test Administration Manual* provides information for TEs and PRs administering the South Dakota paper summative assessments in ELA/L and mathematics.

The *Secure Browser Requirements* provide instructions for downloading and installing the Secure Browser on supported operating systems used for online assessments. It also includes the technical specifications for online testing, including information on Internet and network requirements, general hardware and software requirements, and the text-to-speech function.

The *Quick Guide For Setting Up Your Online Technology System* document outlines the basic technology requirements for administering an online assessment, including operating system requirements and supported web browsers.

The *Reporting User Guide* provides instructions and support for users viewing the 2024–2025 interim assessment performance reports and handscoring in the reporting system.

The *Test Delivery System User Guide* is designed to help users navigate TDS, including the Student Interface and the PR Interface, and help TEs and PRs manage and administer online testing for students.

The *Test Information Distribution Engine (TIDE) User Guide* helps users navigate TIDE. Users can find information on managing user account information, student account information, student test settings and accommodations, appeals, and rosters.

The *Tools, Supports, and Accommodations Guideline (TSA)* provide information for school-level personnel and decision-making teams, particularly Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams, to use when selecting and administering universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations for students who need them.

All manuals, user guides, video tutorials, and quick guides are available on the South Dakota portal at <https://sd.portal.cambiumast.com/resources>.

2.3.2 District Trainings

The SDDOE provided in-person regional trainings and state-wide virtual trainings available to all districts during the 2024–2025 school year. The trainings took place February through March 2025 and topics included overviews of proctoring the South Dakota Math and ELA Assessments and the TIDE, TDS, Reporting, and DEI systems.

2.4 TEST SECURITY

All test items, test materials, and student-level testing information are secured materials for all assessments. The importance of maintaining test security and the integrity of test items is stressed throughout the webinar trainings and in the user guides, modules, and manuals. Features in the testing system also protect test security. This section describes system security, student confidentiality, and policies on testing impropriety.

2.4.1 Student-Level Testing Confidentiality

All secure websites and software systems enforce role-based security models that protect individual privacy and confidentiality in a manner consistent with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and other federal laws. Secure transmission and password-protected access are basic features of the current system and ensure authorized data access. All aspects of the system, including item development and review, test delivery, and reporting, are password protected. CAI’s systems use role-based security models that ensure users may access only the data to which they are entitled and may edit data in accordance with their user rights.

Confirming that the right students are accessing appropriate test content involves three elements:

- *Test eligibility*, which refers to the assignment of a test for a specific student
- *Test accommodation*, which refers to the assignment of a test setting to specific students based on their needs
- *Test session*, which refers to the authentication process of a TE/PR creating and managing a test session, the TE/PR reviewing and approving a test (and its settings) for every student, and the student signing in to take the test

The public disclosure of student information or test results is prohibited by FERPA. Examples of prohibited practices include

- providing login information (username and password) to other authorized TIDE users or to unauthorized individuals;
- sending a student’s name and SSID number together in an email message; and
- having students log in and test under another student’s SSID number.

Test materials and score reports that identify student names with test scores must not be sent to anyone other than authorized individuals with an appropriate need to know. If information about an individual test must be sent via email or fax, only the SSID number is included, not the student’s name.

All students must be enrolled or registered at their testing schools to take the online, paper-pencil, or braille assessments. Student enrollment information, including demographic data, is generated at the district level, and uploaded directly into TIDE during the testing period.

Students log in to the online assessment using their legal first name, SSID number, and a test session ID. Only students can log in to an online test session. TEs, PRs, or other personnel are not permitted to log in to the system on behalf of students, although they are permitted to assist students who need help logging in. For the paper-pencil versions of the assessments, TEs or PRs are required to affix the student Pre-ID label to the student’s answer document.

After a test session, only staff with the administrative roles of AC, DA, SC, or TE can view their students’ scores. PRs and PARAs do not have access to student scores.

2.4.2 System Security

The objective of system security is to ensure that all data are protected and accessed appropriately by the right user group. It is about protecting data and maintaining data and system integrity as intended, including ensuring that all personal information is secured, that transferred data (whether sent or received) is not altered in any way, that the data source is known, and that any service can be performed only by a specific, designated user.

A Hierarchy of Control. As described in Section 2.2, Test Options and Administrative Roles, SCs, PRs, and TEs have well-defined roles and access to the testing system. When the TIDE window opens, the SDDOE creates a verified list of ACs that is uploaded into TIDE. ACs are then responsible for selecting and entering SC information into TIDE, and ACs or SCs are responsible for entering PR and TE information into TIDE. Throughout the year, the ACs, DAs, and SCs are also expected to delete the information of any staff members in TIDE who have transferred, resigned, or no longer serve as educators in the designated school.

Password Protection. Access points for each system role—at the state, district, and school levels—require a password to log in to the system. Newly added users receive separate passwords through the email address assigned by the school.

Secure Browser. A key role of the Technology Coordinator (TC) is to ensure that the Secure Browser is properly installed on the computers used for the administration of the online assessments. Developed by the testing contractor, the Secure Browser prevents students from accessing other computers or Internet applications and from copying test information. The secure browser suppresses access to commonly used browsers such as Internet Explorer and Firefox, and it prevents students from searching for answers on the Internet or communicating with other students through the school’s Internet connection. The assessments can be accessed only through the CAI Secure Browser and not by other Internet browsers.

Take a Test App. The TC may also choose to set up Windows 10 computers for testing with the native Take a Test application. Developed by Microsoft, the Take a Test app enforces a locked-down, secure testing environment identical to CAI’s Secure Browser. Users of the Take a Test app do not need to install the CAI Secure Browser on the testing machine. This application is configurable based on user needs. South Dakota had approved the application for student testing in the winter of 2018 but had stopped support after its low usage in winter 2019.

2.4.3 Security of the Testing Environment

The ACs, SCs, TEs, and PRs work together to determine appropriate testing schedules based on the number of computers available, the number of students in each tested grade, and the average length of time needed to complete each assessment. PARAs will assist TEs and PRs in the administration of the assessments, as needed.

Testing personnel are reminded in the online training, face-to-face training, and user manuals that assessments should be administered in testing rooms that do not crowd students. Good lighting, ventilation, and freedom from noise and interruptions are important factors to consider when selecting testing rooms.

TEs and PRs must establish procedures to maintain a quiet environment during each test session, recognizing that some students may finish more quickly than others. When students are allowed to leave the testing room upon test completion, TEs or PRs must explain the procedures for leaving and where they

are expected to report once they leave. Students must not disrupt others while leaving the testing environment. If students are expected to remain in the testing room until the end of the session, TEs or PRs are encouraged to prepare some quiet work for students to do after they finish the assessment. The work must be on a different subject than in the assessment the students just completed.

If a student needs to leave the room for a brief time, the TEs or PRs must pause the student’s assessment. For the CAT, if the pause lasts longer than 20 minutes, the student can continue with the rest of the assessment in a new test session, but the system will not allow the student to return to the answers he or she provided before the pause. This measure is implemented to prevent students from using the time to look up answers.

Room Preparation

The room should be prepared before the start of the test session. Any information displayed on bulletin boards, chalkboards, or charts that students might use to help answer test questions should be removed or covered. This rule applies to rubrics, vocabulary charts, student work, posters, graphs, content area strategies charts, etc. The cell phones of both testing personnel and students must be turned off and stored out of sight in the testing room. Rooms should have minimized access by others; TEs and PRs are encouraged to post signs in halls and entrances to promote optimum testing conditions. A sign indicating “TESTING—DO NOT DISTURB” should be affixed to testing room doors.

Seating Arrangements

When arranging testing room seating, TEs and PRs should provide adequate spacing between students’ seats. Students should be seated so they will not be tempted to look at the answers of others. Because the online CAT is adaptive, it is unlikely that students will see the same test questions as other students. However, appropriate seating arrangements should still discourage them from communicating. For the performance tasks, different forms are spiraled within a classroom so that students do not receive the same form as their neighbors.

After the Test

At the end of a test session, TEs or PRs must walk through the classroom to pick up any scratch paper that students used and any papers that display students’ SSID numbers and names together. These materials should be securely shredded or stored in a locked area immediately. The printed reading passages and questions for any content area assessment provided for a student who is allowed to use this accommodation in an individual setting must also be shredded immediately at the end of each test session.

For the paper-pencil assessment versions, the *Paper-Pencil Test Administration Manual* for mathematics or ELA/L provides specific instructions on how to package and secure the test booklets so that they can be properly returned to the testing contractor’s office.

2.4.4 Test Security Violations

Anyone who administers or proctors a South Dakota assessment is responsible for understanding the assessment security procedures and prohibited practices. Prohibited practices, as detailed in the *Online, Summative Test Administration Manual*, fall into three groups:

Impropriety. A test security incident that has a minor impact on the individual or group of students who are testing and has a low risk of potentially affecting student performance on the test, test security, or test validity (for example, students leaving the testing room without authorization).

Irregularity. A test security incident that affects an individual or group of students who are testing and may affect student performance on the test, test security, or test validity. These circumstances, such as a fire drill or other disruption, can be contained at the local level.

Breach. A test security incident that poses a threat to the validity of the test. Breaches require immediate attention and escalation to the SDDOE Office of Assessment. Examples include exposure of secure materials or a repeatable security/system risk. These circumstances have external implications (e.g., administrators modifying student answers, students sharing test items through social media).

District and school personnel must document and submit all test security incidents using the TIDE Testing Irregularity form to the SDDOE Office of Assessment. The forms are housed in TIDE and are the record for all test security incidents.

2.5 STUDENT PARTICIPATION

All students (including retained students) currently enrolled in grades 3–8 and 11 at public schools in South Dakota must participate in the South Dakota assessments (Note: some non-public and BIE schools utilize South Dakota assessments for their required standardized testing). Students are tested in the enrolled grade assessment, with the exception of some grade 10 and 12 students. Out-of-grade-level testing must be approved by the state.

2.5.1 Exempt Students

The following students are exempt from participating in the South Dakota assessments:

- A student who has a significant medical emergency, with the approval of the SDDOE Office of Assessment
- A Limited English Proficiency (LEP) student who has moved to the country within the school year (ELA/L exemption only)

2.6 ONLINE TESTING FEATURES AND TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS

South Dakota’s *Tools, Supports, and Accommodations (TSA)* Guidelines are modified from the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium’s *Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidelines*. The *TSA* is intended for school-level personnel and decision-making teams, including IEP and Section 504 Plan teams, as they prepare for and implement the South Dakota assessments. The *TSA* provides information for classroom teachers, English language development educators, special education teachers, and instructional assistants to use in selecting and administering universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations for students who need them. The *TSA* is also intended for assessment staff and administrators who oversee decisions made in instruction and assessment.

The *TSA* applies to all students. They emphasize an individualized approach to the implementation of assessment practices for students who have diverse needs and participate in large-scale content assessments. The *TSA* focuses on universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations for the South Dakota assessments of ELA/L and mathematics. At the same time, the *TSA* supports important instructional

decisions about accessibility and accommodations for students who participate in the South Dakota assessments.

The summative assessments contain universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations in both embedded and non-embedded versions. Embedded resources are part of the computer administration system, whereas non-embedded resources are provided outside that system.

State-level users, ACs, DAs, and SCs can set embedded and non-embedded designated supports and accommodations based on their specific user role. Most accommodations must be set at the state level. Designated supports and accommodations must be set in TIDE before starting a test session.

All embedded and non-embedded universal tools will be activated for all students to use during a test session. A TE or PR can deactivate SDDOE-approved universal tools in the testing system’s PR Interface for a student who may be distracted by the ability to access a specific tool during a test session.

For additional information about the availability of designated supports and accommodations, refer to South Dakota’s *TSA* for complete information. This document is located at <https://sd.portal.cambiumast.com/resource-item/en/tools-supports-and-accommodations-tsa-guidelines>.

2.6.1 Online Universal Tools for All Students

Universal tools are features of an assessment or exam that are embedded or non-embedded components of the test administration system. Universal tools are available to all students based on their preference and selection, and they have been preset in the Test Information Distribution System (TIDE). In the 2024–2025 test administration, the following universal tools were available for all students. For specific information on how to access and use these features, refer to the *Test Delivery System User Guide*, found at <https://sd.portal.cambiumast.com/resource-item/en/test-delivery-system-guide>.

Embedded Universal Tools

Breaks (Pauses). A student may pause the assessment and return to the test question he or she was working on. However, if an assessment is paused for more than 20 minutes, students cannot return to previous test questions if they have navigated to the next segment (for a CAT or PT) or advanced to the next page (for a CAT).

Calculator. Students in grades 6-8, 11 can access an embedded on-screen digital calculator by clicking the calculator icon. This tool is available only with the specific items that the South Dakota item specifications indicate are appropriate.

Digital Notepad. This tool is used for making notes about an item. The digital notepad is item specific and is available through the end of the test segment. Notes are not saved when the student moves on to the next segment or after a break of more than 20 minutes.

English Dictionary. An embedded English dictionary is available for the full-write portion of an ELA/L performance task.

English Glossary. Grade- and context-appropriate definitions of specific construct-irrelevant terms are shown in English on the screen via a pop-up. The student can access the embedded glossary by clicking on any of the pre-selected terms.

Expandable Passages and/or Items. Each passage or stimulus can be expanded so that it takes up a larger portion of the screen.

Global Notes. Global Notes is a notepad available for ELA/L performance tasks in which students complete a full-write. The student clicks the notepad icon for the notepad to appear. During the ELA/L performance tasks, the notes are retained from segment to segment so that the student may return to the notes even though he or she cannot return to specific items in the previous segment.

Highlighter. The student can highlight passages or sections of passages and test questions.

Keyboard Navigation. Navigation throughout the text can be accomplished by using a keyboard.

Line Reader. The student uses a universal onscreen tool to assist in reading by raising and lowering the tool for each line of text on the screen.

Mark for Review. A student can mark a question and return to it later. However, for the CAT, if the assessment is paused for more than 20 minutes, students cannot return to marked test questions.

Mathematics Tools. These digital tools (e.g., embedded ruler, protractor) are used for measurement and are available only with mathematics items for which the South Dakota item specifications deem them appropriate.

Spellcheck. This is a writing tool for checking the spelling of words in student-generated responses. Spellcheck gives an indication only that a word is misspelled; it does not provide the correct spelling. This tool is available only with the specific items for which the South Dakota item specifications indicate that it would be appropriate. It is bundled with other embedded writing tools for all performance task full-writes (planning, drafting, revising, and editing). A full-write is the second part of a performance task.

Strikethrough. A student may use the strikethrough function to cross out response options.

Thesaurus. An embedded on-screen thesaurus is available for the full-write portion of an ELA/L performance task. A thesaurus contains synonyms of terms used in the assessment. A full-write is the second part of a performance task. The use of this universal tool may result in the student needing additional overall time to complete the assessment.

Tutorials. The student can watch a short video demonstrating how to respond to a particular question type.

Writing Tools. Selected writing tools (e.g., bold, italics, bullets, undo and redo) are available for all student-generated responses.

Zoom. The student can zoom in on test questions, text, and graphics up to 3X.

Non-Embedded Universal Tools

Breaks. Breaks may be given at predetermined intervals or after the completion of sections of the assessment for students taking a paper-pencil test. Sometimes, students can take breaks if needed to reduce cognitive fatigue when they experience heavy assessment demands. The use of this universal tool may result in the student needing additional overall time to complete the assessment.

English Dictionary. An English dictionary can be provided for the full-write portion of an ELA/L performance task. A full-write is the second part of a performance task. The use of this universal tool may result in the student needing additional overall time to complete the assessment.

Scratch Paper. Scratch paper to make notes, write computations, or record responses may be made available. Only plain or lined paper is appropriate for ELA/L. Plain graph paper (no coordinate plane or other graphics) is highly recommended for grade 6 and above and can be used on all mathematics assessments. A whiteboard with a marker may be used as scratch paper. If the construct being measured is not affected, students may use assistive technology devices including low-tech assistive technologies such as Math Window, which are permitted to help students make notes. The assistive technology device must be consistent with the student’s IEP or Section 504 Plan. Access to the Internet must be disabled on assistive technology devices.

- *Scratch Paper for the CAT (Computer-Adaptive Test).* All scratch paper must be collected and securely destroyed at the end of each CAT assessment session to maintain test security. All notes on whiteboards or assistive technology devices must also be erased.
- *Scratch Paper for the Performance Tasks.* For mathematics and ELA/L, if a student needs to take the assessment in more than one session, scratch paper, whiteboards, and/or assistive technology devices may be collected at the end of each session, securely stored, and made available to the student at the next performance task testing session. Once the student completes the performance task, the scratch paper must be collected and securely destroyed, and whiteboards and notes on assistive technology devices must be erased to maintain test security.

Thesaurus. A thesaurus provides synonyms of terms. While a student interacts with text included in the assessment, a thesaurus is made available for a full-write. A full-write is the second part of a performance task. The use of this universal tool may result in the student needing additional overall time to complete the assessment.

2.6.2 Designated Supports and Accommodations

Designated supports for the South Dakota assessments are those features that are available for use by any student for whom the need has been indicated by an educator (or team of educators with a parent or guardian and the student). Scores achieved by students using designated supports will be included for federal accountability purposes. It is recommended that a consistent process be used to determine these supports for individual students. All educators making these decisions should be trained on the process and understand the range of designated supports available. Smarter Balanced members have identified digitally embedded and non-embedded designated supports for students for whom an adult or team has indicated a need for the support.

Accommodations are changes in procedures or materials that increase equitable access during the South Dakota assessments. Assessment accommodations generate valid assessment results for students who need them; they allow these students to show what they know and can do. Accommodations are available for students with documented IEPs or Section 504 Plans. Consortium-approved accommodations do not compromise the learning expectations, construct, grade-level standard, or intended outcome of the assessments.

Embedded Designated Supports

Color Contrast. Students can have screen background or font color adjusted based on their needs or preferences. This may include reversing the colors for the entire interface or choosing the color of the font and background. Black on white, reverse contrast, black on rose, medium gray on light gray, and yellow on blue are offered for the online assessments.

Illustration Glossaries. The illustration glossaries are available for mathematics and are provided for selected construct-irrelevant terms for math. Illustrations for these terms appear on the computer screen when students select them. Students with the illustration glossary setting enabled can view the illustration glossary. Students can also adjust the size of the illustration and move it around the screen.

Masking. Masking involves blocking off content that is not of immediate need or that may be distracting to the student. Students can focus their attention on a specific part of a test item by using the masking feature.

Mouse Pointer. Students may be given a mouse pointer of various colors or sizes. Pointer colors include black, green, yellow, red, and white.

Streamline. This accommodation provides a streamlined interface of the test in an alternative, simplified format in which the items appear below the stimuli. When Streamlined Mode is turned on, it disables the ability to use the split-screen feature.

Text-to-Speech. Text-to-speech is allowed for all mathematics stimuli and items. Text-to-speech is allowed for ELA/L PT in three categories: items only, passages only, and both passages and items. It is also available for ELA/L CAT items. To have text-to-speech for ELA/L passages, the student needs an accommodation (see the Embedded Accommodations section for ELA/L CAT reading passages). Items refer to the actual questions being asked to the student and include response options or choices. Stimuli are anything that leads to the question. For example, stimuli may be a description of something related to the test items, could include a diagram, or could be a short passage to help establish the premise of the items that follow it. Text is read aloud to the student via embedded text-to-speech technology. The student can control the speed and raise or lower the volume of the voice via a volume control. This support is also available in Spanish for mathematics items.

Text-to-Speech for Responses to Short-Answer Items. Students enter their responses, and the text is read aloud to the student via embedded text-to-speech technology.

Translated Test Directions (for mathematics). Translation of test directions is a language support available before students begin the actual test items. Students can see test directions in another language. As an embedded designated support, translated test directions are automatically part of the stacked translation designated support.

Translations (Glossaries) (for mathematics). Translated glossaries are a language support and are provided for selected construct-irrelevant terms for mathematics. Translations for these terms appear on the computer screen when students click them. The following language glossaries were offered in SY 2024–2025: Arabic, Burmese, Cantonese, Filipino/Tagalog, Hmong, Korean, Mandarin, Punjabi, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Ukrainian, and Vietnamese.

Translations (Dual Language) (for mathematics). Dual language translations are a linguistic support available for some students. These provide the full translation of each English test item and stimulus.

Turn Off Any Universal Tools. Teachers can disable any universal tools that might be distracting or that students do not need or are unable to use. South Dakota has an approved subset of universal tools that can be tuned off.

Zoom. To increase the default print size for the entire test, the print size must be set for the student in TIDE or set by a TA before the start of the test.

Non-Embedded Designated Supports

Amplification. The student adjusts the volume control beyond the computer’s built-in settings using headphones or other non-embedded devices.

Bilingual Dictionary. A bilingual or dual-language word-to-word dictionary is a language support. This can be provided for the full-write portion of an ELA/L performance task.

Color Contrast. Test content of online items may be printed on different-colored paper.

Color Overlays. Color transparencies are placed over a paper-based assessment.

Illustration Glossaries. The illustration glossaries are a language support provided for selected construct-irrelevant terms for math. Illustrations for these terms appear in a supplement to the paper/pencil test and are identified by item number.

Magnification. Students may adjust the size of specific areas of the screen (e.g., text, formulas, tables, graphics, and navigation buttons) with an assistive technology device. Magnification allows increasing the size to a level not provided for by the zoom universal tool.

Medical Supports. Students may have access to an electronic device for medical purposes (e.g., glucose monitor). The device may include a cell phone and should support the student only during testing.

Noise Buffers. Noise buffers include ear mufflers, white noise, and other equipment to reduce environmental noises.

Printed Test Directions in English. Available as a supplement to the TAM, a printed copy of oral test directions in English may be provided to the student. The use of this support may result in the student needing additional overall time to complete the assessment.

Read Aloud. The read-aloud function is available for mathematics and ELA/L items, except passages. Text is read aloud to the student by a trained and qualified human reader who follows the administration guidelines provided in the *Online, Summative, Test Administration Manual* and the *Guidelines for Read Aloud, Test Reader*. All or portions of the content may be read aloud, except ELA/L passages.

Read Aloud in Spanish (for mathematics tests). Spanish text is read aloud to the student by a trained and qualified human reader who follows the administration guidelines provided in the *Online, Summative, Test Administration Manual* and in the *Guidelines for Read Aloud, Test Reader*. All or portions of the content may be read aloud.

Separate Setting. The student is tested in a setting different from that which is available for most students.

Simplified Test Directions. The test administrator simplifies or paraphrases the test directions found in the *Online, Summative, Test Administration Manual* according to the Simplified Test Directions guidelines.

Translated Test Directions. This is a PDF containing directions translated in each of the languages currently supported. A bilingual adult can read this file to the student.

Translated Test Directions in American Sign Language (ASL). Test directions that include test administration scripts are translated into ASL video. The ASL human signer and the signed test content are viewed at the same time. Students may view portions of the ASL video as often as needed.

Translations (Glossaries) (for mathematics paper-pencil tests). Translated glossaries are a language support provided for selected construct-irrelevant terms for mathematics. Glossary terms are listed by item and include the English term and its translated equivalent.

Embedded Accommodations

American Sign Language (ASL). Test content for ELA/L listening items and mathematics items is translated into an ASL video. An ASL human signer and the signed test content are viewed on the same screen. Students may view portions of the ASL video as often as needed.

Braille. This is a raised-dot code that individuals read with their fingertips. Graphics (e.g., maps, charts, graphs, diagrams, illustrations) are presented in a raised format (paper or thermoform). Contracted and non-contracted braille is available; Nemeth Braille Code is available for mathematics.

Braille Transcript (for ELA/L listening passages). This is a braille transcript of the closed captioning created for the listening passages.

Closed Captioning (for ELA/L listening passages). This is printed text that appears on the computer screen as audio materials are presented.

Permissive Mode. Permissive Mode is required by the contractor for use of assistive technology devices. Use of an assistive technology device may require Permissive Mode to be set in TIDE (i.e., alternate response options, amplification devices, speech-to-text, etc.).

Speech to Text. Embedded voice recognition allows students to use their voices as input devices to the computer to dictate responses. Voice recognition software generally can recognize speech up to 160 words per minute. Students may use their own assistive technology devices instead of embedded Speech-to-Text. This accommodation is available in both English (for ELA/L and mathematics short-answer items, and ELA/L performance task full writes) and Spanish (for mathematics short-answer items).

Text-to-Speech (for ELA/L CAT reading passages or reading items and passages). For the CAT portion of the ELA/L assessment, text-to-speech is available for reading passages or both reading items and passages. The reading passages refer to the text that is on the left-hand side of the screen and items refer to the text that is on the right-hand side of the screen. The text is read aloud to the student via embedded text-to-speech technology. The student can control the speed and raise or lower the volume of the voice via a volume control. This accommodation is appropriate for a very small number of students and is available to those whose need is documented in an IEP or Section 504 Plan.

Word Completion Word completion allows students to begin writing a word and choose from a list of words that have been predicted from word frequency and syntax rules.

Non-Embedded Accommodations

100s Number Table. A paper-based list of all the digits from 1 to 100 in table format will be available from Smarter Balanced for reference and was approved for use on the South Dakota mathematics assessment.

Abacus. For students who typically use an abacus, this tool may be used in place of scratch paper.

Alternate Response Option. Alternate response options include but are not limited to adapted keyboards, large keyboards, StickyKeys, MouseKeys, FilterKeys, adapted mouse, touch screen, head wand, and switches.

Braille (for paper-pencil tests). This is a raised-dot code that individuals read with their fingertips. Graphics (e.g., maps, charts, graphs, diagrams, illustrations) are presented in a raised format (paper or thermoform). Contracted and non-contracted braille is available; Nemeth Braille Code is available for mathematics.

Calculator (for grades 6–8 and 11 mathematics tests). This is a non-embedded calculator for students needing a special calculator, such as a braille calculator or a talking calculator, currently unavailable in the assessment platform.

Large Print. A large print paper form of the test that is provided to the student with a visual impairment.

Multiplication Table. A paper-based single digit (1–12) multiplication table is available from Smarter Balanced and approved for use on the South Dakota mathematics assessment.

Print-on-Demand. Paper copies of passages, stimuli, and/or items are printed for students. For those students needing a paper copy of a passage or stimulus, permission to request printing must first be set in TIDE. For those students needing a paper copy of one or more items, the SDDOE must be contacted by the SC or DC to review the student’s case before setting the accommodation for the student.

Read Aloud (for ELA/L passages). Text is read aloud to the student via an external screen reader or by a trained and qualified human reader who follows the administration guidelines provided in Appendix D in the *Online, Summative, Test Administration Manual* and in the *Tools, Supports, and Accommodations Guidelines*. All or portions of the content may be read aloud. Members can refer to the *Guidelines for Choosing the Read Aloud Accommodation* when deciding if this accommodation is appropriate for a student.

Scribe. Students dictate their responses to a human, who then records verbatim what they dictate. The scribe must be trained and qualified and must follow the administration guidelines provided in the *Online, Summative, Test Administration Manual* and in the *Tools, Supports, and Accommodations Guidelines*.

Speech-to-Text. Voice recognition allows students to use their voices as devices to input information into the computer to dictate responses or give commands (e.g., opening application programs, pulling down menus, saving work). Voice recognition software generally can recognize speech up to 160 words per minute. Students may use their own assistive technology devices. This accommodation is available in both English (for ELA/L and mathematics short-answer items, and ELA/L performance task full writes) and Spanish (for mathematics short-answer items).

Word Completion. Word completion allows students to begin writing a word and choose from a list of words that have been predicted from word frequency and syntax rules. Word completion is delivered via a non-embedded software program. Students may use their own assistive technology devices.

Table 4 presents a list of the universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations offered in the 2024–2025 administration. Tables 5–10 present the number of students who were allowed to use each accommodation and/or designated support on the online ELA and mathematics assessments.

Table 4. 2024–2025 Universal Tools, Designated Supports, and Accommodations

Universal Tools	Designated Supports	Accommodations
Embedded		
Breaks (Pauses)	Color Contrast	American Sign Language ⁹
Calculator ¹	Illustration Glossaries ⁶	Braille
Digital Notepad	Masking	Braille Transcript ¹⁰
English Dictionary ²	Mouse Pointer	Closed Captioning ¹⁰
English Glossary	Streamline	Permissive Mode
Expandable Passages and/or Items	Text-to-Speech ⁷	Speech-to-Text
Global Notes ³	Text-to-Speech for Responses to Short-Answer Items	Text-to-Speech ¹¹
Highlighter	Translated Test Directions ⁸	Word Completion
Keyboard Navigation	Translations (Glossaries) ⁸	
Line Reader	Translations (Dual Language) ⁸	
Mark for Review	Turn Off Any Universal Tools	
Mathematics Tools ⁴	Zoom	
Spellcheck		
Strikethrough		
Thesaurus ²		
Tutorials		
Writing Tools ⁵		
Zoom		
Non-Embedded		
Breaks	Amplification	100s Number Table
English Dictionary ²	Bilingual Dictionary ²	Abacus
Scratch Paper	Color Contrast	Alternate Response Options ¹⁴
Thesaurus ²	Color Overlay	Braille ¹⁵
	Illustration Glossaries ⁶	Calculator ¹
	Magnification	Large Print ¹⁵
	Medical Supports	Multiplication Table
	Noise Buffers	Print-on-Demand
	Printed Test Directions in English	Read Aloud ¹⁶
	Read Aloud ¹²	Scribe
	Read Aloud in Spanish ⁶	Speech-to-Text
	Separate Setting	Word Completion
	Simplified Test Directions	
	Translated Test Direction in ASL	
	Translated Test Directions	
	Translations (Glossaries) ¹³	

Note. Items shown are available for ELA/L and mathematics unless otherwise noted.

¹ For calculator-allowed items only in grades 6–8 and 11

² For ELA/L performance task full-writes

³ For ELA/L performance tasks

⁴ Includes embedded ruler, embedded protractor

⁵ Includes bold, italic, underline, indent, cut, paste, spellcheck, bullets, undo/redo

⁶ For mathematics items

⁷ For ELA/L PT stimuli, ELA/L PT and CAT items (not ELA/L CAT reading passages), and mathematics stimuli and items: must be set in TIDE by district- or school-level user and must be set before test begins. Also available in Spanish for mathematics tests.

⁸ For mathematics items

⁹ For ELA/L listening items and mathematics items

¹⁰ For ELA/L listening passages

¹¹ For ELA/L reading passages: must be set in TIDE by state-level user and must be set before test begins

¹² For ELA/L items (not ELA/L reading passages) and mathematics stimuli and items

¹³ For mathematics items on the paper-pencil test

Universal Tools	Designated Supports	Accommodations
¹⁴ Includes adapted keyboards, large keyboard, StickyKeys, MouseKeys, FilterKeys, adapted mouse, touch screen, head wand, and switches		
¹⁵ For paper-pencil assessments		
¹⁶ For ELA/L reading passages, all grades		

Table 5. ELA/L Total Students with Allowed Embedded and Non-Embedded Accommodations

Accommodations	Grade						
	3	4	5	6	7	8	11
Embedded Accommodations							
American Sign Language	1	4	3	1	2	2	1
Braille	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
Braille Transcript	3	2	6	5	3	6	5
Closed Captioning	3	2	6	5	3	6	5
Permissive Mode	6	6	4	6	7	3	1
Speech-to-Text	45	70	86	54	50	38	24
Text-to-Speech: Reading Passages	0	0	2	1	0	0	0
Text-to-Speech: Reading Passages and Items	115	123	139	123	99	78	60
Word Completion	12	23	25	14	12	6	5
Non-Embedded Accommodations							
Alternate Response Options	2	1	1	0	0	0	0
Print-on-Demand: Passages and Items	0	0	1	0	1	1	0
Read Aloud Passages	6	7	4	3	2	4	1
Scribe	34	34	39	23	17	13	7
Speech-to-Text	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

Table 6. ELA/L Total Students with Allowed Embedded Designated Supports

Designated Supports	Subgroup	Grade						
		3	4	5	6	7	8	11
Color Contrast	Overall	4	9	12	28	15	9	0
	LEP	0	2	1	0	0	0	0
	IDEA	1	3	5	11	4	5	0
Masking	Overall	10	13	10	14	9	5	2
	LEP	1	1	0	1	1	2	0
	IDEA	8	12	7	2	2	3	1
Mouse Pointer	Overall	2	0	3	11	0	1	0
	LEP	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
	IDEA	1	0	2	2	0	1	0
Streamline	Overall	22	21	22	33	18	12	4
	LEP	2	0	0	0	1	0	0
	IDEA	10	5	10	11	15	12	3
Text-to-Speech: CAT Items	Overall	1,905	1,791	1,776	1,440	1,288	1,153	787
	LEP	494	391	392	263	234	253	190
	IDEA	1,045	1,068	1,021	926	795	648	407

Designated Supports	Subgroup	Grade						
		3	4	5	6	7	8	11
Text-to-Speech: PT Items	Overall	323	301	232	203	241	215	131
	LEP	34	35	28	11	26	30	17
	IDEA	266	259	198	170	207	165	108
Text-to-Speech: PT Passages	Overall	3	1	2	5	3	2	0
	LEP	1	0	0	3	1	0	0
	IDEA	2	1	1	1	2	1	0
Text-to-Speech: PT Passages and Items	Overall	1,711	1,614	1,658	1,371	1,142	1,014	700
	LEP	467	364	372	256	211	226	174
	IDEA	887	919	926	869	665	547	338
Text-to-Speech: Short Answer Items	Overall	2050	1923	1918	1590	1405	1244	847
	LEP	503	399	400	272	239	256	191
	IDEA	1168	1186	1151	1050	892	726	462
Zoom	Overall	4	5	3	7	7	4	2
	LEP	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
	IDEA	4	3	3	4	3	4	1

Table 7. ELA/L Total Students with Allowed Non-Embedded Designated Supports

Designated Supports	Subgroup	Grade						
		3	4	5	6	7	8	11
Amplification	Overall	3	6	4	3	0	6	5
	LEP	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	IDEA	3	4	4	3	0	3	4
Bilingual Dictionary	Overall	12	4	5	14	25	11	16
	LEP	12	4	5	13	25	10	16
	IDEA	2	0	0	1	0	1	0
Color Contrast	Overall	1	0	3	2	1	4	0
	LEP	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	IDEA	1	0	2	2	1	4	0
Color Overlay	Overall	4	0	2	3	1	0	0
	LEP	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
	IDEA	3	0	1	3	1	0	0
Magnification	Overall	1	1	2	5	2	4	3
	LEP	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	IDEA	1	1	1	5	2	4	2
Medical Supports	Overall	10	11	6	14	12	14	14
	LEP	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
	IDEA	4	3	1	2	4	4	1
Noise Buffers	Overall	10	14	14	6	4	2	5
	LEP	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
	IDEA	9	13	8	5	2	1	3
Printed Test Directions in English	Overall	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
	LEP	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	IDEA	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Read Aloud: Items	Overall	70	41	43	25	30	37	33
	LEP	8	5	7	3	0	1	0
	IDEA	64	36	36	22	29	34	32
Separate Setting	Overall	1,039	1,121	1,109	945	885	820	612
	LEP	134	113	110	81	71	63	57
	IDEA	887	996	955	808	738	658	474
Simplified Test Directions	Overall	282	256	294	333	301	301	113
	LEP	47	45	49	71	85	84	12
	IDEA	246	222	248	252	210	202	98
Translated Test Directions in ASL	Overall	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
	LEP	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	IDEA	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Translated Test Directions	Overall	81	54	86	75	51	52	69
	LEP	80	54	86	75	51	52	69
	IDEA	5	9	12	18	12	10	6

Table 8. Mathematics Total Students with Allowed Embedded and Non-Embedded Accommodations

Accommodations	Grade						
	3	4	5	6	7	8	11
Embedded Accommodations							
American Sign Language	1	4	3	1	2	2	1
Permissive Mode	5	6	4	6	6	3	1
Speech-to-Text	38	49	72	50	42	35	23
Word Completion	12	19	21	13	12	5	5
Non-Embedded Accommodations							
100s Number Table	179	187	146	83	38	30	1
Abacus	2	1	0	0	0	0	0
Alternate Response Options	2	1	1	0	0	0	0
Calculator	0	1	0	1	0	3	1
Multiplication Table	226	371	412	406	312	254	47
Print-on-Demand: Stimuli and Items	0	0	1	0	1	1	0
Scribe	24	28	29	13	15	9	6
Speech-to-Text	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

Table 9. Mathematics Total Students with Allowed Embedded Designated Supports

Designated Supports	Subgroup	Grade						
		3	4	5	6	7	8	11
Color Contrast	Overall	4	10	12	28	15	9	0
	LEP	0	2	1	0	0	0	0
	IDEA	1	4	5	11	4	5	0
Illustration Glossaries	Overall	259	208	230	173	140	158	126
	LEP	253	194	217	152	130	145	123
	IDEA	34	40	44	41	23	29	12
Masking	Overall	8	12	10	14	8	5	3
	LEP	1	1	0	1	1	2	0
	IDEA	7	11	7	2	2	3	2
Mouse Pointer	Overall	2	0	2	11	0	1	0
	LEP	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
	IDEA	1	0	1	2	0	1	0
Streamline	Overall	21	21	22	34	15	11	5
	LEP	2	0	0	1	1	0	0
	IDEA	9	5	10	11	13	11	4
Text-to-Speech: Items	Overall	121	92	76	70	65	71	38
	LEP	10	8	13	4	10	8	6
	IDEA	90	72	60	58	52	53	30
Text-to-Speech: Stimuli	Overall	3	1	2	2	3	4	2
	LEP	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
	IDEA	1	1	2	1	2	2	2
Text-to-Speech: Stimuli and Items	Overall	1,954	1,859	1,860	1,534	1,345	1,191	809
	LEP	518	416	415	306	259	288	193
	IDEA	1,072	1,112	1,087	983	826	666	423
Text-to-Speech for Responses to Short-Answer Items	Overall	2,076	1,952	1,938	1,605	1,413	1,266	849
	LEP	528	424	428	310	269	298	199
	IDEA	1,162	1,185	1,149	1,041	880	721	455
Translation (Glossaries): Spanish	Overall	63	70	85	90	65	78	55
	LEP	62	70	85	89	64	77	55
	IDEA	2	6	9	13	11	7	3
Translation (Glossaries): Other Languages	Overall	12	11	10	13	14	7	3
	LEP	12	10	8	12	14	7	3
	IDEA	1	0	0	2	0	0	0
Translations (Dual Language)	Overall	137	136	145	56	40	70	39
	LEP	34	38	52	55	39	69	39
	IDEA	17	21	14	0	0	2	0
Zoom	Overall	4	5	3	8	8	4	2
	LEP	1	0	0	1	2	0	0
	IDEA	4	3	3	4	3	4	1

Table 10. Mathematics Total Students with Allowed Non-Embedded Designated Supports

Designated Supports	Subgroup	Grade						
		3	4	5	6	7	8	11
Amplification	Overall	3	6	4	3	0	5	5
	LEP	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	IDEA	3	4	4	3	0	2	4
Color Contrast	Overall	1	1	3	2	1	4	0
	LEP	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	IDEA	1	1	2	2	1	4	0
Color Overlay	Overall	4	0	2	3	1	0	0
	LEP	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
	IDEA	3	0	1	3	1	0	0
Illustration Glossaries	Overall	8	7	9	6	2	1	1
	LEP	7	3	5	0	0	0	0
	IDEA	2	5	6	5	2	1	0
Magnification	Overall	1	1	2	5	2	4	3
	LEP	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	IDEA	1	1	1	5	2	4	2
Medical Supports	Overall	9	11	6	14	11	14	14
	LEP	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
	IDEA	4	3	1	2	3	4	1
Noise Buffers	Overall	9	13	14	6	4	2	5
	LEP	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
	IDEA	9	12	8	5	2	1	3
Printed Test Directions in English	Overall	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	LEP	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	IDEA	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Read Aloud: Items	Overall	65	40	43	26	27	35	30
	LEP	7	5	6	3	0	0	0
	IDEA	59	36	37	23	26	33	29
Read Aloud: Stimuli	Overall	45	34	40	22	20	25	23
	LEP	4	5	4	2	0	0	0
	IDEA	42	30	34	19	19	23	22
Read Aloud in Spanish: Items	Overall	3	3	5	3	2	1	0
	LEP	3	2	4	2	2	1	0
	IDEA	0	1	1	1	0	0	0
Read Aloud in Spanish: Stimuli	Overall	4	2	3	3	2	1	1
	LEP	4	2	3	2	1	1	0
	IDEA	1	0	0	1	1	0	1
Separate Setting	Overall	1,036	1,111	1,112	965	896	848	613
	LEP	136	113	109	100	82	86	55
	IDEA	879	983	960	809	733	665	477
Simplified Test Directions	Overall	280	254	299	350	304	304	112
	LEP	48	46	53	87	90	92	11
	IDEA	241	218	251	251	208	197	98
Translated Test Direction in ASL	Overall	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
	LEP	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Designated Supports	Subgroup	Grade						
		3	4	5	6	7	8	11
	IDEA	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Translated Test Directions	Overall	94	63	103	86	64	64	72
	LEP	94	63	102	86	64	64	72
	IDEA	5	9	13	18	12	9	6
Translation (Glossaries): Spanish	Overall	8	6	11	19	21	14	3
	LEP	8	6	11	19	21	14	3
	IDEA	2	1	1	0	0	0	0
Translation (Glossaries): Other Languages	Overall	1	2	3	3	1	1	0
	LEP	0	1	1	3	1	1	0
	IDEA	1	0	1	0	0	0	0

2.6.3 Usage of Designated Supports and Accommodations

The Cambium Assessment, Inc. (CAI)’s test delivery system (TDS) collects usage data for certain accessibility resources that require student interaction. Among the designated supports and accommodations, the following tools were analyzed to determine how frequently they were used: *American Sign Language, Braille Transcript, Print-on-Demand, Speech-to-Text, Text-to-Speech, and Masking.*

Tables 11 through 16 present the number of students allowed to use each accommodation or designated support and the percentage of those students who used it on at least one item or passage in ELA/L and mathematics, respectively. In ELA/L, *Text-to-Speech* was the most frequently allowed and used tool among accommodations and designated supports. In mathematics, *Speech-to-Text* was the most frequently allowed and used accommodation, while *Text-to-Speech* is the most frequently allowed and used designated support.

Table 11. ELA/L: Accessibility Resource Usages (Grades 3–5)

Accessibility Resources	Subgroup	Grade 3		Grade 4		Grade 5	
		N Allowed	% Used	N Allowed	% Used	N Allowed	% Used
Accommodation							
American Sign Language	Overall	1	0.0	4	50.0	3	33.3
	LEP	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	0.0
	IDEA	1	0.0	4	50.0	3	33.3
Braille Transcript	Overall	3	33.3	2	50.0	6	0.0
	LEP	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	0.0
	IDEA	2	0.0	2	50.0	5	0.0
Print-on-Demand	Overall	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	100.0
	LEP	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
	IDEA	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Speech-to-Text	Overall	45	77.8	70	68.6	86	69.8
	LEP	3	66.7	3	100.0	7	42.9
	IDEA	41	75.6	68	69.1	75	69.3
Text-to-Speech: Reading Passages and Items	Overall	115	95.7	123	91.1	139	94.2
	LEP	8	100.0	6	83.3	8	100.0
	IDEA	111	95.5	116	91.4	127	93.7
Designated Support							

Accessibility Resources	Subgroup	Grade 3		Grade 4		Grade 5	
		N Allowed	% Used	N Allowed	% Used	N Allowed	% Used
Masking	Overall	10	10.0	13	53.8	10	10.0
	LEP	1	0.0	1	0.0	0	0.0
	IDEA	8	12.5	12	58.3	7	14.3
Text-to-Speech: CAT Items	Overall	1,905	84.7	1,791	86.2	1,776	83.0
	LEP	494	79.4	391	80.6	392	80.4
	IDEA	1,045	89.6	1,068	90.9	1,021	87.6
Text-to-Speech: PT Items	Overall	323	82.4	301	75.4	232	73.7
	LEP	34	61.8	35	77.1	28	67.9
	IDEA	266	85.0	259	78.4	198	77.8
Text-to-Speech: PT Passages	Overall	3	66.7	1	100.0	2	100.0
	LEP	1	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
	IDEA	2	100.0	1	100.0	1	100.0
Text-to-Speech: PT Passages and Items	Overall	1,711	86.1	1,614	85.3	1,658	82.0
	LEP	467	79.0	364	81.9	372	79.0
	IDEA	887	92.2	919	89.2	926	87.9
Text-to-Speech for Responses to Short-Answer Items	Overall	2,050	41.5	1,923	45.9	1,918	42.9
	LEP	503	36.4	399	42.4	400	37.3
	IDEA	1,168	40.5	1,186	44.9	1,151	44.0

Table 12. ELA/L: Accessibility Resource Usages (Grades 6–8)

Accessibility Resources	Subgroup	Grade 6		Grade 7		Grade 8	
		N Allowed	% Used	N Allowed	% Used	N Allowed	% Used
Accommodation							
American Sign Language	Overall	1	0.0	2	50.0	2	50.0
	LEP	0	0.0	2	50.0	0	0.0
	IDEA	1	0.0	2	50.0	2	50.0
Braille Transcript	Overall	5	40.0	3	33.3	6	0.0
	LEP	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
	IDEA	5	40.0	1	100.0	1	0.0
Print-on-Demand	Overall	0	0.0	1	100.0	1	100.0
	LEP	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
	IDEA	0	0.0	1	100.0	1	100.0
Speech-to-Text	Overall	54	61.1	50	66.0	38	44.7
	LEP	3	66.7	3	66.7	0	0.0
	IDEA	49	59.2	46	63.0	31	48.4
Text-to-Speech: Reading Passages and Items	Overall	123	92.7	99	88.9	78	91.0
	LEP	8	87.5	4	75.0	1	100.0
	IDEA	112	92.0	96	89.6	75	92.0
Designated Support							
Masking	Overall	14	57.1	9	22.2	5	20.0
	LEP	1	100.0	1	0.0	2	0.0
	IDEA	2	0.0	2	0.0	3	0.0
Text-to-Speech: CAT Items	Overall	1,440	80.0	1,288	70.4	1,153	67.4
	LEP	263	79.8	234	73.5	253	74.3
	IDEA	926	84.9	795	78.4	648	74.1
Text-to-Speech: PT Items	Overall	203	60.1	241	56.4	215	41.9
	LEP	11	45.5	26	46.2	30	43.3
	IDEA	170	66.5	207	60.4	165	43.6
Text-to-Speech: PT Passages	Overall	5	80.0	3	66.7	2	50.0
	LEP	3	66.7	1	100.0	0	0.0
	IDEA	1	100.0	2	50.0	1	0.0
Text-to-Speech: PT Passages and Items	Overall	1,371	77.5	1,142	67.9	1,014	63.1
	LEP	256	77.3	211	71.1	226	70.4
	IDEA	869	81.7	665	75.9	547	70.0
Text-to-Speech for Responses to Short-Answer Items	Overall	1,590	48.5	1,405	40.9	1,244	38.2
	LEP	272	47.4	239	45.2	256	37.5
	IDEA	1,050	47.3	892	40.2	726	40.1

Table 13. ELA/L: Accessibility Resource Usages (Grade 11)

Accessibility Resources	Subgroup	Grade 11	
		N Allowed	% Used
Accommodation			
American Sign Language	Overall	1	100.0
	LEP	0	0.0
	IDEA	1	100.0
Braille Transcript	Overall	5	0.0
	LEP	0	0.0
	IDEA	2	0.0
Print-on-Demand	Overall	0	0.0
	LEP	0	0.0
	IDEA	0	0.0
Speech-to-Text	Overall	24	58.3
	LEP	0	0.0
	IDEA	22	63.6
Text-to-Speech: Reading Passages and Items	Overall	60	81.7
	LEP	1	100.0
	IDEA	55	83.6
Designated Support			
Masking	Overall	2	0.0
	LEP	0	0.0
	IDEA	1	0.0
Text-to-Speech: CAT Items	Overall	787	58.8
	LEP	190	59.5
	IDEA	407	71.5
Text-to-Speech: PT Items	Overall	131	38.9
	LEP	17	11.8
	IDEA	108	41.7
Text-to-Speech: PT Passages	Overall	0	0.0
	LEP	0	0.0
	IDEA	0	0.0
Text-to-Speech: PT Passages and Items	Overall	700	51.6
	LEP	174	47.7
	IDEA	338	66.3
Text-to-Speech for Responses to Short-Answer Items	Overall	847	21.8
	LEP	191	22.5
	IDEA	462	25.8

Table 14. Mathematics: Accessibility Resource Usages (Grades 3–5)

Accessibility Resources	Subgroup	Grade 3		Grade 4		Grade 5	
		N Allowed	% Used	N Allowed	% Used	N Allowed	% Used
Accommodation							
American Sign Language	Overall	1	0.0	4	100.0	3	0.0
	LEP	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	0.0
	IDEA	1	0.0	4	100.0	3	0.0
Print-on-Demand	Overall	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.0
	LEP	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
	IDEA	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Speech-to-Text	Overall	38	50.0	49	57.1	72	47.2
	LEP	3	0.0	3	66.7	6	50.0
	IDEA	35	51.4	47	59.6	62	43.5
Designated Support							
Masking	Overall	8	0.0	12	25.0	10	40.0
	LEP	1	0.0	1	0.0	0	0.0
	IDEA	7	0.0	11	27.3	7	42.9
Text-to-Speech: Items	Overall	121	90.9	92	58.7	76	78.9
	LEP	10	90.0	8	25.0	13	69.2
	IDEA	90	91.1	72	65.3	60	83.3
Text-to-Speech: Stimuli	Overall	3	33.3	1	100.0	2	50.0
	LEP	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
	IDEA	1	100.0	1	100.0	2	50.0
Text-to-Speech: Stimuli and Items	Overall	1,954	88.5	1,859	83.9	1,860	76.4
	LEP	518	82.2	416	79.6	415	74.9
	IDEA	1,072	93.2	1,112	88.7	1,087	83.2
Text-to-Speech for Responses to Short-Answer Items	Overall	2,076	23.5	1,952	25.4	1,938	22.8
	LEP	528	21.2	424	25.2	428	23.6
	IDEA	1,162	22.4	1,185	24.9	1,149	23.6

Table 15. Mathematics: Accessibility Resource Usages (Grades 6–8)

Accessibility Resources	Subgroup	Grade 6		Grade 7		Grade 8	
		N Allowed	% Used	N Allowed	% Used	N Allowed	% Used
Accommodation							
American Sign Language	Overall	1	100.0	2	100.0	2	50.0
	LEP	0	0.0	2	100.0	0	0.0
	IDEA	1	100.0	2	100.0	2	50.0
Print-on-Demand	Overall	0	0.0	1	0.0	1	0.0
	LEP	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
	IDEA	0	0.0	1	0.0	1	0.0
Speech-to-Text	Overall	50	36.0	42	19.0	35	14.3
	LEP	1	0.0	3	0.0	0	0.0
	IDEA	45	35.6	38	18.4	28	14.3
Designated Support							
Masking	Overall	14	42.9	8	75.0	5	0.0
	LEP	1	0.0	1	100.0	2	0.0
	IDEA	2	50.0	2	100.0	3	0.0
Text-to-Speech: Items	Overall	70	65.7	65	38.5	71	43.7
	LEP	4	25.0	10	30.0	8	37.5
	IDEA	58	70.7	52	44.2	53	50.9
Text-to-Speech: Stimuli	Overall	2	0.0	3	0.0	4	75.0
	LEP	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	100.0
	IDEA	1	0.0	2	0.0	2	50.0
Text-to-Speech: Stimuli and Items	Overall	1,534	69.2	1,345	51.2	1,191	46.7
	LEP	306	69.3	259	57.5	288	55.2
	IDEA	983	75.3	826	59.9	666	54.1
Text-to-Speech for Responses to Short-Answer Items	Overall	1,605	15.6	1,413	5.4	1,266	7.4
	LEP	310	17.1	269	5.6	298	8.1
	IDEA	1,041	16.0	880	5.7	721	7.4

Table 16. Mathematics: Accessibility Resource Usages (Grade 11)

Accessibility Resources	Subgroup	Grade 11	
		N Allowed	% Used
Accommodation			
American Sign Language	Overall	1	100.0
	LEP	0	0.0
	IDEA	1	100.0
Print-on-Demand	Overall	0	0.0
	LEP	0	0.0
	IDEA	0	0.0
Speech-to-Text	Overall	23	17.4
	LEP	0	0.0
	IDEA	21	19.0
Designated Support			
Masking	Overall	3	0.0
	LEP	0	0.0
	IDEA	2	0.0
Text-to-Speech: Items	Overall	38	36.8
	LEP	6	50.0
	IDEA	30	33.3
Text-to-Speech: Stimuli	Overall	2	50.0
	LEP	0	0.0
	IDEA	2	50.0
Text-to-Speech: Stimuli and Items	Overall	809	28.6
	LEP	193	27.5
	IDEA	423	38.8
Text-to-Speech for Responses to Short-Answer Items	Overall	849	2.5
	LEP	199	2.5
	IDEA	455	3.1

2.7 TESTING TIME

The online environment allows item response time to be captured as the item page time (the time each item page is presented) in milliseconds. For discrete items, each item appears on the screen one item at a time, whereas stimulus-based items appear on the screen together. The page time is the time spent on one item for discrete items and the time spent on all items associated with a stimulus for stimulus-based items. For each student, the total time taken to complete the test is computed by adding up the page time for all items and item groups (stimulus-based items).

The South Dakota assessments are not timed, and an individual student may need more or less time overall. The length of a test session is determined by TEs or PRs who are knowledgeable about the class periods in the school’s instructional schedule and the timing needs associated with the assessments. Students should be allowed extra time if they need it, but TEs or PRs must use their best professional judgment when allowing students extra time.

Tables 17 and 18 present the average test-taking time and the testing time at percentiles for the overall test, the CAT component, and the PT component.

Table 17. ELA/L Testing Time

Grade	Average Testing Time (hh:mm)	SD of Testing Time (hh:mm)	Median Testing Time (hh:mm)	Testing Time in Percentiles (hh:mm)				
				75th	80th	85th	90th	95th
Overall Test								
3	2:58	1:37	2:40	3:39	3:58	4:22	4:57	6:00
4	3:09	1:34	2:53	3:53	4:13	4:37	5:08	6:05
5	3:03	1:26	2:51	3:48	4:03	4:26	4:55	5:39
6	2:56	1:21	2:46	3:36	3:50	4:07	4:33	5:17
7	2:52	1:25	2:37	3:28	3:44	4:04	4:33	5:22
8	2:43	1:16	2:32	3:20	3:35	3:52	4:16	4:55
11	2:12	0:56	2:09	2:43	2:52	3:03	3:18	3:47
CAT Component								
3	1:23	0:42	1:16	1:42	1:49	1:59	2:11	2:37
4	1:27	0:40	1:20	1:45	1:52	2:03	2:18	2:41
5	1:26	0:36	1:20	1:43	1:50	1:59	2:11	2:32
6	1:34	0:41	1:29	1:52	2:00	2:09	2:21	2:42
7	1:29	0:38	1:25	1:47	1:54	2:03	2:14	2:34
8	1:25	0:37	1:21	1:43	1:49	1:57	2:07	2:26
11	1:13	0:29	1:12	1:29	1:34	1:40	1:49	2:02
PT Component								
3	1:35	1:10	1:19	2:03	2:17	2:35	3:01	3:50
4	1:42	1:09	1:28	2:12	2:25	2:42	3:08	3:53
5	1:38	1:03	1:26	2:08	2:20	2:36	2:58	3:36
6	1:23	0:52	1:13	1:46	1:57	2:10	2:27	2:56
7	1:23	0:57	1:10	1:44	1:56	2:10	2:29	3:06
8	1:18	0:50	1:09	1:40	1:50	2:02	2:19	2:49
11	0:59	0:34	0:55	1:15	1:22	1:29	1:40	1:59

Note. SD: standard deviation

Table 18. Mathematics Testing Time

Grade	Average Testing Time (hh:mm)	SD of Testing Time (hh:mm)	Median Testing Time (hh:mm)	Testing Time in Percentiles (hh:mm)				
				75th	80th	85th	90th	95th
Overall Test								
3	1:40	0:55	1:27	2:01	2:11	2:25	2:44	3:17
4	1:50	0:57	1:37	2:12	2:23	2:37	2:59	3:38
5	1:58	0:58	1:48	2:26	2:38	2:52	3:12	3:47
6	1:53	0:56	1:44	2:15	2:24	2:36	2:52	3:22
7	1:41	0:50	1:33	2:02	2:11	2:23	2:38	3:04
8	1:41	0:50	1:34	2:03	2:11	2:22	2:36	3:03
11	1:21	0:36	1:17	1:40	1:46	1:55	2:05	2:25
CAT Component								
3	1:06	0:37	0:58	1:20	1:28	1:38	1:50	2:12
4	1:15	0:41	1:05	1:31	1:39	1:50	2:06	2:33
5	1:16	0:37	1:08	1:33	1:40	1:49	2:02	2:26
6	1:14	0:39	1:08	1:28	1:34	1:41	1:52	2:11
7	1:15	0:37	1:09	1:31	1:38	1:46	1:58	2:16
8	1:15	0:38	1:09	1:31	1:37	1:46	1:57	2:15
11	0:58	0:26	0:55	1:12	1:17	1:22	1:30	1:44
PT Component								
3	0:33	0:26	0:27	0:42	0:47	0:53	1:03	1:18
4	0:35	0:24	0:29	0:43	0:48	0:53	1:02	1:19
5	0:43	0:30	0:36	0:55	1:01	1:09	1:20	1:40
6	0:39	0:26	0:33	0:48	0:53	0:59	1:08	1:24
7	0:26	0:20	0:22	0:33	0:36	0:42	0:48	1:01
8	0:26	0:18	0:22	0:33	0:36	0:40	0:47	0:57
11	0:22	0:15	0:19	0:30	0:32	0:36	0:41	0:50

Note. SD: standard deviation

2.8 DATA FORENSICS PROGRAM

The validity of test scores depends on the integrity of the test administration. Any irregularities in test administration could cast doubt on the validity of the inferences based on those test scores. Multiple facets ensure that tests are administered properly, including clear test administration policies, effective PR training, and tools to identify possible irregularities in test administrations.

For online administrations, a set of quality assurance (QA) reports is generated during and after the testing window. One of the QA reports focuses on flagging possible testing anomalies. Testing anomalies are analyzed by examining changes in student performance from year to year, test taking time, item response patterns using a person-fit index, and item response change analyses.

Analyses are performed at the student level and summarized for each aggregate unit, including testing session, PR, and school. Flagging criteria used for these analyses are described below and are configurable by an authorized user. When the aggregate unit size is small, the aggregate unit is flagged if the percentage of flagged students is greater than 50% in the analysis. The default small aggregate unit size is five or fewer students, but this value is configurable. For each aggregate unit, small groups are identified based on the

number of tests included in the aggregate unit from that analysis. Thus, a small unit identified in one analysis may not be a small unit in another analysis. The QA reports are provided to state clients to review and ensure the test integrity after the testing window closes.

2.8.1 Changes in Student Performance

Changes in student scores between administration years are examined using a regression model to check for outliers. For these between-year comparisons, students' current-year scores are regressed on their test scores from the previous year and on the number of days between the two years' test-end dates (to control for the instruction time between the two test scores).

A large score gain or loss in student scores between administration years is detected by examining the residuals for outliers. The residuals are computed as the observed value minus the regression model's predicted value. To detect unusual residuals, the studentized residuals are computed. An unusual increase or decrease in student scores between administration years is flagged when the absolute value of the studentized residual is greater than 3.

The residuals of students are also aggregated for a testing session, PR, and school. The system flags any unusual changes in an aggregate performance between administrations and/or years based on the average of the residuals in the aggregate unit (e.g., testing session, PR, school). For each aggregate unit, a t value is computed and flagged when $|t|$ is greater than 3,

$$t = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n \hat{e}_i / n}{\sqrt{\frac{s^2}{n} + \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n \sigma^2 (1 - h_{ii})}{n^2}}}$$

where s is the standard deviation of residuals in an aggregate unit; n is the number of students in an aggregate unit (e.g., testing session, PR, school), σ^2 is the MSE from the regression, h_{ii} is the leverage from the regression for the i th student and \hat{e}_i is the residual for the i th student.

The variance of average residuals in the denominator is estimated in two components, conditioning on true residual e_i , $var(E(\hat{e}_i|e_i)) = s^2$ and $E(var(\hat{e}_i|e_i)) = \sigma^2(1 - h_{ii})$. Following the law of total variance (Billingsley, 1995, p. 456),

$$var(\hat{e}_i) = var(E(\hat{e}_i|e_i)) + E(var(\hat{e}_i|e_i)) = s^2 + \sigma^2(1 - h_{ii}), \text{ hence,}$$

$$var\left(\frac{\sum_{i=1}^n \hat{e}_i}{n}\right) = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n (s^2 + \sigma^2(1 - h_{ii}))}{n^2} = \frac{s^2}{n} + \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n (\sigma^2(1 - h_{ii}))}{n^2}.$$

2.8.2 Test-Taking Time

The summative assessments are not timed, and thus individual test-taking times may vary across students. However, unusual test-taking times such as excessively shorter or longer test-taking times may indicate irregularities in test administration. An example of an unusual test-taking time is a test record for an individual who scores very well on the test, even though the average time spent is far less than that required of students statewide. If students already know the answers to the questions, the test-taking time may be much shorter than those who have no prior knowledge of the item content. Conversely, if a TE or PR helps students by coaching them to change their responses during the test, the testing time could be longer than expected.

The state average testing time and standard deviation are computed based on all students available when the analysis was performed. Students and aggregate units are flagged if the test-taking time is different from the state average by three standard deviations or more, although the flagging criteria can be adjusted by an authorized user.

2.8.3 Inconsistent Item Response Pattern (Person Fit)

In item response theory (IRT) models, person-fit measurement is used to identify test takers whose response patterns are improbable given an IRT model. If a test has psychometric integrity, little irregularity will be seen in the item responses of the individual who responds to the items fairly and honestly.

If a test taker has prior knowledge of some test items (or is provided answers during the exam), he or she will respond correctly to those items at a higher probability than indicated by his or her ability as estimated across all items. In this case, the person-fit index will be large for the student. However, if a student has prior knowledge of the entire test content, this will not be detected based on the person-fit index, although the item response time index might flag such a student.

The person-fit index is based on all item responses in a test. An unlikely response to a single test question may not result in a flagged person-fit index. Of course, not all unlikely patterns indicate cheating, as in the case of a student who is able to guess a significant number of correct answers. Therefore, the evidence of person-fit index should be evaluated along with other irregular factors to determine possible testing irregularities. The number of flagged students is summarized for every testing session, PR, and school.

The person-fit index is computed using a standardized log-likelihood statistic. Following Dragow, Levine, and Williams (1985), and Sotaridona, Pornel, and Vallejo (2003), an aberrant response pattern is defined as a deviation from the expected item score model. Snijders (2001) showed that the distribution of l_z is asymptotically normal (i.e., with an increasing number of administered items). Even at shorter test lengths of 8 or 15 items, the “asymptotic error probabilities are quite reasonable for nominal Type I error probabilities of 0.10 and 0.05” (Snijders, 2001).

Sotaridona et al. (2003) report promising results of using l_z for systematic flagging of aberrant response patterns. Students with l_z values less than -3 are flagged. Aggregate units are flagged with t less than -3,

$$t = \frac{\text{Average } l_z \text{ values}}{\sqrt{s^2/n}},$$

where s is the standard deviation of l_z values in an aggregate unit and n is number of students in the aggregate unit.

2.8.4 Item Response Change

Students are allowed to revisit items as many times as they wish within a session and may also mark items to be revisited prior to completing the session. However, excessively high rates of response change, especially high rates of item score increase (i.e., response changes from wrong to right), may indicate irregularities in test administration. For example, proctors could review students’ responses and either coach them to modify their responses or keep the session active and change responses themselves.

To identify irregular patterns of response change, the item score for the final response to each item and the penultimate response if one exists are examined, and the number of instances in which the item score increases are counted.

The average and standard deviation of positive item score changes are computed based on all students available when the analysis was performed. Students and aggregate units are flagged if the number of positive item score changes is larger than the state average by three standard deviations or more, although the flagging criteria can be adjusted by an authorized user.

2.9 PREVENTION AND RECOVERY OF DISRUPTIONS IN TEST DELIVERY SYSTEM

Cambium Assessment, Inc. (CAI) is continuously improving the ability to protect testing systems from interruptions. CAI's test delivery system (TDS) is designed to ensure that student responses are captured accurately and stored on more than one server in case of a failure. The CAI architecture described here is designed to recover from failure of any component with little interruption. Each system is redundant, and crucial student response data are transferred to a different data center each night.

A unique monitoring system has been developed by CAI that is very sensitive to changes in server performance. Most monitoring systems provide warnings when something goes wrong. CAI's monitoring system does, too, but it also provides warnings when any given server is performing differently from its performance over the prior few hours or differently than the other servers performing the same jobs. Subtle changes in performance often precede actual failure by hours or days, allowing CAI to detect potential problems, investigate them, and mitigate them *before* a failure. On multiple occasions, this has enabled CAI to make adjustments and replace equipment before any problems occurred.

Clients are also alerted within minutes of any disruption because of CAI's escalation procedure. This emergency alert system notifies CAI's executive and technical staff by text message; staff then immediately communicate with one another to understand the problem.

The next section describes CAI's system architecture and how it recovers from device failures, Internet interruptions, and other problems.

2.9.1 High-Level System Architecture

CAI's high-level system architecture provides the redundancy, robustness, and reliability required by a large-scale, high-stakes testing program. CAI's general approach, which has been adopted by South Dakota and Smarter Balanced as standard policy, is pragmatic and well supported by the system architecture.

Any system built around an expectation of flawless performance of computers or networks within schools and districts is bound to fail. CAI's system is designed to ensure that the testing results and experience respond robustly to such inevitable failures. Thus, CAI's TDS is designed to protect data integrity and prevent student data loss at every point in the process.

The key elements of the testing system, including the data integrity processes at work at each point in the system, are described in the following section. Fault tolerance and automated recovery are built into every component of the system.

Student Machines

Student responses are conveyed to CAI’s servers in real time as students respond. Long responses, such as essays, are saved automatically at configurable intervals (usually one minute), so that student work is not at risk of being unrecorded during testing.

Responses are saved asynchronously, with a background process on the student machine waiting for confirmation of successfully stored data on the server. If confirmation is not received within the designated time (usually 30–90 seconds), the system will prevent the student from doing any more work until connectivity is restored. The student is offered the choice of asking the system to try again or pausing the test and returning later. For example:

- If connectivity is lost and restored within the designated time period, the student may be unaware of the momentary interruption.
- If connectivity cannot be restored silently, the student is prevented from testing and given the option of logging out or retrying the save.
- If the system fails completely, upon logging back into the system, the student returns to the item he or she was viewing when the failure occurred.

In short, data integrity is preserved by confirmed saves to system servers and prevention of further testing if confirmation is not received.

Test Delivery Satellites

The test delivery satellites communicate with the student machines to deliver items and receive responses. Each satellite is a collection of web and database servers. Each satellite is equipped with a redundant array of independent disks (RAID) system to mitigate the risk of disk failure. Each response is stored on multiple independent disks.

One server for every four satellites serves as a backup hub. This server continually monitors and stores all changed student response data from the satellites, creating an additional copy of the real-time data. In the unlikely event of failure, data are completely protected. Satellites are automatically monitored, and upon failure, they are removed from service. Real-time student data are immediately recoverable from the satellite, backup hub, or hub (described in the following paragraphs), with backup copies remaining on the drive arrays of the disabled satellite.

If a satellite fails, students will exit the system. The automatic recovery system enables them to log in again within seconds or minutes of the failure, without data loss. This process is managed by the hub. Data will remain on the satellites until the satellite receives notice from the demographic and history servers that the data are safely stored on those disks.

Hub

Hub servers are redundant clusters of database servers with RAID drive systems. Hub servers continuously gather data from the test delivery satellites and their mini-hubs and store these data as described here. This real-time backup copy remains on the hub until the hub receives notification from the demographic and history servers that the data have reached the designated storage location.

Demographic and History Servers

The demographic and history servers store student data for the duration of the testing window. They are clustered database servers, also with RAID subsystems, providing redundant capability to prevent data loss in the event of server or disk failure. At the normal conclusion of a test, these servers receive completed tests from the test delivery satellites. Upon successful completion information, these servers notify the hub and satellites that it is safe to delete student data.

Quality Assurance System

The quality assurance (QA) system gathers data used to detect cheating, monitors real-time item function, and evaluates test integrity. Every completed test runs through the QA system. Any anomalies (such as unscored or missing items, unexpected test lengths, or other unlikely issues) are flagged, and an immediate notification goes out to CAI’s psychometricians and project team.

Database of Record

The Database of Record (DOR) is the final storage location for the student data. These clustered database servers with RAID systems hold the completed student data.

2.9.2 Automated Backup and Recovery

Every system is backed up nightly. Industry-standard backup and recovery procedures are in place to ensure the safety, security, and integrity of all data. This set of systems and processes is designed to provide complete data integrity and prevent loss of student data. Redundant systems at every point, real-time data integrity protection and checks, and well-considered real-time backup processes prevent loss of student data, even in the unlikely event of system failure.

2.9.3 Other Disruption Prevention and Recovery

These testing systems are designed to be extremely fault-tolerant. The systems can withstand failure of any component with little or no service interruption. This robustness is archived through redundancy. Key redundant systems are as follows:

- The system’s hosting provider has redundant power generators that can continue to operate for up to 60 hours without refueling. With the multiple refueling contracts that are in place, these generators can operate indefinitely.
- The hosting provider has multiple redundancies in the flow of information to and from the system’s data centers by partnering with nine different network providers. Each fiber carrier must enter the data center at separate physical points, protecting the data center from a complete service failure caused by an unlikely network cable cut.
- On the network level there are redundant firewalls and load balancers throughout the environment.
- The system uses redundant power and switching within all server cabinets.
- Data are protected by nightly backups. A full weekly backup and incremental nightly backups protect data. Should a catastrophic event occur, CAI is able to reconstruct real-time data using the data retained on the TDS satellites and hubs.

- The server backup agents send alerts to notify system administration staff in the event of a backup error, at which time they will inspect the error to determine whether the backup was successful or if they need to rerun it.

The system's TDS is hosted in an industry-leading facility with redundant power, cooling, state-of-the-art security, and other features that protect the system from failure. The system is redundant at every component, and in the event of failure, the unique design ensures that data are always stored in at least two locations. The engineering that led to this system protects student responses from loss.

3 SUMMARY OF 2024–2025 OPERATIONAL TEST ADMINISTRATION

3.1 STUDENT POPULATION

All students enrolled in grades 3–8 and 11 in all public elementary and secondary schools must participate in the South Dakota English language arts/literacy (ELA/L) and mathematics assessments. School districts are responsible for maintaining current student enrollment records in Infinite Campus. This enrollment data flows through a series of connected systems. The data is first shared with SD-STARS (South Dakota’s Longitudinal Data System), which processes this information to generate a student file each night. SD-STARS then delivers this nightly file to Cambium, whose TIDE system updates daily with the new enrollment information. These consistently updated enrollment files serve an important purpose: they allow for accurate calculation of test participation rates by showing what percentage of enrolled students have attempted the test. Tables 19 and 20 present the participation rates, i.e., the percentage of students who attempted the test by subgroups. Tables 21 and 22 present the number of South Dakota students who meet attemptedness requirements for scoring and reporting the results of the South Dakota summative assessments.

Table 19. Participation Rates by Percentage in ELA/L Summative Assessment

Group	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 11
All Students	98.3	98.2	98.1	97.9	98.1	98.0	97.5
Female	98.6	98.5	98.3	98.2	98.3	98.3	97.8
Male	97.9	97.9	98.0	97.5	97.9	97.7	97.3
African American	94.2	95.8	94.7	93.8	94.9	95.3	96.3
AmerIndian/Alaskan	97.4	97.4	97.0	96.1	95.6	95.1	93.4
Asian	94.2	93.4	94.7	97.3	96.6	93.5	96.2
Hispanic	97.0	96.1	97.0	95.2	96.2	95.2	96.1
Pacific Islander	96.0	94.4	93.8	83.3	100.0	100.0	94.1
White	98.8	98.8	98.7	98.7	98.8	98.9	98.3
Multi-Racial	99.3	98.7	99.0	98.0	99.2	98.8	97.2
LEP	95.4	93.3	93.0	89.3	91.1	89.7	93.5
IDEA	95.0	94.5	93.9	92.9	93.4	92.5	90.6
Section 504 Plan	98.7	98.7	98.1	98.8	98.4	99.4	97.6

Note. AmerIndian/Alaskan = American Indian/Alaskan Native; LEP = limited English proficiency status

Table 20. Participation Rates by Percentage in Mathematics Summative Assessment

Group	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 11
All Students	98.6	98.5	98.5	98.4	98.4	98.4	97.6
Female	98.9	98.9	98.7	98.8	98.7	98.6	97.9
Male	98.3	98.2	98.3	97.9	98.1	98.2	97.3
African American	97.4	97.2	97.1	97.4	97.9	98.6	96.3
AmerIndian/Alaskan	97.4	97.3	96.8	96.1	95.8	95.0	92.7
Asian	98.4	98.3	98.9	99.5	97.1	96.5	96.9
Hispanic	98.5	98.2	99.1	98.1	97.9	98.3	96.6
Pacific Islander	100.0	100.0	93.8	88.9	100.0	100.0	94.1
White	98.9	98.9	98.7	98.8	98.9	98.9	98.4
Multi-Racial	99.3	98.7	99.0	98.3	99.2	98.6	97.2

Group	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 11
LEP	99.1	98.8	98.8	98.8	97.1	98.4	95.0
IDEA	94.9	94.5	93.9	93.2	93.5	92.4	90.7
Section 504 Plan	98.7	99.0	98.1	98.8	98.4	99.0	97.9

Table 21. Number of Students in ELA/L Summative Assessment

Group	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 11
All Students	10,929	10,431	10,676	10,555	10,437	10,448	9,844
Female	5,319	5,010	5,234	5,169	5,101	5,122	4,869
Male	5,610	5,421	5,442	5,386	5,336	5,326	4,975
African American	362	343	358	331	354	346	309
AmerIndian/Alaskan	1,280	1,155	1,204	1,120	1,151	1,129	909
Asian	181	169	179	183	198	158	158
Hispanic	1,029	882	959	914	872	859	733
Pacific Islander	24	16	15	15	12	23	17
White	7,334	7,200	7,349	7,320	7,230	7,281	7,217
Multi-Racial	719	666	612	672	620	652	501
LEP	875	629	625	452	438	459	341
IDEA	2,109	2,042	1,934	1,743	1,497	1,302	951
Section 504 Plan	390	385	470	485	502	516	612

Table 22. Number of Students in Mathematics Summative Assessment

Group	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 11
All Students	10,968	10,468	10,713	10,605	10,467	10,484	9,845
Female	5,338	5,030	5,251	5,197	5,120	5,139	4,869
Male	5,630	5,438	5,462	5,408	5,347	5,345	4,976
African American	372	348	366	343	365	357	309
AmerIndian/Alaskan	1,280	1,154	1,203	1,119	1,151	1,127	902
Asian	189	178	187	187	199	163	159
Hispanic	1,046	901	978	942	888	885	738
Pacific Islander	25	17	15	16	12	23	17
White	7,337	7,204	7,351	7,325	7,232	7,279	7,220
Multi-Racial	719	666	613	673	620	650	500
LEP	909	667	663	499	466	504	350
IDEA	2,093	2,039	1,938	1,742	1,493	1,303	949
Section 504 Plan	390	385	472	487	504	514	614

3.2 SUMMARY OF OVERALL STUDENT PERFORMANCE

Tables 23–28 summarize the 2024–2025 summative test results for all students and by subgroup, including the average and standard deviation of scale scores, the percentage of students in each achievement level, and the percentage of proficient students.

Figures 1 and 2 present the percentage of proficient students in the past six test administrations for all students (cohort comparisons). Figures 3 and 4 present the average scale scores over the past six administrations for all students. In Figures 1 through 4, the 2019–2020 overall student performance is not included because the testing was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Appendix B provides the average and standard deviations of scale scores and the percentage of proficient students by subgroup for each test administration across four years.

Table 23. Descriptive Statistics and Percentage of Students in Achievement Levels for Overall and by Subgroup: ELA/L (Grades 3–5)

Group	Number Tested	Scale Score Mean	Scale Score SD	% Level 1	% Level 2	% Level 3	% Level 4	% Proficient
Grade 3								
All Students	10,929	2417.45	89.05	30	26	23	22	45
Female	5,319	2421.30	87.64	28	26	24	23	46
Male	5,610	2413.79	90.21	31	26	22	21	43
African American	362	2384.38	84.40	43	28	17	12	29
AmerIndian/Alaskan	1,280	2353.04	76.15	59	25	12	4	16
Asian	181	2409.97	81.74	29	33	22	17	38
Hispanic	1,029	2381.44	85.02	45	27	17	12	29
Pacific Islander	24	2367.38	76.74	54	25	13	8	21
White	7,334	2436.91	84.77	21	25	26	28	54
Multi-Racial	719	2405.34	85.13	34	27	21	18	39
LEP	875	2362.30	75.97	53	27	15	5	20
IDEA	2,109	2365.22	83.34	54	24	13	9	22
Section 504 Plan	390	2409.47	86.84	33	27	22	18	39
Grade 4								
All Students	10,431	2464.48	95.12	30	21	24	25	49
Female	5,010	2469.42	93.38	28	21	24	26	50
Male	5,421	2459.92	96.49	32	21	24	24	47
African American	343	2423.20	98.95	51	18	16	15	31
AmerIndian/Alaskan	1,155	2398.38	86.65	58	21	14	6	21
Asian	169	2477.86	93.81	27	22	21	30	51
Hispanic	882	2428.45	94.69	46	21	18	14	32
Pacific Islander	16	2397.78	98.69	63	13	19	6	25
White	7,200	2482.10	89.97	23	21	27	30	57
Multi-Racial	666	2455.82	90.11	33	23	23	21	44
LEP	629	2387.90	77.47	62	25	10	3	13
IDEA	2,042	2395.58	91.78	61	18	13	8	20
Section 504 Plan	385	2455.89	89.25	34	23	22	21	43
Grade 5								
All Students	10,676	2496.68	99.03	29	21	29	21	50
Female	5,234	2504.80	96.72	26	20	31	22	54
Male	5,442	2488.87	100.59	32	21	27	19	46
African American	358	2455.18	96.48	47	22	19	12	32
AmerIndian/Alaskan	1,204	2422.61	87.92	61	19	15	4	20
Asian	179	2515.60	97.75	23	16	35	26	61
Hispanic	959	2452.45	98.28	46	23	22	10	32
Pacific Islander	15	2434.19	100.68	53	13	33	0	33
White	7,349	2517.21	92.81	21	21	33	26	58
Multi-Racial	612	2485.41	92.92	33	20	32	15	47
LEP	625	2403.94	76.31	67	23	9	1	10
IDEA	1,934	2418.09	91.87	63	18	14	5	19
Section 504 Plan	470	2492.29	97.52	29	25	28	18	46

Note. The percentage of each achievement level may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Table 24. Descriptive Statistics and Percentage of Students in Achievement Levels for Overall and by Subgroup: ELA/L (Grades 6–8)

Group	Number Tested	Scale Score Mean	Scale Score SD	% Level 1	% Level 2	% Level 3	% Level 4	% Proficient
Grade 6								
All Students	10,555	2521.27	96.95	26	26	33	16	49
Female	5,169	2529.40	95.86	23	25	34	18	52
Male	5,386	2513.48	97.36	28	26	32	14	46
African American	331	2488.67	94.90	38	27	27	8	35
AmerIndian/Alaskan	1,120	2444.50	90.93	57	23	17	3	20
Asian	183	2532.66	107.54	22	26	32	20	52
Hispanic	914	2484.20	97.94	40	26	26	8	34
Pacific Islander	15	2462.73	69.18	60	13	27	0	27
White	7,320	2539.56	90.28	18	26	37	20	56
Multi-Racial	672	2514.70	91.65	26	30	30	13	44
LEP	452	2425.20	76.87	65	25	10	0	10
IDEA	1,743	2432.73	86.28	64	23	11	3	13
Section 504 Plan	485	2515.56	89.61	26	28	34	12	46
Grade 7								
All Students	10,437	2551.38	96.87	22	25	37	16	53
Female	5,101	2564.18	93.17	17	24	41	18	59
Male	5,336	2539.15	98.75	27	25	34	14	48
African American	354	2513.05	93.93	31	34	28	7	35
AmerIndian/Alaskan	1,151	2477.09	91.51	51	26	20	3	23
Asian	198	2577.62	93.34	15	20	43	22	65
Hispanic	872	2518.44	96.99	31	29	33	7	40
Pacific Islander	12	2540.55	118.74	25	17	42	17	58
White	7,230	2569.20	90.25	16	23	41	19	61
Multi-Racial	620	2541.62	97.94	26	25	34	15	49
LEP	438	2454.47	78.85	59	31	10	0	11
IDEA	1,497	2457.73	89.01	60	25	11	3	14
Section 504 Plan	502	2549.23	93.50	21	29	34	16	50
Grade 8								
All Students	10,448	2562.83	100.44	22	27	35	15	51
Female	5,122	2578.65	96.94	18	25	38	19	57
Male	5,326	2547.61	101.40	27	29	32	12	44
African American	346	2513.29	102.03	40	29	25	7	32
AmerIndian/Alaskan	1,129	2490.32	90.96	48	32	17	3	20
Asian	158	2579.67	98.90	17	25	40	18	58
Hispanic	859	2521.85	105.52	37	27	27	9	36
Pacific Islander	23	2541.49	97.96	26	39	22	13	35
White	7,281	2581.63	93.77	16	26	40	19	58
Multi-Racial	652	2555.30	98.03	24	30	35	12	47
LEP	459	2454.55	81.42	64	27	9	0	9
IDEA	1,302	2459.69	88.49	64	24	10	2	11
Section 504 Plan	516	2555.51	91.23	24	28	37	11	48

Note. The percentage of each achievement level may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Table 25. Descriptive Statistics and Percentage of Students in Achievement Levels for Overall and by Subgroup: ELA/L (Grade 11)

Group	Number Tested	Scale Score Mean	Scale Score SD	% Level 1	% Level 2	% Level 3	% Level 4	% Proficient
Grade 11								
All Students	9,844	2608.94	113.95	17	20	35	28	63
Female	4,869	2624.76	107.85	13	18	36	33	69
Male	4,975	2593.46	117.60	21	22	33	24	58
African American	309	2563.61	116.92	28	25	32	14	46
AmerIndian/Alaskan	909	2527.29	102.41	38	30	26	6	32
Asian	158	2610.57	124.01	17	19	32	32	64
Hispanic	733	2560.41	118.50	30	23	30	17	47
Pacific Islander	17	2558.86	103.10	24	29	41	6	47
White	7,217	2627.32	107.81	12	18	37	33	70
Multi-Racial	501	2592.45	112.33	20	22	35	23	57
LEP	341	2470.34	94.30	62	24	13	1	14
IDEA	951	2481.79	102.17	57	25	14	3	17
Section 504 Plan	612	2607.66	110.99	17	19	38	26	64

Note. The percentage of each achievement level may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Table 26. Descriptive Statistics and Percentage of Students in Achievement Levels for Overall and by Subgroup: Mathematics (Grades 3–5)

Group	Number Tested	Scale Score Mean	Scale Score SD	% Level 1	% Level 2	% Level 3	% Level 4	% Proficient
Grade 3								
All Students	10,968	2434.20	85.88	26	23	29	22	51
Female	5,338	2426.74	81.31	28	25	30	18	47
Male	5,630	2441.28	89.42	24	21	29	27	55
African American	372	2394.15	80.68	45	26	20	10	30
AmerIndian/Alaskan	1,280	2365.28	76.42	58	23	15	3	18
Asian	189	2424.56	83.56	28	25	32	15	47
Hispanic	1,046	2391.82	81.00	45	25	21	9	29
Pacific Islander	25	2387.39	66.02	44	28	28	0	28
White	7,337	2456.18	78.97	16	22	33	29	62
Multi-Racial	719	2419.22	80.36	30	27	27	16	43
LEP	909	2379.89	74.60	51	26	18	5	23
IDEA	2,093	2382.72	90.65	51	21	18	10	28
Section 504 Plan	390	2429.82	90.67	29	23	27	21	48
Grade 4								
All Students	10,468	2478.43	86.32	22	29	28	21	49
Female	5,030	2471.20	81.03	23	31	28	17	46
Male	5,438	2485.12	90.43	20	28	27	25	52
African American	348	2430.09	86.16	39	35	17	9	26
AmerIndian/Alaskan	1,154	2408.97	78.62	52	31	12	5	17
Asian	178	2482.29	93.60	21	30	25	25	49
Hispanic	901	2440.64	84.17	37	33	21	10	30
Pacific Islander	17	2392.40	94.72	47	41	6	6	12
White	7,204	2498.06	78.90	14	28	32	27	58
Multi-Racial	666	2464.01	83.77	26	34	27	14	41
LEP	667	2409.32	71.31	50	36	11	3	14
IDEA	2,039	2417.12	88.39	50	29	14	8	22
Section 504 Plan	385	2473.22	86.42	24	29	28	19	47
Grade 5								
All Students	10,713	2500.60	94.52	32	27	19	22	41
Female	5,251	2494.48	89.75	33	30	19	18	37
Male	5,462	2506.49	98.55	30	25	20	25	45
African American	366	2451.68	88.37	53	26	14	7	21
AmerIndian/Alaskan	1,203	2416.92	80.16	71	20	5	4	9
Asian	187	2515.38	96.00	29	26	17	28	45
Hispanic	978	2453.95	86.12	52	28	11	9	20
Pacific Islander	15	2428.51	79.04	60	20	20	0	20
White	7,351	2524.21	86.90	21	28	23	28	51
Multi-Racial	613	2482.61	87.99	37	30	18	14	32
LEP	663	2419.74	74.81	69	23	5	3	8
IDEA	1,938	2426.89	90.80	65	20	9	6	14
Section 504 Plan	472	2500.55	96.14	31	30	18	21	39

Note. The percentage of each achievement level may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Table 27. Descriptive Statistics and Percentage of Students in Achievement Levels for Overall and by Subgroup: Mathematics (Grades 6–8)

Group	Number Tested	Scale Score Mean	Scale Score SD	% Level 1	% Level 2	% Level 3	% Level 4	% Proficient
Grade 6								
All Students	10,605	2522.69	105.48	29	28	22	21	43
Female	5,197	2517.70	101.95	30	30	22	18	41
Male	5,408	2527.48	108.57	28	27	23	23	45
African American	343	2468.41	107.35	50	26	16	8	24
AmerIndian/Alaskan	1,119	2427.68	103.19	66	22	9	3	12
Asian	187	2538.49	117.66	31	24	20	25	45
Hispanic	942	2475.59	102.73	46	30	14	10	24
Pacific Islander	16	2428.91	87.23	75	19	0	6	6
White	7,325	2546.70	94.23	19	29	26	26	52
Multi-Racial	673	2510.81	100.52	34	30	19	16	36
LEP	499	2421.40	87.12	71	23	5	1	6
IDEA	1,742	2424.45	105.74	68	21	7	4	11
Section 504 Plan	487	2520.33	97.21	29	31	24	17	41
Grade 7								
All Students	10,467	2542.19	110.62	29	27	22	21	43
Female	5,120	2537.79	106.66	30	29	22	19	41
Male	5,347	2546.40	114.14	29	26	22	23	46
African American	365	2483.26	106.73	50	27	16	7	23
AmerIndian/Alaskan	1,151	2443.45	96.75	67	21	9	3	12
Asian	199	2566.53	112.29	23	24	23	30	53
Hispanic	888	2498.33	104.24	44	31	16	10	26
Pacific Islander	12	2501.17	123.10	33	33	25	8	33
White	7,232	2566.78	101.26	20	28	26	26	52
Multi-Racial	620	2529.16	112.98	32	30	21	17	38
LEP	466	2434.52	86.09	70	24	5	1	6
IDEA	1,493	2438.24	103.40	69	20	7	4	11
Section 504 Plan	504	2549.45	110.47	27	28	24	21	45
Grade 8								
All Students	10,484	2553.65	117.16	34	25	20	21	41
Female	5,139	2554.85	113.19	33	26	21	21	41
Male	5,345	2552.49	120.85	35	25	19	21	40
African American	357	2481.62	111.42	55	26	14	5	18
AmerIndian/Alaskan	1,127	2451.42	94.54	75	16	6	3	9
Asian	163	2570.71	119.51	29	28	22	21	44
Hispanic	885	2497.77	115.37	54	22	13	10	23
Pacific Islander	23	2492.62	142.13	57	17	13	13	26
White	7,279	2580.86	108.05	24	27	23	26	50
Multi-Racial	650	2539.67	110.18	37	29	18	16	34
LEP	504	2433.40	92.08	78	17	3	1	5
IDEA	1,303	2439.87	102.62	75	16	5	3	8
Section 504 Plan	514	2547.46	105.69	32	34	18	16	34

Note. The percentage of each achievement level may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Table 28. Descriptive Statistics and Percentage of Students in Achievement Levels for Overall and by Subgroup: Mathematics (Grade 11)

Group	Number Tested	Scale Score Mean	Scale Score SD	% Level 1	% Level 2	% Level 3	% Level 4	% Proficient
Grade 11								
All Students	9,845	2581.05	118.80	38	27	22	13	36
Female	4,869	2579.76	113.87	38	27	23	12	35
Male	4,976	2582.31	123.43	38	26	21	15	36
African American	309	2534.03	111.01	57	24	14	6	20
AmerIndian/Alaskan	902	2482.19	88.79	76	17	6	0	7
Asian	159	2580.85	132.76	42	23	21	14	36
Hispanic	738	2530.31	110.88	58	22	13	6	20
Pacific Islander	17	2513.90	112.93	65	18	12	6	18
White	7,220	2602.26	114.64	29	29	26	16	42
Multi-Racial	500	2559.43	111.06	45	28	18	9	27
LEP	350	2462.07	82.71	85	12	2	1	3
IDEA	949	2449.37	96.99	85	11	3	2	5
Section 504 Plan	614	2574.82	121.85	41	26	20	13	33

Note. The percentage of each achievement level may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Figure 1. ELA/L Percent Proficient Across Years

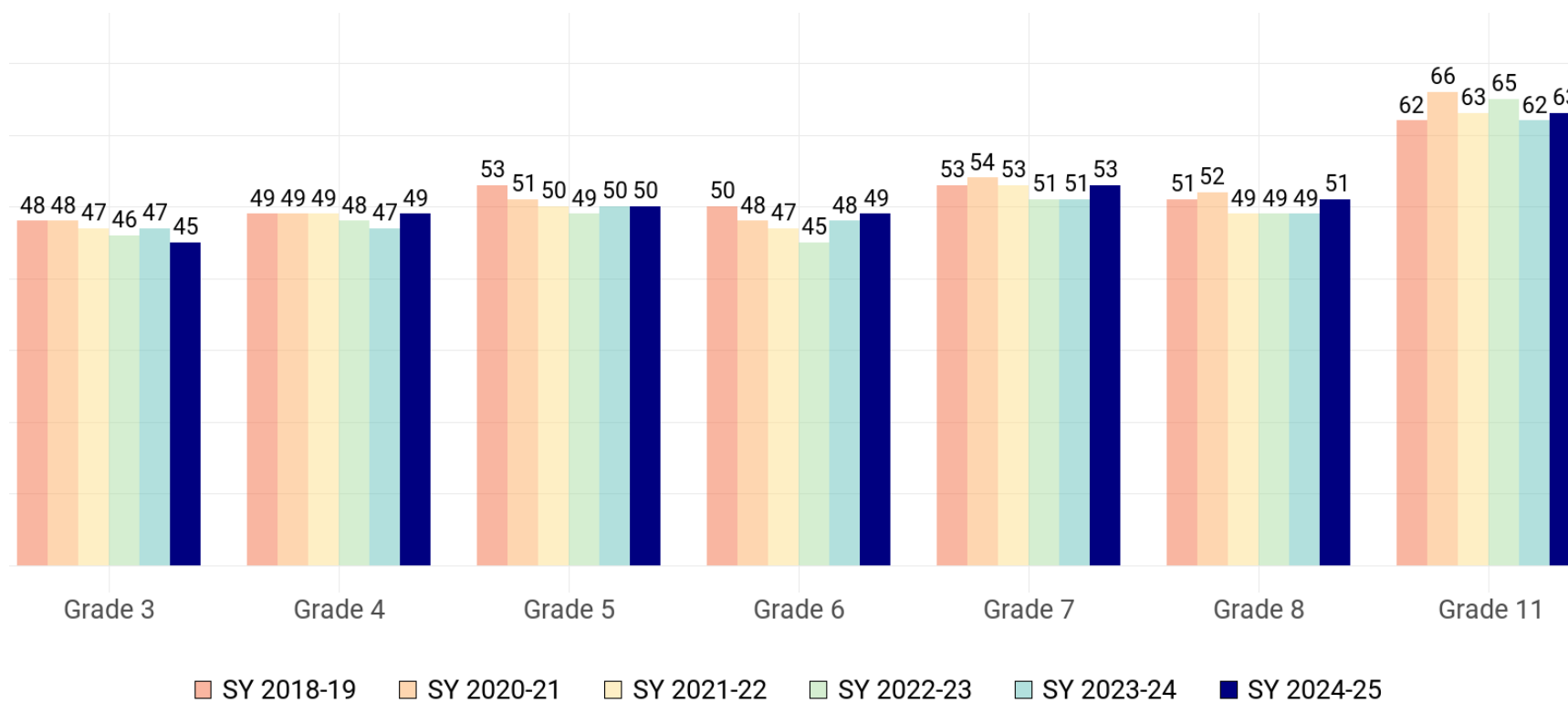


Figure 2. Mathematics Percent Proficient Across Years

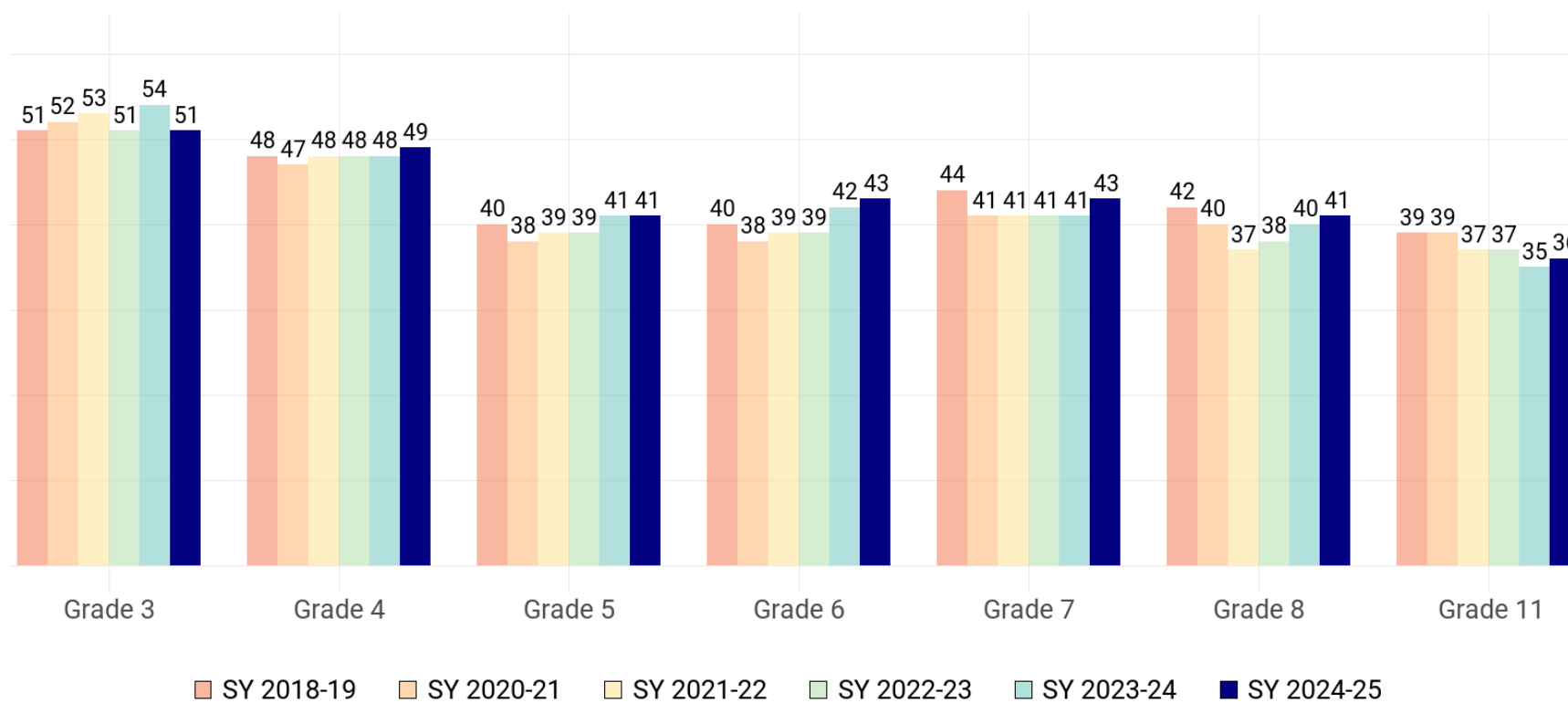


Figure 3. ELA/L Average Scale Score Across Years

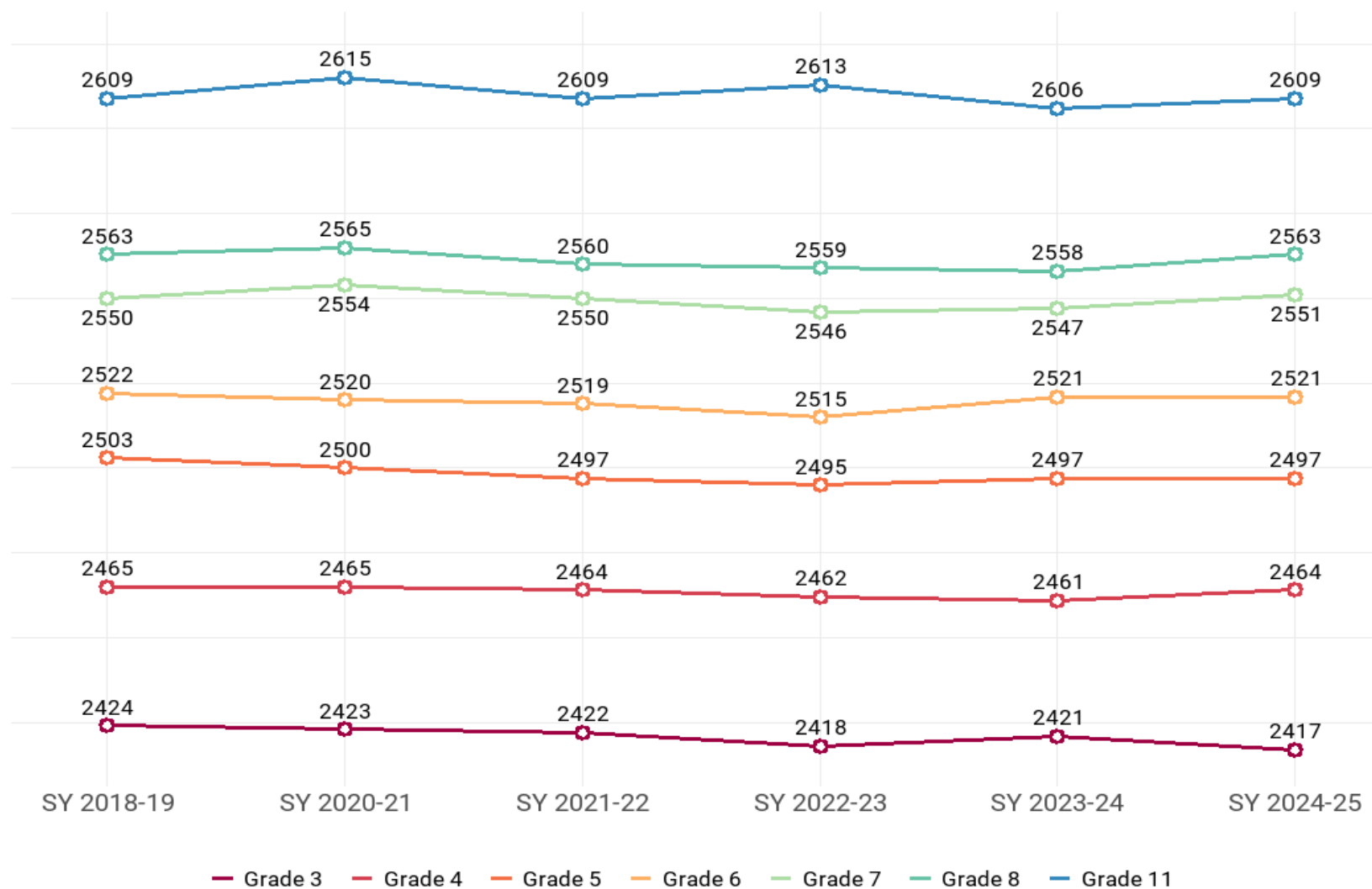
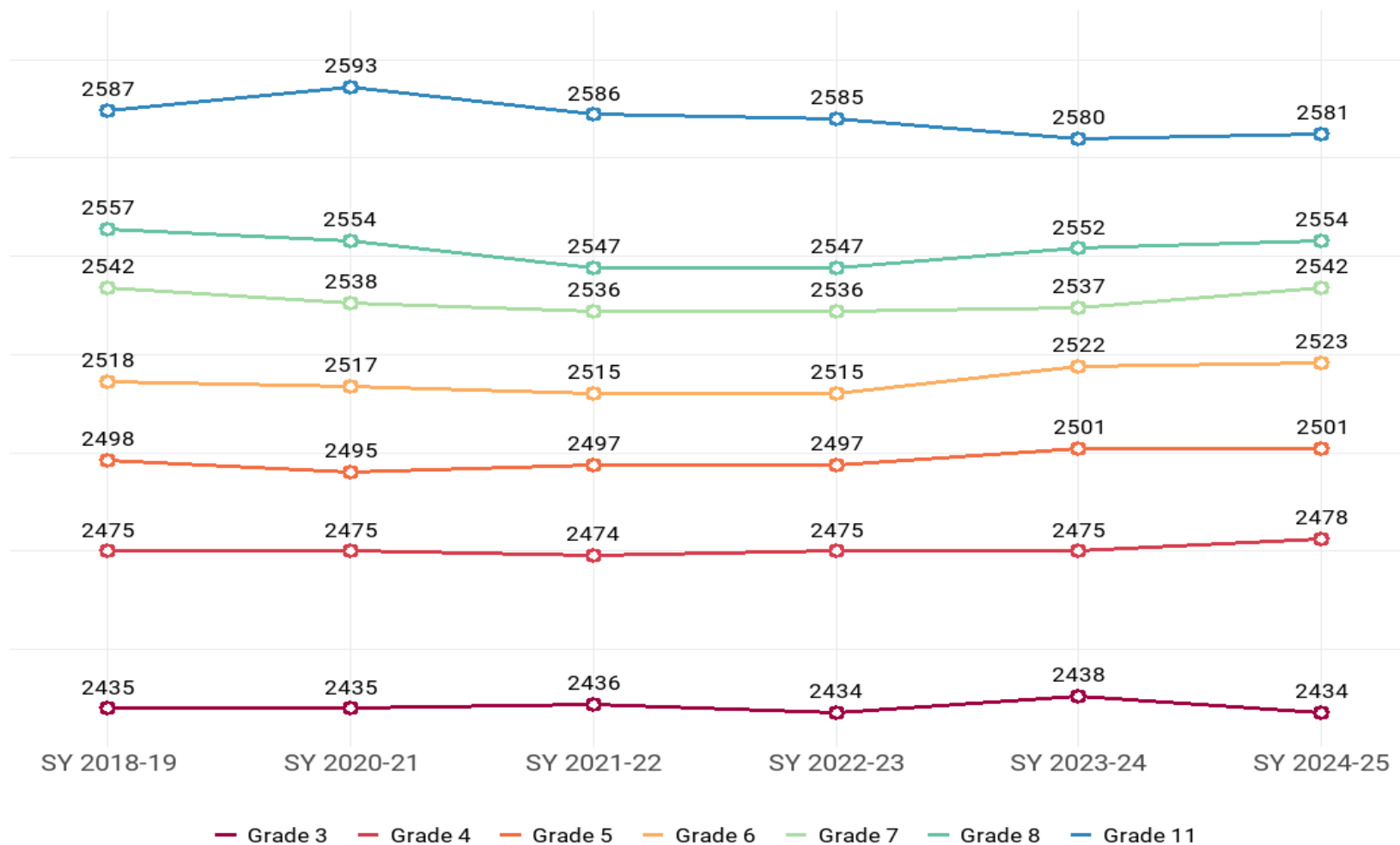


Figure 4. Mathematics Average Scale Score Across Years



Because the precision of scores in each claim is not sufficient to report scores, given the small number of items, the scores on each claim are reported using one of the three performance categories, taking into account the standard error of measurement (SEM) of the claim score: (1) Below Standard, (2) At/Near Standard, or (3) Above Standard. (Refer to Section 6.5, Rules for Calculating Strengths and Weaknesses for Claim Scores, for details on how the performance category is determined.) Tables 29 and 30 present the distribution of performance categories for each claim. The number of claims is four in ELA/L and three in mathematics, combining claims 2 and 4.

Table 29. ELA/L Percentage of Students in Performance Categories by Claim

Grade	Performance Category	Claim 1: Reading	Claim 2: Writing	Claim 3: Listening	Claim 4: Research
3	Below	31	29	19	30
	At/Near	47	53	66	52
	Above	21	19	16	18
4	Below	28	27	18	26
	At/Near	47	57	62	53
	Above	24	16	20	20
5	Below	28	26	23	26
	At/Near	47	54	61	51
	Above	25	20	16	23
6	Below	31	27	23	22
	At/Near	48	54	65	57
	Above	21	18	12	21
7	Below	25	22	17	21
	At/Near	51	54	66	55
	Above	24	24	17	24
8	Below	28	25	19	21
	At/Near	48	55	66	55
	Above	24	20	15	23
11	Below	20	18	15	16
	At/Near	45	49	60	51
	Above	35	34	25	33

Note. The percentage of each claim may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Table 30. Mathematics Percentage of Students in Performance Categories by Claim

Grade	Performance Category	Claim 1: Concepts and Procedures	Claims 2 and 4: Problem Solving and Modeling and Data Analysis	Claim 3: Communicating Reasoning
3	Below	31	26	26
	At/Near	34	47	47
	Above	35	27	27
4	Below	33	29	29
	At/Near	32	47	45
	Above	35	24	26
5	Below	39	34	36
	At/Near	32	47	46
	Above	29	19	17
6	Below	39	32	31
	At/Near	35	49	49
	Above	27	19	20
7	Below	37	30	30
	At/Near	35	46	51
	Above	29	23	19
8	Below	39	30	31
	At/Near	35	48	51
	Above	26	21	18
11	Below	48	30	34
	At/Near	30	50	50
	Above	21	20	16

Note. The percentage of each claim may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

3.3 DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENT ABILITY AND ITEM DIFFICULTY

Figures 5–10 display the empirical distribution of the South Dakota student scale scores in the 2024–2025 administration and the distribution of the administered summative item difficulty parameters for each grade for overall and by claim. Overall, the student ability distribution is shifted to the left in all grades and subjects, a pattern more pronounced in the mathematics upper grades, indicating that the pool includes more difficult items than the ability level of students in the tested population. The pool includes difficult items to measure high-performing students accurately but needs additional easy items to measure low-performing students better. At the claim level, the student ability distribution is shifted to the left particularly in claims 1 (Reading) and 4 (Research) across all grades, and in claim 3 (Listening) for grade 3 ELA/L. In mathematics, the student ability distribution is shifted to the left for all claims except for claim 1 in lower grades. The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium plans to add additional easy items to the pool and augment the pool in proportion to the test blueprint constraints (e.g., content, Depth of Knowledge [DOK], item type, item difficulties) to measure low-performing students better.

Figure 5. Student Ability—Item Difficulty Distribution for ELA/L

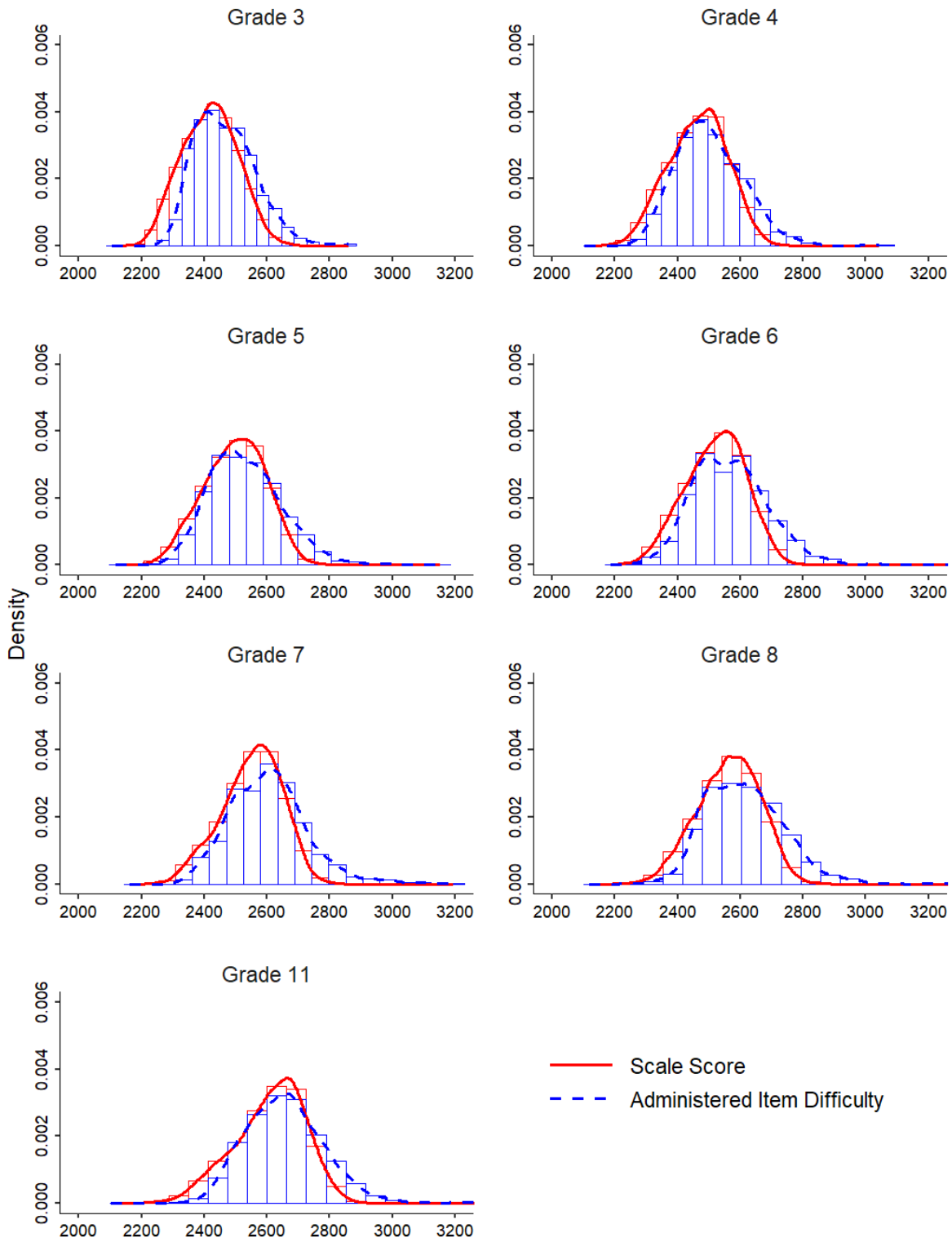


Figure 6. Student Ability—Item Difficulty Distribution by Claim: ELA/L (Grades 3–5)

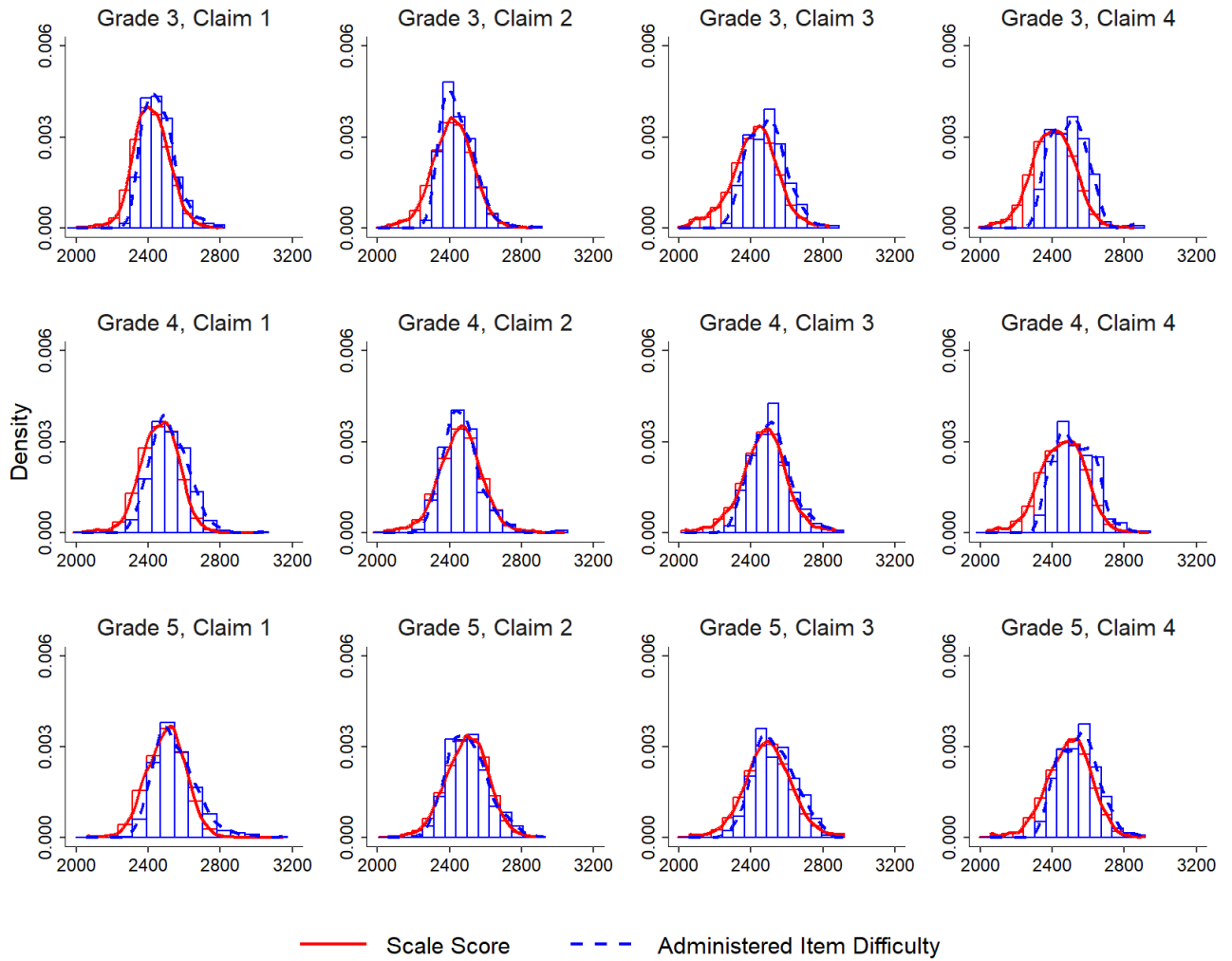


Figure 7. Student Ability—Item Difficulty Distribution by Claim: ELA/L (Grades 6–8, 11)

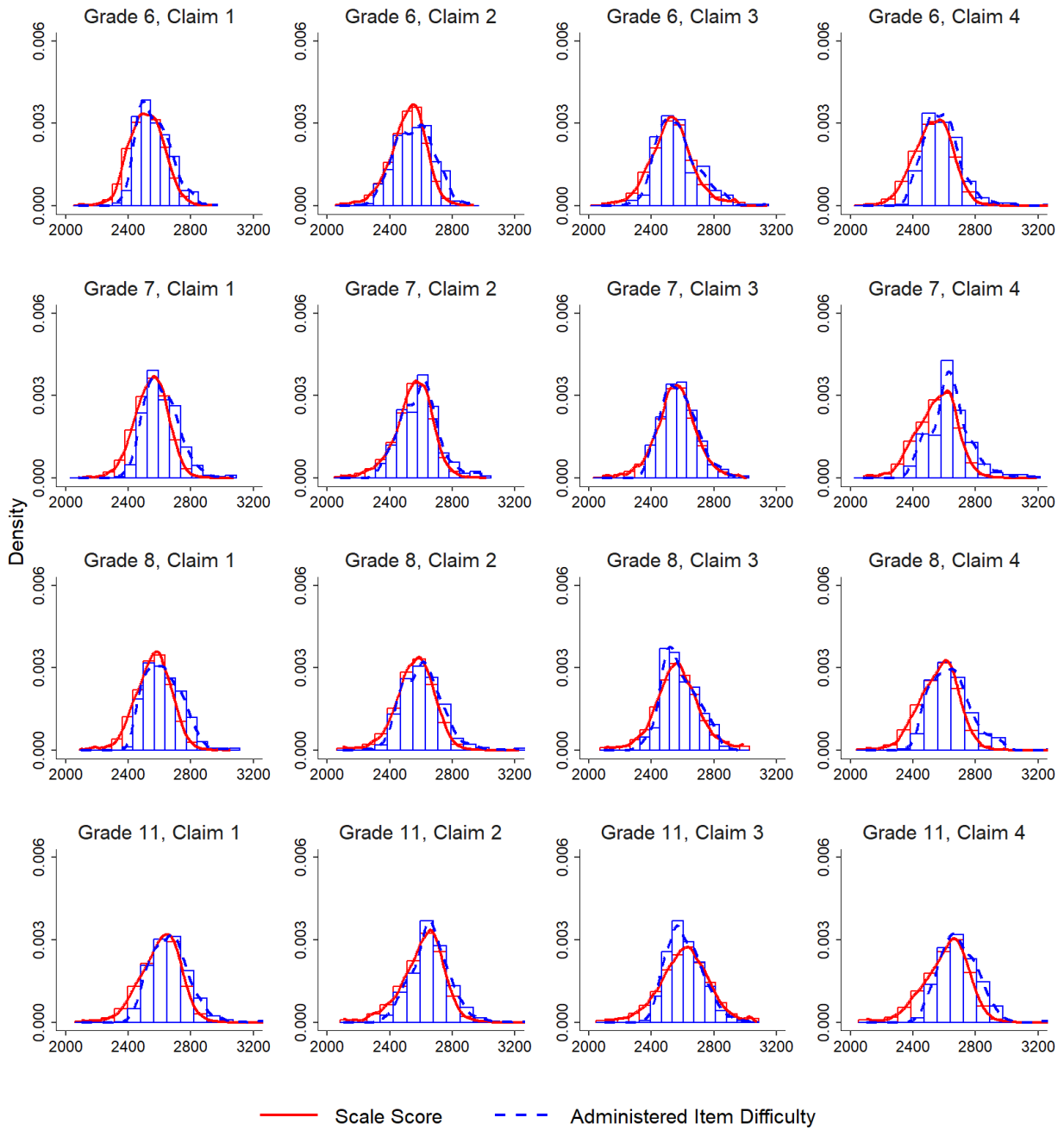


Figure 8. Student Ability—Item Difficulty Distribution for Mathematics

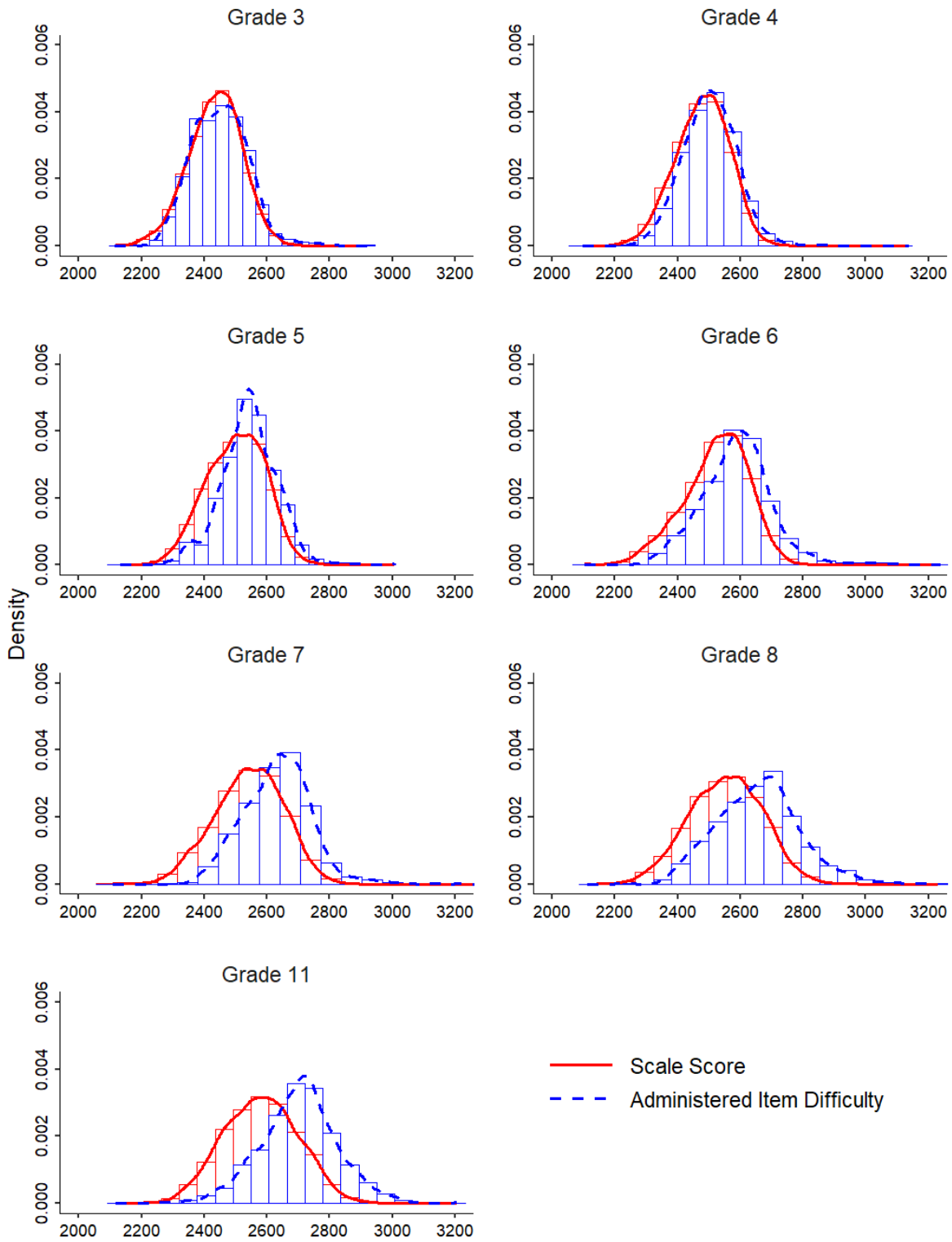


Figure 9. Student Ability—Item Difficulty Distribution by Claim: Mathematics (Grades 3–5)

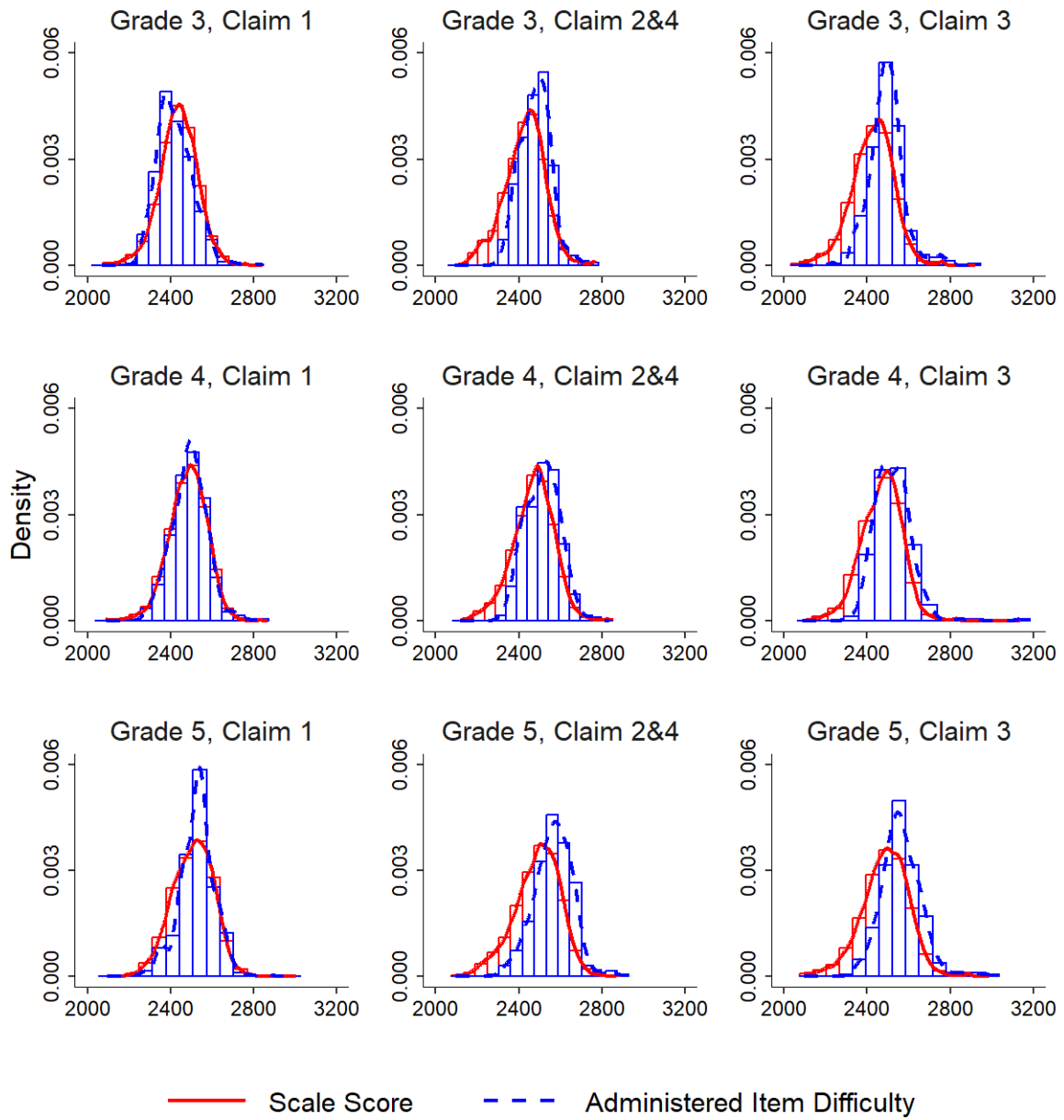
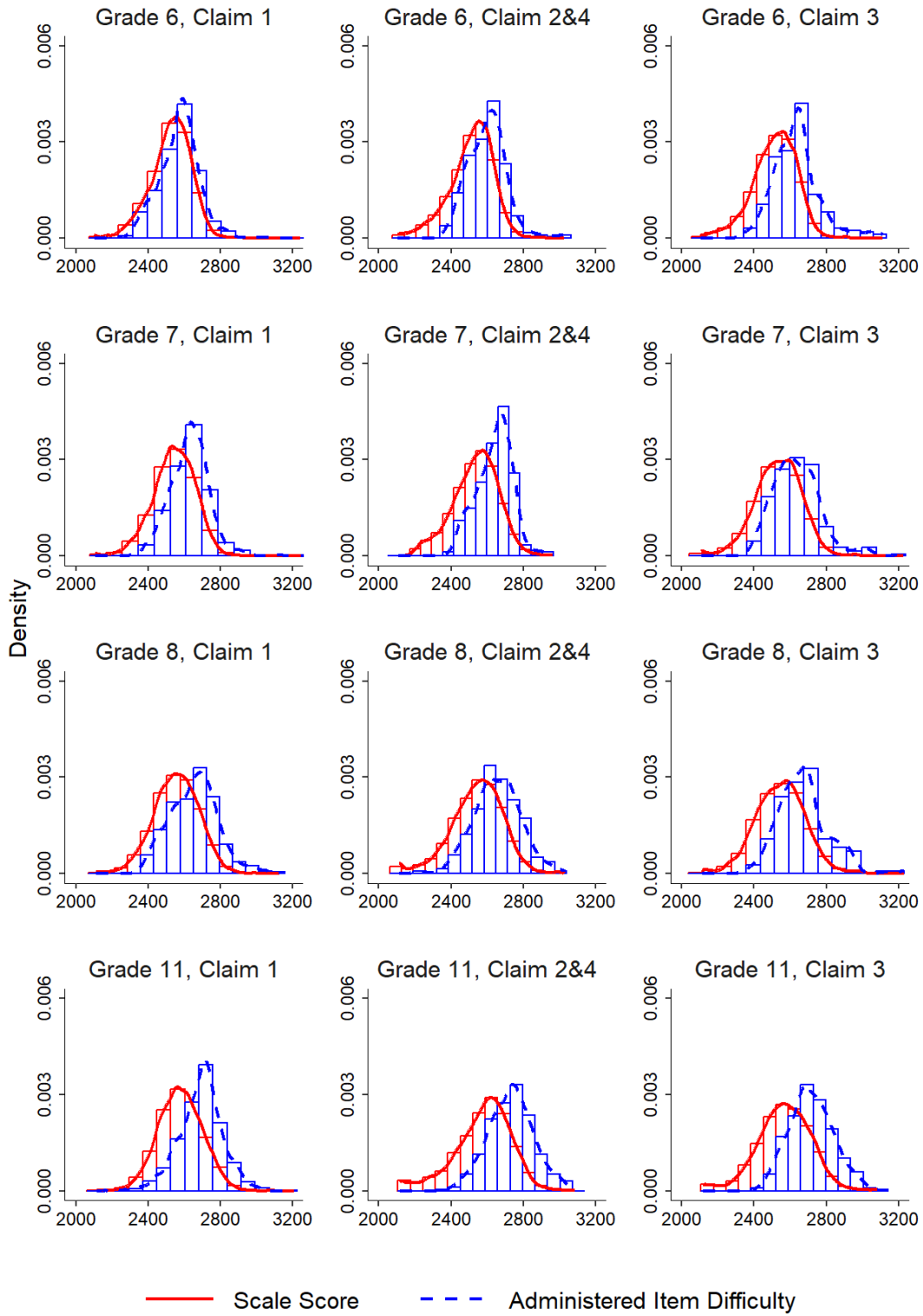


Figure 10. Student Ability—Item Difficulty Distribution by Claim: Mathematics (Grades 6–8, 11)



4 VALIDITY

According to the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* (AERA, APA, & NCME, 2014), *validity* refers to the degree to which evidence and theory support the interpretations of test scores as described by the intended uses of assessments. The validity of an intended interpretation of test scores relies on all the evidence accrued about the technical quality of a testing system, including test development and construction procedures, test score reliability, accurate scaling and equating, procedures for setting meaningful achievement standards, standardized test administration and scoring procedures, and attention to fairness for all test takers. The appropriateness and usefulness of the South Dakota summative assessments depends on the assessments meeting the relevant standards of validity.

For the Smarter Balanced assessments, independent alignment studies have been conducted to evaluate the degree of correspondence between assessment content and state academic standards (see Section 4.12 of the Smarter Balanced Technical Report for detailed information: https://technicalreports.smarterbalanced.org/2023-24_summative-report/book/test-design.html). Findings from these studies provide evidence that items within the English language arts (ELA)/literacy and mathematics assessments are well aligned with state standards with respect to both content representation and cognitive complexity.

The validity evidence provided in this chapter is as follows:

- Test Content
- Internal Structure

Evidence on test content validity is provided with the blueprint match rates for the delivered tests. Evidence on the internal structure is examined in the results of intercorrelations among claim scores.

Some of the evidence on standardized test administration, scoring procedures, and attention to fairness for all test takers is provided in other chapters.

4.1 EVIDENCE ON TEST CONTENT

The South Dakota summative assessment includes two components: the computer-adaptive test (CAT) and the performance task (PT). For the CAT, each student receives a different set of items that adapt to his or her ability. For PTs, each student is administered a fixed-form test. The content covered in all PT forms is the same. The test blueprint constraints for CAT and PT can be found at: <https://doe.sd.gov/Assessment/SD-assessments.aspx>.

In the adaptive item-selection algorithm, item selection occurs in two discrete stages: blueprint satisfaction and match-to-ability. The Smarter Balanced blueprints specify a range of items to be administered in each claim, content domain/standard, and target. Moreover, blueprints constrain the DOK and item and passage types. For DOK constraints, the Smarter Balanced blueprint specifies either the minimum or maximum number of items, not both the minimum and maximum. In blueprints, all content blueprint elements are configured to obtain a strictly enforced range of items administered. The algorithm also seeks to satisfy target-level constraints, but these ranges are not strictly enforced. In ELA/L, the blueprints also specify the number of passages in claim 1 (Reading) and claim 3 (Listening).

Tables 31 and 33 present the percentages of tests aligned with the ELA/L test blueprint constraints for items in claims, targets, DOK, and the number of passage requirements. All tests met the blueprint requirements

except some targets in claim 1 (Reading), which administered a few items more or less than the item requirement. Additionally, there is one braille language ELA/L test in grade 3 that included one more listening passage than the requirement. This is because the braille language pool filter restricts the item pool, which in this case results in an extra listening passage being included. The violations in the claim 1 reading targets appeared in all grades due to the uneven distribution of items across targets and DOKs within and across the passages.

Tables 34–36 provide the percentages of tests aligned with the mathematics CAT test blueprint constraints for items in claims, DOK, and target constraints. In mathematics, all tests met all blueprint requirements, except for a few tests that had blueprint violations due to the application of pool filters limiting the item pool and two tests in grade 3 that failed to meet the Claim 2/4_DOK3+ requirement because of the uneven distribution of combinations of DOK and targets in claims 2 and 4. Pool filters, such as using an alternative language like braille or Spanish or only items with illustration or language glossaries, can result in an accommodated CAT item pool that is too limited to meet all test blueprint requirements, especially if multiple pool filters are employed on the same test.

Table 31. Percentage of ELA/L Delivered CAT Tests Meeting Blueprint Requirements for Each Claim and the Number of Passages Administered (Grades 3–5)

Claim	Content Category/Target	Required Items/Passages	%BP Match		
			Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
1	Literary Text	7–8	100.00	100.00	100.00
	Target 2: Central Ideas	1–2	99.98	99.99	100.00
	Target 4: Reasoning and Evaluation	1–2	100.00	100.00	99.86
	Targets 1, 3, 5, 6, and 7	3–6	100.00	100.00	99.93
	Long Literary Text Passage	≥ 1	100.00	100.00	100.00
	Short Literary Text Passage	≤ 2	100.00	100.00	100.00
	Informational Text	7–8	100.00	100.00	100.00
	Target 9: Central Ideas	1–2	99.38	100.00	100.00
	Target 11: Reasoning and Evaluation	1–2	100.00	100.00	100.00
	Targets 8, 10, 12, 13, and 14	3–6	99.99	100.00	100.00
	Long Informational Text Passage	≥ 1	100.00	100.00	100.00
	Short Informational Text Passage	≤ 2	100.00	100.00	100.00
	DOK 2	≥ 7	100.00	100.00	100.00
	DOK 3 or 4	≥ 2	100.00	100.00	100.00
2	Writing	6	100.00	100.00	100.00
	Target 1, 3, or 6: Organization/Purpose	1	100.00	100.00	100.00
	Target 1, 3, or 6: Evidence/Elaboration	1	100.00	100.00	100.00
	Target 8: Language and Vocabulary Use	1	100.00	100.00	100.00
	Target 9: Edit/Clarify	3	100.00	100.00	100.00
	DOK 2 or Higher	≥ 2	100.00	100.00	100.00
3	Listening	8–9	100.00	100.00	100.00
	Target 4: Listen/Interpret	8–9	100.00	100.00	100.00
	DOK 2 or Higher	≥ 3	100.00	100.00	100.00
	Listening Passage	3–4	99.99	100.00	100.00
4	Research	8	100.00	100.00	100.00
	Target 2: Interpret and Integrate Information	2–3	100.00	100.00	100.00
	Target 3: Analyze Information/Sources	2–3	100.00	100.00	100.00
	Target 4: Use Evidence	2–3	100.00	100.00	100.00

Table 32. Percentage of ELA/L Delivered CAT Tests Meeting Blueprint Requirements for Each Claim and the Number of Passages Administered (Grades 6–8)

Claim	Content Category/Target	Required Items/Passages	%BP Match		
			Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
1	Literary Text	4–7	100.00	100.00	100.00
	Target 2: Central Ideas	1	99.46	98.22	99.41
	Target 4: Reasoning and Evaluation	1	99.07	98.36	99.97
	Targets 1, 3, 5, 6, and 7	2–5	100.00	100.00	100.00
	Target 2 or 4 Short Text	0–1	100.00	100.00	100.00
	Long Literary Text Passage	≥ 1	100.00	100.00	100.00
	Informational Text	10–12*	100.00	100.00	100.00
	Target 9 and Target 11	2–5	99.65	99.56	99.99
	Targets 8, 10, 12, 13, and 14	7–10	99.40	99.56	99.99
	Target 9 or 11 Short Text	0–1	100.00	100.00	100.00
	Long Informational Text Passage	≥ 1	100.00	100.00	100.00
	Short Informational Text Passage	≤ 2	100.00	100.00	100.00
	DOK 1	≤ 5	100.00	100.00	100.00
	DOK 3 or 4	≥ 2	100.00	100.00	100.00
2	Writing	6	100.00	100.00	100.00
	Target 1, 3, or 6 (Organization/Purpose)	1	100.00	100.00	100.00
	Target 1, 3, or 6 (Evidence/Elaboration)	1	100.00	100.00	100.00
	Target 8: Language and Vocabulary Use	1	100.00	100.00	100.00
	Target 9: Edit/Clarify	3	100.00	100.00	100.00
	DOK 2	≥ 2	100.00	100.00	100.00
	DOK 3 or 4	1	100.00	100.00	100.00
	Brief Write	1	100.00	100.00	100.00
3	Listening	8–9	100.00	100.00	100.00
	Target 4: Listen/Interpret	8–9	100.00	100.00	100.00
	DOK 2 or Higher	≥ 3	100.00	100.00	100.00
	Listening Passage	3–4	100.00	100.00	100.00
4	Research	8	100.00	100.00	100.00
	Target 2: Analyze/Integrate Information	2–3	100.00	100.00	100.00
	Target 3: Evaluate Information/Sources	2–3	100.00	100.00	100.00
	Target 4: Use Evidence	2–3	100.00	100.00	100.00

*Required items for Informational Text are 10–12 in grades 6 and 7, and 12 in grade 8.

Table 33. Percentage of ELA/L Delivered CAT Tests Meeting Blueprint Requirements for Each Claim and the Number of Passages Administered (Grade 11)

Claim	Content Category/Target	Required Items/Passages	%BP Match
			Grade 11
1	Literary Text	4	100.00
	Target 2: Central Ideas	1	99.34
	Target 4: Reasoning and Evaluation	1	99.50
	Targets 1, 3, 5, 6, and 7	2	99.05
	Target 2 or 4 Short Text	0–1	100.00
	Long Literary Text Passage	≥ 1	100.00
	Informational Text	11–12	100.00
	Target 9 and Target 11	2–4	98.21
	Targets 8, 10, 12, 13, and 14	7–10	99.68
	Target 9 or 11 Short Text	0–1	100.00
	Long Informational Text Passage	≥ 1	100.00
	Short Informational Text Passage	≤ 2	100.00
	DOK 1	≤ 4	100.00
	DOK 3 or 4	≥ 3	100.00
2	Writing	6	100.00
	Target 1, 3, or 6 (Organization/Purpose)	1	100.00
	Target 1, 3, or 6 (Evidence/Elaboration)	1	100.00
	Target 8: Language and Vocabulary Use	1	100.00
	Target 9: Edit/Clarify	3	100.00
	DOK 2	≥ 2	100.00
	DOK 3 or 4	1	100.00
	Brief Write	1	100.00
3	Listening	8–9	100.00
	Target 4: Listen/Interpret	8–9	100.00
	DOK 2 or Higher	≥ 4	100.00
	Listening Passage	3–4	100.00
4	Research	8	100.00
	Target 2: Analyze/Integrate Information	2–3	100.00
	Target 3: Evaluate Information/Sources	2–3	100.00
	Target 4: Use Evidence	2–3	100.00

Table 34. Mathematics Percentage of Delivered CAT Tests Meeting Blueprint Requirements for Claims and Targets (Grades 3–5)

Claim	Content Domain	Grade 3		Grade 4		Grade 5	
		Required Items	% BP Match	Required Items	% BP Match	Required Items	% BP Match
1	Overall	17–20	100.00	17–20	100.00	17–20	100.00
	DOK 2 or Higher	≥ 7	100.00	≥ 7	100.00	≥ 7	100.00
	<i>Priority Cluster</i>	13–15	100.00				
	Targets B, C, G, I	5–6	100.00				
	Targets D, F	5–6	100.00				
	Target A	2–3	100.00				
	<i>Supporting Cluster</i>	4–5	100.00				
	Targets E, J, K	3–4	100.00				
	Target H	1	100.00				
	<i>Priority Cluster</i>			13–15	100.00		
	Targets A, E, F			8–9	100.00		
	Target G			2–3	100.00		
	Target D			1–2	100.00		
	Target H			1	100.00		
	<i>Supporting Cluster</i>			4–5	100.00		
Targets I, K			2–3	100.00			
Targets B, C, J			1	100.00			
Target L			1	100.00			
2 & 4	Overall	6	100.00	6	100.00	6	100.00
	DOK 3 or Higher	≥ 2	99.82	≥ 2	100.00	≥ 2	99.84
	2. Target A	2	100.00	2	100.00	2	100.00
	2. Targets B, C, D	1	100.00	1	100.00	1	100.00
	4. Targets A, D	1	99.99	1	100.00	1	100.00
	4. Targets B, E	1	100.00	1	100.00	1	100.00
	4. Targets C, F	1	99.99	1	100.00	1	100.00
3	Overall	8	100.00	8	100.00	8	100.00
	DOK 3 or Higher	≥ 2	100.00	≥ 2	100.00	≥ 2	100.00
	Targets A, D	3	100.00	3	100.00	3	100.00
	Targets B, E	3	100.00	3	100.00	3	100.00
	Targets C, F	2	100.00	2	100.00	2	100.00

Table 35. Mathematics Percentage of Delivered CAT Tests Meeting Blueprint Requirements for Claims and Targets (Grades 6–8)

Claim	Content Domain	Grade 6		Grade 7		Grade 8	
		Required Items	% BP Match	Required Items	% BP Match	Required Items	% BP Match
1	Overall	16–20	100.00	16–20	100.00	16–20	100.00
	DOK 2 or Higher	≥ 2	100.00	≥ 7	100.00	≥ 7	100.00
	<i>Priority Cluster</i>	12–15	100.00				
	Targets E, F	5–6	99.96				
	Target A	3–4	100.00				
	Targets G, B	2	99.83				
	Target D	2	99.31				
	<i>Supporting Cluster</i>	4–5	100.00				
	Targets C, H, I, J	4–5	100.00				
	<i>Priority Cluster</i>			12–15	99.83		
	Targets A, D			8–9	100.00		
	Targets B, C			5–6	99.83		
	<i>Supporting Cluster</i>			4–5	99.99		
	Targets E, F			2–3	99.99		
Targets G, H, I			1–2	100.00			
<i>Priority Cluster</i>					12–15	99.98	
Targets C, D					5–6	99.68	
Targets B, E, G					5–6	99.68	
Targets F, H					2–3	99.99	
<i>Supporting Cluster</i>					4–5	99.98	
Targets A, I, J					4–5	99.98	
2 & 4	Overall	6	100.00	6	100.00	6	100.00
	DOK 3 or Higher	≥ 2	100.00	≥ 2	100.00	≥ 2	100.00
	2. Target A	2	100.00	2	100.00	2	100.00
	2. Targets B, C, D	1	100.00	1	100.00	1	100.00
	4. Targets A, D	1	100.00	1	100.00	1	100.00
	4. Targets B, E	1	100.00	1	100.00	1	100.00
4. Targets C, F	1	100.00	1	100.00	1	100.00	
3	Overall	8	100.00	8	100.00	8	100.00
	DOK 3 or Higher	≥ 2	100.00	≥ 2	100.00	≥ 2	100.00
	Targets A, D	3	100.00	3	100.00	3	100.00
	Targets B, E	3	100.00	3	100.00	3	100.00
	Targets C, F, G	2	100.00	2	100.00	2	100.00

Table 36. Mathematics Percentage of Delivered Tests Meeting Blueprint Requirements for Claims and Targets (Grade 11)

Claim	Content Domain	Grade 11	
		Required Items	% BP Match
1	Overall	19–22	100.00
	DOK 2 or Higher	≥ 7	100.00
	<i>Priority Cluster</i>	14–16	100.00
	Targets D, E	2	100.00
	Target F	1	100.00
	Targets G, H, I	4–5	100.00
	Target J	2	100.00
	Target K	2	100.00
	Targets L, M, N	3–4	100.00
	<i>Supporting Cluster</i>	5–6	100.00
	Target O	2	100.00
	Target P	1–2	100.00
	Targets A, B	1	100.00
	Target C	1	100.00
2 & 4	Overall	6	100.00
	DOK 3 or Higher	≥ 2	100.00
	2. Target A	2	100.00
	2. Targets B, C, D	1	100.00
	4. Targets A, D	1	100.00
	4. Targets B, E	1	100.00
	4. Targets C, F	1	100.00
3	Overall	8	100.00
	DOK 3 or Higher	≥ 2	100.00
	Targets A, D	3	100.00
	Targets B, E	3	100.00
	Targets C, F, G	2	100.00

Table 37 summarizes the target coverage, the average, and the range of the numbers of unique targets administered in each delivered test by claim. Because the test blueprint is not required to cover all targets in each test, it is expected that the number of targets covered varies across tests. Although the target coverage varies somewhat across individual tests, all targets are covered at an aggregate level across all tests combined.

Table 37. Average and Range of the Number of Unique Targets Assessed within Each Claim Across All Delivered CAT Tests

Grade	Total Targets in BP				Average				Range (Minimum–Maximum)			
	C1	C2	C3	C4	C1	C2	C3	C4	C1	C2	C3	C4
ELA/L												
3	14	5	1	3	11.5	4.0	1.0	3.0	9–14	4–4	1–1	3–3
4	14	5	1	3	11.5	4.0	1.0	3.0	8–14	4–4	1–1	3–3
5	14	5	1	3	11.8	4.0	1.0	3.0	9–14	4–4	1–1	3–3
6	14	5	1	3	10.4	4.0	1.0	3.0	9–11	4–4	1–1	3–3
7	14	5	1	3	10.8	4.0	1.0	3.0	9–11	4–4	1–1	3–3
8	14	5	1	3	10.3	4.0	1.0	3.0	8–11	4–4	1–1	3–3
11	14	5	1	3	10.6	4.0	1.0	3.0	8–11	4–4	1–1	3–3
Mathematics												
3	11	4	6	6	11.0	2.0	5.4	3.0	10–11	2–2	3–6	3–3
4	12	4	6	6	10.0	2.0	5.5	3.0	10–10	2–2	3–6	3–3
5	11	4	6	6	9.0	2.0	5.2	3.0	9–9	2–2	3–6	3–3
6	10	4	7	6	10.0	2.0	5.0	3.0	9–10	2–2	3–6	3–3
7	9	4	7	6	8.0	2.0	5.1	3.0	7–8	2–2	3–6	3–3
8	10	4	7	6	10.0	2.0	5.3	3.0	9–10	2–2	3–6	3–3
11	16	4	7	6	14.8	2.0	5.2	3.0	13–15	2–2	3–6	3–3

An adaptive testing algorithm constructs a test form unique to each student, targeting the student’s level of ability and meeting the test blueprints. Consequently, the test forms will not be statistically parallel (e.g., equal test difficulty) across individual students, but test scores from the individual tests are comparable since all test forms measure the same content, albeit with a different set of test items. Although each form is unique with respect to its items, all forms align with the same curricular expectations outlined in the test blueprints.

4.2 EVIDENCE ON INTERNAL STRUCTURE

The measurement model used in the Smarter Balanced assessments assumes a single underlying latent trait in student ability estimates, which supports the reporting of a single total ability score. During the test construction phase, the test blueprint was designed to cover multiple distinct claims under each subject. The item selection algorithm prioritizes blueprint matching to ensure each test contains an appropriate combination of items from each claim. Assessing the relationship between these different claim scores is a measure of internal validity according to the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* (AERA, APA, & NCME, 2014). The presence of high correlations among claim scores is evidence that the Smarter Balanced assessment measures a single underlying ability, and the claim scores are related to each other.

Tables 38 and 39 present the correlations among claim scores, both observed (below diagonal) and corrected for attenuation (above diagonal). The correction for attenuation indicates what the correlation would be if claim scores could be measured with perfect reliability, corrected (adjusted) for measurement error estimates.

The observed correlation between two claim scores with measurement errors can be corrected for attenuation as $r_{x'y'} = \frac{r_{xy}}{\sqrt{r_{xx} \times r_{yy}}}$, where $r_{x'y'}$ is the correlation between x and y corrected for attenuation, r_{xy}

is the observed correlation between x and y , r_{xx} is the reliability coefficient for x , and r_{yy} is the reliability coefficient for y .

When corrected for attenuation (above diagonal), the correlations among claim scores are higher than observed correlations. The disattenuated correlations are quite high, especially in mathematics. The correction for attenuation is large in mathematics because the marginal reliabilities of claims 2 and 4 and claim 3 scores are low. The low reliabilities are due to large standard errors among lower scores because of a shortage of easy items in the item pool.

Because the reliabilities for claim scores are low, the performance of each claim score is reported in three performance categories. The distribution of performance categories for each claim is provided in Tables 29 and 30, Section 3.2. Scale scores are not reported for claims.

Table 38. Correlations Among Claim Scores for ELA/L

Grade	Claim	Observed & Disattenuated Correlation			
		Claim 1	Claim 2	Claim 3	Claim 4
3	Claim 1: Reading		0.88	0.90	0.88
	Claim 2: Writing	0.65		0.86	0.86
	Claim 3: Listening	0.59	0.55		0.86
	Claim 4: Research	0.63	0.61	0.54	
4	Claim 1: Reading		0.88	0.94	0.90
	Claim 2: Writing	0.64		0.86	0.87
	Claim 3: Listening	0.64	0.57		0.89
	Claim 4: Research	0.66	0.61	0.58	
5	Claim 1: Reading		0.89	0.91	0.92
	Claim 2: Writing	0.66		0.85	0.90
	Claim 3: Listening	0.64	0.58		0.90
	Claim 4: Research	0.69	0.66	0.62	
6	Claim 1: Reading		0.88	0.92	0.92
	Claim 2: Writing	0.66		0.86	0.90
	Claim 3: Listening	0.63	0.58		0.90
	Claim 4: Research	0.65	0.63	0.57	
7	Claim 1: Reading		0.87	0.92	0.92
	Claim 2: Writing	0.65		0.85	0.88
	Claim 3: Listening	0.62	0.56		0.89
	Claim 4: Research	0.66	0.62	0.57	
8	Claim 1: Reading		0.90	0.91	0.90
	Claim 2: Writing	0.67		0.85	0.88
	Claim 3: Listening	0.62	0.56		0.86
	Claim 4: Research	0.65	0.62	0.55	
11	Claim 1: Reading		0.90	0.92	0.94
	Claim 2: Writing	0.68		0.84	0.90
	Claim 3: Listening	0.64	0.57		0.89
	Claim 4: Research	0.69	0.65	0.59	

Table 39. Correlations among Claim Scores for Mathematics

Grade	Claim	Observed & Disattenuated Correlation		
		Claim 1	Claims 2 & 4	Claim 3
3	Claim 1		0.97	0.95
	Claims 2 & 4	0.79		1
	Claim 3	0.78	0.74	
4	Claim 1		0.97	0.95
	Claims 2 & 4	0.81		0.99
	Claim 3	0.80	0.76	
5	Claim 1		0.97	0.96
	Claims 2 & 4	0.77		1
	Claim 3	0.78	0.73	
6	Claim 1		0.98	0.96
	Claims 2 & 4	0.80		1
	Claim 3	0.76	0.72	
7	Claim 1		1	0.96
	Claims 2 & 4	0.81		0.99
	Claim 3	0.77	0.72	
8	Claim 1		0.98	0.96
	Claims 2 & 4	0.78		0.99
	Claim 3	0.76	0.71	
11	Claim 1		0.95	0.93
	Claims 2 & 4	0.76		0.94
	Claim 3	0.73	0.66	

Legend:

Claim 1: Concepts and Procedures

Claims 2 & 4: Problem Solving & Modeling and Data Analysis

Claim 3: Communicating Reasoning

5 RELIABILITY

According to the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* (AERA, APA, & NCME, 2014), reliability refers to the consistency of test scores across replications of a testing procedure. Reliability is related to the precision of measurement for a test and is evaluated, in part, in terms of the scores' standard error of measurement (SEM). In classical test theory, reliability is defined as the ratio of the true score variance to the observed score variance, assuming the error variance is the same for all scores, and reliability coefficients are the correlation between scores on two equivalent forms of the test. Within the item response theory (IRT) framework, measurement error is conditional on ability and varies across the ability scale. The amount of precision in estimating achievement can be determined by the test information function, which describes the amount of information provided by the test at each score point along the ability continuum. Test information is the inverse of measurement error; the larger the measurement error, the less test information is being provided. In computer-adaptive testing, items administered vary among students, so the amount of measurement error differs from one test to another, which yields conditional standard errors of measurement (CSEM).

The reliability evidence of the South Dakota summative tests is provided with marginal reliability, SEM, and classification accuracy and consistency in each achievement level.

5.1 MARGINAL RELIABILITY

For reliability, the *marginal reliability* was computed for the scale scores, taking into account the varying measurement errors across the ability range. Marginal reliability is a measure of the overall reliability of an assessment based on the average conditional SEM, estimated at different points on the ability scale for all students.

The marginal reliability ($\bar{\rho}$) is defined as

$$\bar{\rho} = \left[\sigma^2 - \left(\frac{\sum_{i=1}^N CSEM_i^2}{N} \right) \right] / \sigma^2,$$

where N is the number of students; $CSEM_i$ is the conditional SEM of the scale score for student i , and σ^2 is the variance of the scale score. The higher the reliability coefficient, the greater the precision of the test.

Another way to examine test reliability is with the SEM. In IRT, SEM is estimated as a function of test information provided by a given set of items that make up the test. In CAT, items administered vary across all students, so the SEM can vary across students, also, which yields CSEM. The average CSEM can be computed as

$$\text{Average CSEM} = \sigma \sqrt{1 - \bar{\rho}} = \sqrt{\frac{\sum_{i=1}^N CSEM_i^2}{N}}$$

The smaller the value of average CSEM, the greater the accuracy of test scores.

Table 40 presents the marginal reliability coefficients and the average CSEM for the total scale scores.

Table 40. Marginal Reliability for ELA/L and Mathematics

Grade	N	Number of Items Specified in Test Blueprint	Marginal Reliability	Scale Score Mean	Scale Score SD	Average CSEM
ELA/L						
3	10,929	38–41	0.91	2417.45	89.05	26.71
4	10,431	38–41	0.91	2464.48	95.12	27.98
5	10,676	38–41	0.92	2496.68	99.03	27.91
6	10,555	38–42	0.91	2521.27	96.95	29.03
7	10,437	38–42	0.91	2551.38	96.87	29.41
8	10,448	38–42	0.91	2562.83	100.44	30.40
11	9,844	39–41	0.92	2608.94	113.95	33.10
Mathematics						
3	10,968	35–40	0.95	2434.20	85.88	19.85
4	10,468	35–40	0.95	2478.43	86.32	19.63
5	10,713	35–40	0.94	2500.60	94.52	22.98
6	10,605	34–40	0.94	2522.69	105.48	25.52
7	10,467	34–40	0.94	2542.19	110.62	27.22
8	10,484	34–40	0.93	2553.65	117.16	30.07
11	9,845	37–42	0.93	2581.05	118.80	31.06

5.2 STANDARD ERROR CURVES

Figures 11 and 12 present plots of the CSEM of scale scores across the range of abilities. The vertical lines indicate the three cut scores for the four achievement levels. For most of the ability range, the selection algorithm matched items to each student’s ability and to the test blueprints with similar precision. Because the item pool is finite and has fewer items located at the extremes of the ability scale, the selection algorithm had to prioritize meeting blueprint requirements over matching items to ability level for those students with very high or very low abilities. This results in higher standard errors for students with very high or very low abilities compared to students with abilities around and between the three cut scores.

Given that classifying students into achievement levels, especially into proficient or not proficient levels based on the Level 3 cut, is a high stakes decision for schools, it is important that ability levels near and between the cut scores are measured with as much precision as possible. This increased precision near and between the cut scores is achieved by having more items in the item pool for abilities across the middle of the scale, where the cut scores are located.

A consequence of the selection algorithm’s prioritization of meeting blueprint requirements is that student ability near the low and high extremes of the scale is measured with relatively less precision. This produces the expected u-curve shape for the CSEM plots in Figures 11 and 12. An adaptive test with an infinitely large item pool and a selection algorithm that focused on maximizing information over blueprint requirements would produce CSEM curves that are more flat. The Smarter Balanced assessments focus on increasing precision where it is most needed, ability scores near and in between the cut scores. It is worth noting that larger standard errors are observed at the lower ends of the score distribution, relative to the higher ends. This occurs because the item pools currently have a shortage of very easy items that are better targeted toward these lower-achieving students. Content experts use this information to consider how to further target and populate item pools.

Figure 11. Conditional Standard Error of Measurement for ELA/L

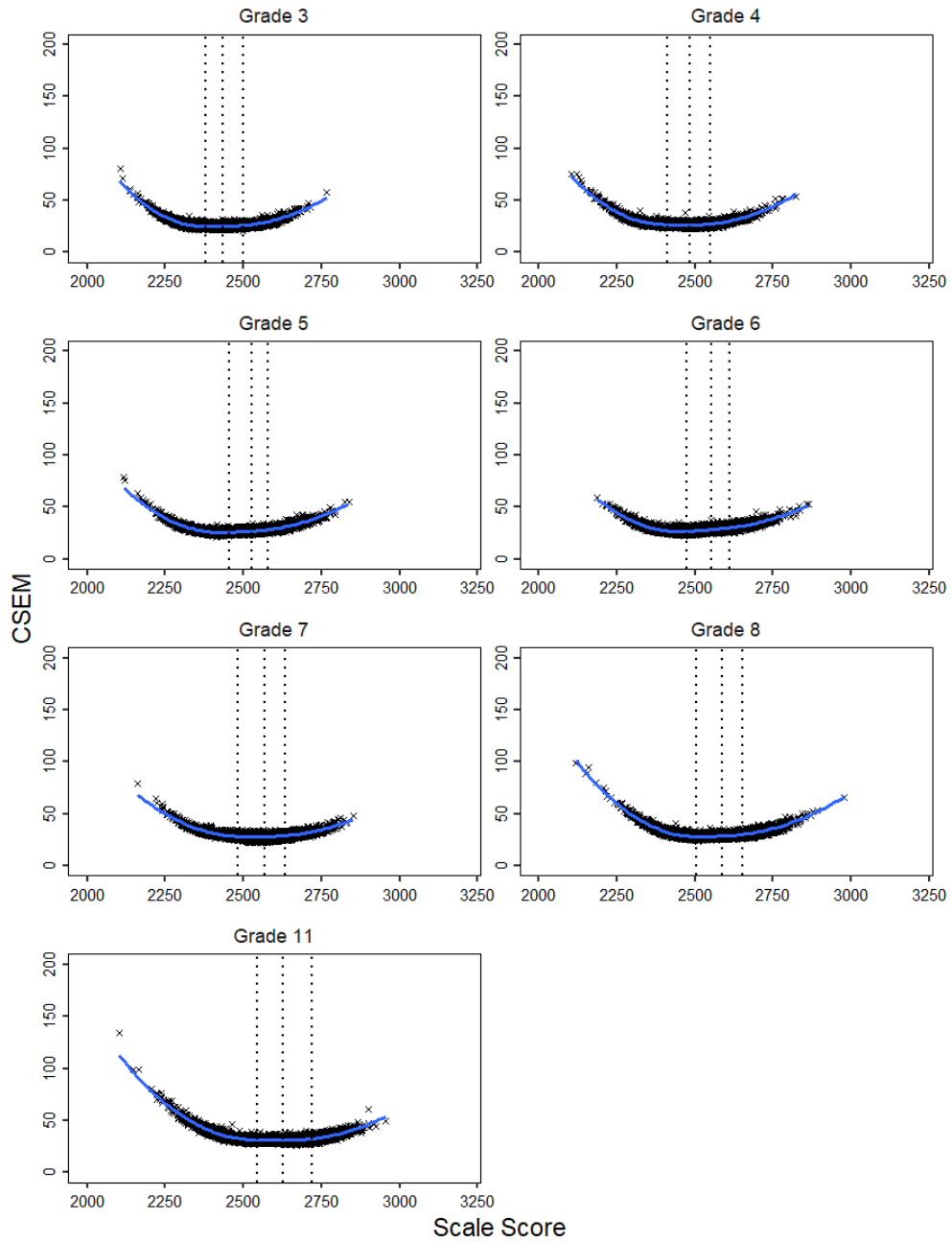
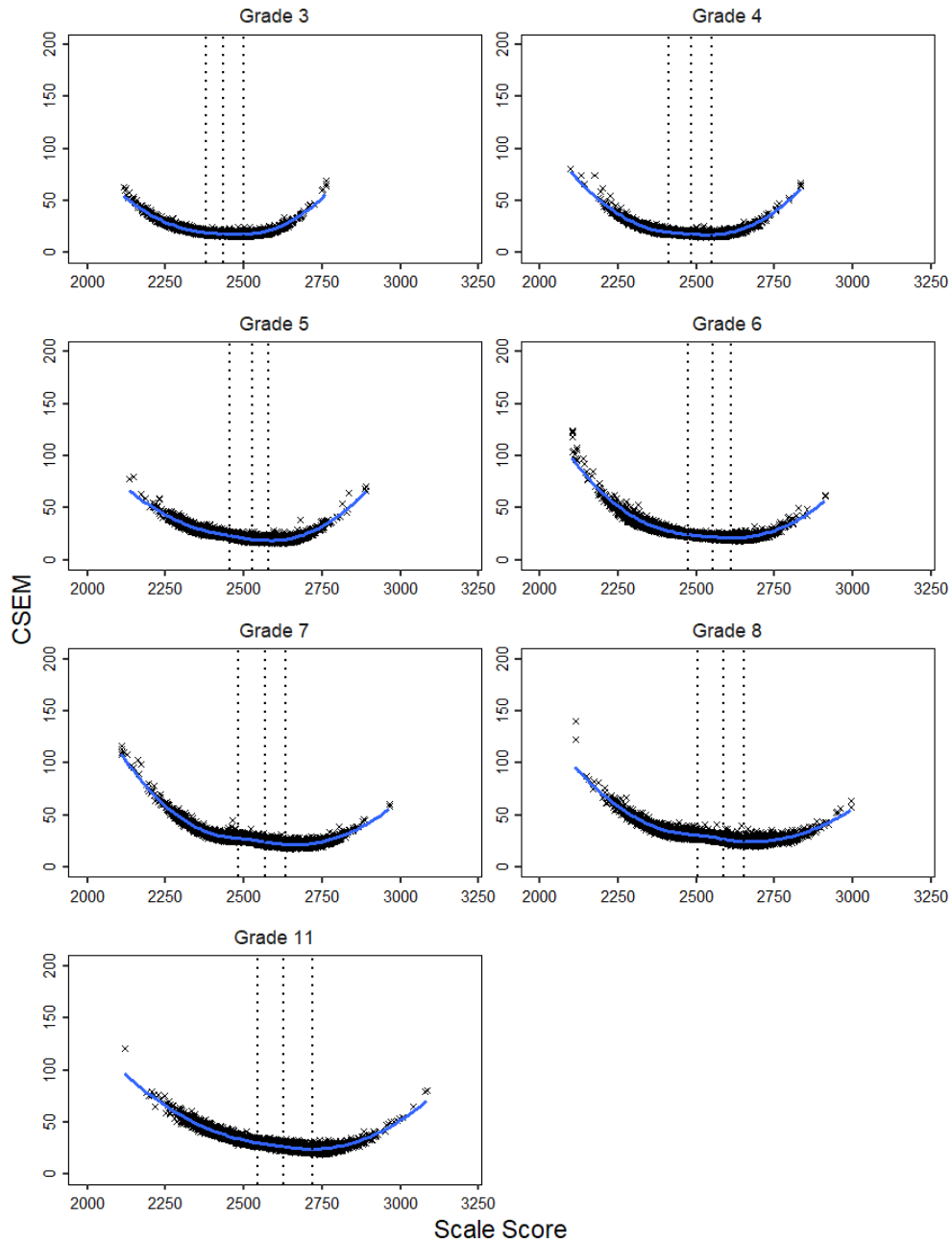


Figure 12. Conditional Standard Error of Measurement for Mathematics



The SEMs presented in Figures 11 and 12 are summarized in Tables 41 and 42. Table 41 provides the average CSEM for all scale scores and by achievement level. Table 42 presents the average CSEM at each cut score and the difference in average CSEMs between two cut scores. As shown in Figures 11 and 12, the largest average CSEM is in Level 1 for most grades in ELA/L and all grades in mathematics. The average CSEMs at all cut scores are similar in ELA/L, but larger at the Level 2 cut in mathematics.

Table 41. Average Conditional Standard Error of Measurement by Achievement Levels

Grade	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Average CSEM
ELA/L					
3	28.30	25.12	25.32	27.66	26.71
4	29.32	26.45	26.47	28.96	27.98
5	27.77	25.90	27.07	31.04	27.91
6	28.80	27.01	28.92	32.57	29.03
7	31.82	27.70	28.30	31.04	29.41
8	33.03	28.08	29.09	33.15	30.40
11	38.53	31.28	31.05	33.33	33.10
Mathematics					
3	23.11	18.44	17.76	19.72	19.85
4	23.78	18.60	17.38	19.11	19.63
5	27.85	21.30	19.11	20.13	22.98
6	31.87	23.05	21.78	22.26	25.52
7	33.46	26.40	22.95	22.40	27.22
8	35.41	29.04	25.44	25.61	30.07
11	37.21	28.31	25.06	25.78	31.06

Table 42. Average Conditional Standard Error of Measurement at Each Achievement Level Cut and Difference of the Standard Errors of Measurement Between Two Cuts

Grade	L2 Cut	L3 Cut	L4 Cut	L2-L3	L3-L4	L2-L4
ELA/L						
3	25.33	24.82	25.57	0.51	0.75	0.24
4	27.06	25.96	26.94	1.09	0.98	0.12
5	25.57	26.43	28.27	0.86	1.84	2.70
6	26.35	27.32	30.25	0.97	2.93	3.90
7	28.45	27.18	29.06	1.27	1.88	0.61
8	28.14	28.29	30.36	0.15	2.08	2.23
11	31.82	31.23	31.38	0.59	0.15	0.44
Mathematics						
3	18.92	18.24	17.68	0.68	0.57	1.25
4	19.20	17.98	17.18	1.23	0.80	2.03
5	23.63	19.58	18.90	4.06	0.68	4.74
6	24.50	22.16	21.97	2.34	0.19	2.53
7	26.69	24.09	21.65	2.60	2.44	5.04
8	30.62	26.97	24.10	3.66	2.86	6.52
11	30.14	25.93	24.35	4.20	1.58	5.78

5.3 RELIABILITY OF ACHIEVEMENT CLASSIFICATION

When student performance is reported in terms of achievement levels, the reliability of achievement classification is computed in terms of the probabilities of accurate and consistent classification of students as specified in Standard 2.16 in the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* (AERA, APA, & NCME, 2014). The indexes consider the accuracy and consistency of classifications.

For a fixed-form test, the accuracy and consistency of classifications are estimated on a single form's test scores from a single test administration based on the true-score distribution estimated by fitting a bivariate beta-binomial model or a four-parameter beta model (Huynh, 1976; Livingston & Lewis, 1995; Livingston & Wingersky, 1979; Subkoviak, 1976). For the CAT, because the adaptive testing algorithm constructs a test form unique to each student, the classification indexes are computed on the basis of all sets of items administered across students using an IRT-based method (Guo, 2006).

The classification index can be examined in terms of classification accuracy and consistency. *Classification accuracy* refers to the agreement between the classifications based on the form actually taken and the classifications that would be made based on the test takers' true scores, if their true scores could somehow be known. *Classification consistency* refers to the agreement between the classifications based on the form (adaptively administered items) actually taken and the classifications that would be made on the basis of an alternative form (another set of adaptively administered items given the same ability). It is the percentages of students who would be consistently classified in the same achievement levels on two equivalent test forms.

In reality, the true ability is unknown, and students do not take an alternative, equivalent form. Therefore, the classification accuracy and the classification consistency are estimated based on students' item scores, the item parameters, and the assumed underlying latent ability distribution as described later in this section. The true score is an expected value of the test score with a measurement error.

For the i th student, the student's estimated ability is $\hat{\theta}_i$ with SEM of $se(\hat{\theta}_i)$, and the estimated ability is distributed, as $\hat{\theta}_i \sim N(\theta_i, se^2(\hat{\theta}_i))$, assuming a normal distribution, where θ_i is the unknown true ability of the i th student. The probability of the true score at achievement level l based on the cut scores c_{l-1} and c_l is estimated as

$$\begin{aligned} p_{il} &= p(c_{l-1} \leq \theta_i < c_l) = p\left(\frac{c_{l-1} - \hat{\theta}_i}{se(\hat{\theta}_i)} \leq \frac{\theta_i - \hat{\theta}_i}{se(\hat{\theta}_i)} < \frac{c_l - \hat{\theta}_i}{se(\hat{\theta}_i)}\right) = p\left(\frac{\hat{\theta}_i - c_l}{se(\hat{\theta}_i)} < \frac{\hat{\theta}_i - \theta_i}{se(\hat{\theta}_i)} \leq \frac{\hat{\theta}_i - c_{l-1}}{se(\hat{\theta}_i)}\right) \\ &= \Phi\left(\frac{\hat{\theta}_i - c_{l-1}}{se(\hat{\theta}_i)}\right) - \Phi\left(\frac{\hat{\theta}_i - c_l}{se(\hat{\theta}_i)}\right). \end{aligned}$$

Instead of assuming a normal distribution of $\hat{\theta}_i \sim N(\theta_i, se^2(\hat{\theta}_i))$, the above probabilities can be estimated directly using the likelihood function.

The likelihood function of theta given a student's item scores represents the likelihood of the student's ability at that theta value. Integrating the likelihood values over the range of theta at and above the cut point (with proper normalization) represents the probability of the student's latent ability or the true score being at or above that cut point. If a student with estimated theta is below the cut point, the probability of being at or above the cut point is an estimate of the chance that this student is misclassified as below the cut. One minus that probability is the estimate of the student's chance to be correctly classified as below the cut score. Using this logic, the various classification probabilities can be defined.

The probability of the i th student being classified at achievement level l ($l = 1, 2, \dots, L$) based on the cut scores cut_{l-1} and cut_l , given the student's item scores $\mathbf{z}_i = (z_{i1}, \dots, z_{iJ})$ and item parameters $\mathbf{b} = (\mathbf{b}_1, \dots, \mathbf{b}_J)$ and using the J administered items, can be estimated as

$$p_{il} = P(\text{cut}_{l-1} \leq \theta_i < \text{cut}_l | \mathbf{z}, \mathbf{b}) = \frac{\int_{\text{cut}_{l-1}}^{\text{cut}_l} L(\theta | \mathbf{z}, \mathbf{b}) d\theta}{\int_{-\infty}^{+\infty} L(\theta | \mathbf{z}, \mathbf{b}) d\theta} \text{ for } l = 2, \dots, L - 1,$$

$$p_{i1} = P(-\infty < \theta_i < \text{cut}_1 | \mathbf{z}, \mathbf{b}) = \frac{\int_{-\infty}^{\text{cut}_1} L(\theta | \mathbf{z}, \mathbf{b}) d\theta}{\int_{-\infty}^{+\infty} L(\theta | \mathbf{z}, \mathbf{b}) d\theta}$$

$$p_{iL} = P(\text{cut}_{L-1} \leq \theta_i < \infty | \mathbf{z}, \mathbf{b}) = \frac{\int_{\text{cut}_{L-1}}^{\infty} L(\theta | \mathbf{z}, \mathbf{b}) d\theta}{\int_{-\infty}^{+\infty} L(\theta | \mathbf{z}, \mathbf{b}) d\theta},$$

where the likelihood function based on general IRT models is

$$L(\theta | \mathbf{z}_i, \mathbf{b}) = \prod_{j \in d} \left(z_{ij} c_j + \frac{(1-c_j) \exp(z_{ij} D a_j (\theta - b_j))}{1 + \exp(D a_j (\theta - b_j))} \right) \prod_{j \in p} \left(\frac{\exp(D a_j (z_{ij} \theta - \sum_{k=1}^{K_j} b_{jk}))}{1 + \sum_{m=1}^{K_j} \exp(D a_j (\sum_{k=1}^m (\theta - b_{jk})))} \right),$$

where d stands for dichotomous and p stands for polytomous items; $\mathbf{b}_j = (a_j, b_j, c_j)$ if the j th item is a dichotomous item, and $\mathbf{b}_j = (a_j, b_{j1}, \dots, b_{jK_j})$ if the j th item is a polytomous item; a_j is the item's discrimination parameter (for Rasch model, $a_j=1$), c_j is the guessing parameter (for Rasch and two-parameter logistic [2PL] models, $c_j=0$), and D is 1.7 for non-Rasch models and 1 for Rasch model.

Classification Accuracy

Using p_{il} , a $L \times L$ table can be constructed as

$$\begin{pmatrix} n_{a11} & \dots & n_{a1L} \\ \vdots & \vdots & \vdots \\ n_{aL1} & \dots & n_{aLL} \end{pmatrix},$$

where $n_{alm} = \sum_{pl_i=l} p_{im} \cdot n_{alm}$ is the expected count of students at achievement level lm , pl_i is the i th student's achievement level, and p_{im} are the probabilities of the i th student being classified at achievement level m . In the above table, the row represents the observed level, and the column represents the expected level.

The classification accuracy (CA) at level l ($l = 1, \dots, L$) is estimated by

$$CA_l = \frac{n_{all}}{\sum_{m=1}^L n_{alm}},$$

and the overall classification accuracy is estimated by

$$CA = \frac{\sum_{l=1}^L n_{all}}{N},$$

where N is the total number of students. Because classifying students as proficient or not proficient is such a high stakes decision, classification accuracy is also considered at the proficiency level by repeating the process for overall classification accuracy of achievement levels but with the four achievement levels collapsed into two proficiency categories: proficient (achievement levels 3 and 4) and not proficient (achievement levels 1 and 2).

Classification Consistency

Using p_{il} , which is similar to accuracy, another $L \times L$ table can be constructed by assuming the test is administered twice independently to the same student group

$$\begin{pmatrix} n_{c11} & \dots & n_{c1L} \\ \vdots & \vdots & \vdots \\ n_{cL1} & \dots & n_{cLL} \end{pmatrix},$$

where $n_{clm} = \sum_{i=1}^N p_{il} p_{im}$. p_{il} and p_{im} are the probabilities of the i th student being classified at achievement level l and m , respectively based on observed scores and hypothetical scores from the equivalent test form.

The classification consistency (CC) at level l ($l = 1, \dots, L$) is estimated by

$$CC_l = \frac{n_{c ll}}{\sum_{m=1}^L n_{c lm}},$$

and the overall classification consistency is

$$CC = \frac{\sum_{l=1}^L n_{c ll}}{N}.$$

As with classification accuracy, classification consistency is also considered at the proficiency level by repeating the process for overall classification consistency of achievement levels but with the four achievement levels collapsed into two proficiency categories: proficient (achievement levels 3 and 4) and not proficient (achievement levels 1 and 2).

The analysis of the classification index is performed based on overall scale scores. Table 43 provides the percentages of classification accuracy and consistency for overall and by achievement level.

The overall classification index ranged from 78% to 84% for accuracy and from 70% to 77% for consistency across all grades and subjects. For achievement levels, the classification index is higher in L1 and L4 than in L2 and L3. The higher accuracy at L1 and L4 is due to the fact that the intervals used to compute the classification probabilities for students in L1 and L4 $[-\infty, L2 \text{ cut}; L4 \text{ cut}, \infty]$ are wider than the intervals used to compute the classification probabilities for students in L2 and L3 $[L2 \text{ cut}, L3 \text{ cut}; L3 \text{ cut}, L4 \text{ cut}]$. The misclassification probability tends to be higher for narrower intervals. Classification accuracy and classification consistency at the proficiency cut scores were high, ranging from 91% to 94% for accuracy and from 88% to 91% for consistency.

The accuracy of classifications is higher than the consistency of the classifications in all achievement levels. The accuracy is higher than the consistency because the accuracy is based on one test with a measurement error and the true score. In contrast, consistency is based on two tests with measurement errors. The classification indexes by subgroup are provided in Appendix C: Classification Accuracy and Consistency Index by Subgroup.

Table 43. Classification Accuracy and Consistency

Grade	Achievement Level	ELA/L		Mathematics	
		% Accuracy	% Consistency	% Accuracy	% Consistency
3	Overall	78	70	82	75
	L1	90	84	88	84
	L2	69	58	73	63
	L3	65	55	78	71
	L4	86	79	88	83
	Proficiency Cut	92	88	94	91
4	Overall	78	70	84	77
	L1	90	84	90	84
	L2	63	52	80	72
	L3	65	55	78	71
	L4	87	80	89	84
	Proficiency Cut	92	88	94	91
5	Overall	79	71	83	76
	L1	90	85	91	86
	L2	66	54	77	68
	L3	73	64	70	59
	L4	85	77	88	83
	Proficiency Cut	92	89	94	91
6	Overall	79	70	82	75
	L1	90	84	92	87
	L2	71	60	77	68
	L3	74	66	70	60
	L4	83	72	88	81
	Proficiency Cut	92	88	93	90
7	Overall	79	70	82	75
	L1	89	82	91	85
	L2	70	59	75	66
	L3	77	70	73	63
	L4	82	72	89	84
	Proficiency Cut	91	88	93	90
8	Overall	79	71	81	74
	L1	89	82	90	85
	L2	71	62	72	62
	L3	77	70	70	59
	L4	82	72	89	83
	Proficiency Cut	92	88	93	90
11	Overall	80	72	83	76
	L1	89	82	91	87
	L2	72	61	73	64
	L3	75	67	77	68
	L4	85	79	88	82
	Proficiency Cut	93	90	94	91

5.4 RELIABILITY FOR SUBGROUPS

The reliability of test scores is also computed by subgroup. Tables 44 through 51 present the marginal reliability coefficients by subgroup. The reliability coefficients are similar across subgroups but somewhat lower for American and Alaskan, Limited English Proficiency (LEP), and IDEA subgroups in some grades. A large percentage of students in these subgroups received Level 1 with large SEMs.

Table 44. Marginal Reliability Coefficients for Overall and by Subgroup: ELA/L (Grades 3–4)

Subgroup	Grade 3					Grade 4				
	N	MR	SS	SD	CSEM	N	MR	SS	SD	CSEM
All Students	10,929	0.91	2417.45	89.05	26.71	10,431	0.91	2464.48	95.12	27.98
Female	5,319	0.91	2421.30	87.64	26.59	5,010	0.91	2469.42	93.38	27.85
Male	5,610	0.91	2413.79	90.21	26.82	5,421	0.92	2459.92	96.49	28.09
African American	362	0.90	2384.38	84.40	27.05	343	0.92	2423.20	98.95	28.60
AmerIndian/Alaskan	1,280	0.87	2353.04	76.15	27.74	1,155	0.89	2398.38	86.65	28.79
Asian	181	0.90	2409.97	81.74	26.44	169	0.91	2477.86	93.81	27.64
Hispanic	1,029	0.90	2381.44	85.02	27.01	882	0.91	2428.45	94.69	28.40
Pacific Islander	24	0.87	2367.38	76.74	27.59	16	0.91	2397.78	98.69	29.97
White	7,334	0.90	2436.91	84.77	26.46	7,200	0.90	2482.10	89.97	27.79
Multi-Racial	719	0.90	2405.34	85.13	26.77	666	0.91	2455.82	90.11	27.69
LEP	875	0.87	2362.30	75.97	27.14	629	0.86	2387.90	77.47	28.75
IDEA	2,109	0.89	2365.22	83.34	27.41	2,042	0.90	2395.58	91.78	29.20
Section 504 Plan	390	0.91	2409.47	86.84	26.62	385	0.90	2455.89	89.25	27.82

Legend. MR: Marginal Reliability; SS: Scale Score Mean; SD: Standard Deviation of Scale Score; CSEM: Mean of Conditional Standard Error of Measurement

Table 45. Marginal Reliability Coefficients for Overall and by Subgroup: ELA/L (Grades 5–6)

Subgroup	Grade 5					Grade 6				
	N	MR	SS	SD	CSEM	N	MR	SS	SD	CSEM
All Students	10,676	0.92	2496.68	99.03	27.91	10,555	0.91	2521.27	96.95	29.03
Female	5,234	0.92	2504.80	96.72	27.89	5,169	0.91	2529.40	95.86	29.06
Male	5,442	0.92	2488.87	100.59	27.93	5,386	0.91	2513.48	97.36	29.01
African American	358	0.92	2455.18	96.48	27.58	331	0.91	2488.67	94.90	28.99
AmerIndian/Alaskan	1,204	0.90	2422.61	87.92	27.71	1,120	0.90	2444.50	90.93	29.04
Asian	179	0.92	2515.60	97.75	28.27	183	0.92	2532.66	107.54	29.45
Hispanic	959	0.92	2452.45	98.28	27.86	914	0.91	2484.20	97.94	28.81
Pacific Islander	15	0.92	2434.19	100.68	28.91	15	0.84	2462.73	69.18	27.40
White	7,349	0.91	2517.21	92.81	27.99	7,320	0.90	2539.56	90.28	29.10
Multi-Racial	612	0.91	2485.41	92.92	27.49	672	0.90	2514.70	91.65	28.60
LEP	625	0.87	2403.94	76.31	27.81	452	0.86	2425.20	76.87	28.87
IDEA	1,934	0.91	2418.09	91.87	28.00	1,743	0.89	2432.73	86.28	29.12
Section 504 Plan	470	0.92	2492.29	97.52	27.60	485	0.90	2515.56	89.61	28.91

Table 46. Marginal Reliability Coefficients for Overall and by Subgroup: ELA/L (Grades 7–8)

Subgroup	Grade 7					Grade 8				
	N	MR	SS	SD	CSEM	N	MR	SS	SD	CSEM
All Students	10,437	0.91	2551.38	96.87	29.41	10,448	0.91	2562.83	100.44	30.40
Female	5,101	0.90	2564.18	93.17	29.32	5,122	0.90	2578.65	96.94	30.34
Male	5,336	0.91	2539.15	98.75	29.51	5,326	0.91	2547.61	101.40	30.45
African American	354	0.90	2513.05	93.93	29.56	346	0.91	2513.29	102.03	31.17
AmerIndian/Alaskan	1,151	0.89	2477.09	91.51	30.66	1,129	0.88	2490.32	90.96	31.31
Asian	198	0.90	2577.62	93.34	29.14	158	0.91	2579.67	98.90	30.40
Hispanic	872	0.91	2518.44	96.99	29.62	859	0.91	2521.85	105.52	31.13
Pacific Islander	12	0.93	2540.55	118.74	31.43	23	0.91	2541.49	97.96	29.65
White	7,230	0.90	2569.20	90.25	29.18	7,281	0.90	2581.63	93.77	30.15
Multi-Racial	620	0.91	2541.62	97.94	29.43	652	0.91	2555.30	98.03	30.18
LEP	438	0.85	2454.47	78.85	30.45	459	0.84	2454.55	81.42	32.53
IDEA	1,497	0.88	2457.73	89.01	30.81	1,302	0.87	2459.69	88.49	32.36
Section 504 Plan	502	0.90	2549.23	93.50	29.33	516	0.89	2555.51	91.23	29.68

Table 47. Marginal Reliability Coefficients for Overall and by Subgroup: ELA/L (Grade 11)

Subgroup	Grade 11				
	N	MR	SS	SD	CSEM
All Students	9,844	0.92	2608.94	113.95	33.10
Female	4,869	0.91	2624.76	107.85	32.70
Male	4,975	0.92	2593.46	117.60	33.49
African American	309	0.92	2563.61	116.92	34.04
AmerIndian/Alaskan	909	0.89	2527.29	102.41	34.28
Asian	158	0.92	2610.57	124.01	34.61
Hispanic	733	0.92	2560.41	118.50	34.05
Pacific Islander	17	0.90	2558.86	103.10	33.15
White	7,217	0.91	2627.32	107.81	32.77
Multi-Racial	501	0.91	2592.45	112.33	33.23
LEP	341	0.85	2470.34	94.30	36.66
IDEA	951	0.87	2481.79	102.17	36.56
Section 504 Plan	612	0.91	2607.66	110.99	32.88

Table 48. Marginal Reliability Coefficients for Overall and by Subgroup: Mathematics (Grades 3–4)

Subgroup	Grade 3					Grade 4				
	N	MR	SS	SD	CSEM	N	MR	SS	SD	CSEM
All Students	10,968	0.95	2434.20	85.88	19.85	10,468	0.95	2478.43	86.32	19.63
Female	5,338	0.94	2426.74	81.31	19.72	5,030	0.94	2471.20	81.03	19.46
Male	5,630	0.95	2441.28	89.42	19.97	5,438	0.95	2485.12	90.43	19.79
African American	372	0.94	2394.15	80.68	20.54	348	0.94	2430.09	86.16	21.36
AmerIndian/Alaskan	1,280	0.92	2365.28	76.42	21.76	1,154	0.92	2408.97	78.62	21.81
Asian	189	0.94	2424.56	83.56	19.91	178	0.95	2482.29	93.60	20.83
Hispanic	1,046	0.93	2391.82	81.00	20.71	901	0.94	2440.64	84.17	20.75
Pacific Islander	25	0.91	2387.39	66.02	19.92	17	0.93	2392.40	94.72	25.58
White	7,337	0.94	2456.18	78.97	19.33	7,204	0.94	2498.06	78.90	18.97
Multi-Racial	719	0.94	2419.22	80.36	19.93	666	0.94	2464.01	83.77	19.68
LEP	909	0.92	2379.89	74.60	20.89	667	0.90	2409.32	71.31	22.08
IDEA	2,093	0.94	2382.72	90.65	21.74	2,039	0.94	2417.12	88.39	21.95
Section 504 Plan	390	0.95	2429.82	90.67	20.16	385	0.95	2473.22	86.42	19.59

Table 49. Marginal Reliability Coefficients for Overall and by Subgroup: Mathematics (Grades 5–6)

Subgroup	Grade 5					Grade 6				
	N	MR	SS	SD	CSEM	N	MR	SS	SD	CSEM
All Students	10,713	0.94	2500.60	94.52	22.98	10,605	0.94	2522.69	105.48	25.52
Female	5,251	0.93	2494.48	89.75	22.91	5,197	0.94	2517.70	101.95	25.47
Male	5,462	0.95	2506.49	98.55	23.04	5,408	0.94	2527.48	108.57	25.56
African American	366	0.92	2451.68	88.37	25.01	343	0.93	2468.41	107.35	28.95
AmerIndian/Alaskan	1,203	0.89	2416.92	80.16	26.75	1,119	0.91	2427.68	103.19	30.61
Asian	187	0.94	2515.38	96.00	22.74	187	0.95	2538.49	117.66	26.60
Hispanic	978	0.92	2453.95	86.12	24.85	942	0.93	2475.59	102.73	27.98
Pacific Islander	15	0.90	2428.51	79.04	25.32	16	0.89	2428.91	87.23	28.66
White	7,351	0.94	2524.21	86.90	21.90	7,325	0.93	2546.70	94.23	24.10
Multi-Racial	613	0.93	2482.61	87.99	23.24	673	0.94	2510.81	100.52	25.38
LEP	663	0.87	2419.74	74.81	26.86	499	0.87	2421.40	87.12	31.70
IDEA	1,938	0.91	2426.89	90.80	26.54	1,742	0.91	2424.45	105.74	31.43
Section 504 Plan	472	0.94	2500.55	96.14	23.30	487	0.93	2520.33	97.21	24.99

Table 50. Marginal Reliability Coefficients for Overall and by Subgroup: Mathematics (Grades 7–8)

Subgroup	Grade 7					Grade 8				
	N	MR	SS	SD	CSEM	N	MR	SS	SD	CSEM
All Students	10,467	0.94	2542.19	110.62	27.22	10,484	0.93	2553.65	117.16	30.07
Female	5,120	0.94	2537.79	106.66	27.18	5,139	0.93	2554.85	113.19	29.87
Male	5,347	0.94	2546.40	114.14	27.26	5,345	0.94	2552.49	120.85	30.27
African American	365	0.92	2483.26	106.73	30.69	357	0.91	2481.62	111.42	34.10
AmerIndian/Alaskan	1,151	0.89	2443.45	96.75	32.63	1,127	0.87	2451.42	94.54	34.60
Asian	199	0.95	2566.53	112.29	25.95	163	0.94	2570.71	119.51	29.67
Hispanic	888	0.92	2498.33	104.24	29.21	885	0.92	2497.77	115.37	32.85
Pacific Islander	12	0.94	2501.17	123.10	30.26	23	0.94	2492.62	142.13	33.42
White	7,232	0.94	2566.78	101.26	25.70	7,279	0.93	2580.86	108.05	28.70
Multi-Racial	620	0.94	2529.16	112.98	28.66	650	0.92	2539.67	110.18	30.28
LEP	466	0.85	2434.52	86.09	33.41	504	0.84	2433.40	92.08	36.65
IDEA	1,493	0.90	2438.24	103.40	33.50	1,303	0.88	2439.87	102.62	35.74
Section 504 Plan	504	0.94	2549.45	110.47	27.14	514	0.92	2547.46	105.69	29.77

Table 51. Marginal Reliability Coefficients for Overall and by Subgroup: Mathematics (Grade 11)

Subgroup	Grade 11				
	N	MR	SS	SD	CSEM
All Students	9,845	0.93	2581.05	118.80	31.06
Female	4,869	0.93	2579.76	113.87	30.83
Male	4,976	0.94	2582.31	123.43	31.28
African American	309	0.91	2534.03	111.01	33.54
AmerIndian/Alaskan	902	0.83	2482.19	88.79	36.19
Asian	159	0.94	2580.85	132.76	31.87
Hispanic	738	0.91	2530.31	110.88	33.89
Pacific Islander	17	0.90	2513.90	112.93	34.93
White	7,220	0.93	2602.26	114.64	29.85
Multi-Racial	500	0.92	2559.43	111.06	31.75
LEP	350	0.78	2462.07	82.71	38.48
IDEA	949	0.83	2449.37	96.99	39.67
Section 504 Plan	614	0.93	2574.82	121.85	31.55

5.5 RELIABILITY FOR CLAIM SCORES

The marginal reliability coefficients and the measurement errors are also computed for the claim scores. In mathematics, claims 2 and 4 are combined to have enough items to generate a score. Because the precision of scores in claims is not sufficient to report scores, given the small number of items, the scores on each claim are reported using one of the three performance categories, taking into account the SEM of the claim score: (1) Below Standard, (2) At/Near Standard, or (3) Above Standard. Tables 52 and 53 present the marginal reliability coefficients for each claim score in ELA/L and mathematics, respectively.

Table 52. Marginal Reliability Coefficients for Claim Scores in ELA/L

Grade	Claim	Number of Items Specified in Test Blueprint	Marginal Reliability	Scale Score Mean	Scale Score SD	Average CSEM
3	Claim 1: Reading	14–16	0.75	2417.74	100.13	50.13
	Claim 2: Writing	7	0.72	2417.04	113.54	59.68
	Claim 3: Listening	8–9	0.57	2421.30	129.73	84.79
	Claim 4: Research	9	0.68	2404.65	119.39	67.22
4	Claim 1: Reading	14–16	0.76	2462.98	107.74	52.93
	Claim 2: Writing	7	0.70	2458.38	122.19	66.59
	Claim 3: Listening	8–9	0.62	2472.80	128.95	79.62
	Claim 4: Research	9	0.70	2457.00	125.90	69.21
5	Claim 1: Reading	14–16	0.77	2498.98	111.89	53.70
	Claim 2: Writing	7	0.73	2495.65	121.38	63.10
	Claim 3: Listening	8–9	0.64	2495.11	135.15	81.58
	Claim 4: Research	9	0.74	2492.71	126.49	64.98
6	Claim 1: Reading	14–17	0.76	2517.67	113.16	55.48
	Claim 2: Writing	7	0.74	2516.27	117.96	60.38
	Claim 3: Listening	8–9	0.60	2528.75	140.42	88.40
	Claim 4: Research	9	0.66	2528.06	124.59	72.53
7	Claim 1: Reading	14–17	0.75	2545.69	109.54	54.53
	Claim 2: Writing	7	0.73	2550.60	124.71	64.21
	Claim 3: Listening	8–9	0.60	2557.19	131.89	83.37
	Claim 4: Research	9	0.68	2548.67	131.23	74.32
8	Claim 1: Reading	14–17	0.76	2559.81	117.07	57.23
	Claim 2: Writing	7	0.72	2560.97	125.99	66.47
	Claim 3: Listening	8–9	0.60	2566.20	144.08	91.26
	Claim 4: Research	9	0.69	2563.60	129.53	72.56
11	Claim 1: Reading	15–16	0.77	2602.43	131.42	62.85
	Claim 2: Writing	7	0.75	2609.55	139.54	70.13
	Claim 3: Listening	8–9	0.62	2609.12	158.60	97.54
	Claim 4: Research	9	0.69	2610.11	145.48	80.55

Table 53. Marginal Reliability Coefficients for Claim Scores in Mathematics

Grade	Claim	Number of Items Specified in Test Blueprint	Marginal Reliability	Scale Score Mean	Scale Score SD	Average CSEM
3	Claim 1	17–20	0.91	2437.77	92.87	28.07
	Claims 2 & 4	8–10	0.72	2429.15	99.21	52.21
	Claim 3	8–10	0.74	2424.95	102.48	51.98
4	Claim 1	17–20	0.91	2483.08	92.94	28.05
	Claims 2 & 4	8–10	0.76	2469.90	101.41	49.51
	Claim 3	8–10	0.77	2470.36	98.97	47.42
5	Claim 1	17–20	0.90	2506.69	100.61	32.24
	Claims 2 & 4	8–10	0.71	2488.65	112.28	60.79
	Claim 3	8–10	0.73	2486.95	115.02	59.37
6	Claim 1	16–20	0.90	2526.00	113.99	35.76
	Claims 2 & 4	8–10	0.73	2512.07	123.64	64.12
	Claim 3	8–10	0.70	2513.73	123.56	68.00
7	Claim 1	16–20	0.89	2543.32	117.59	38.86
	Claims 2 & 4	8–10	0.74	2536.78	127.33	64.44
	Claim 3	8–10	0.71	2532.35	129.74	69.43
8	Claim 1	16–20	0.88	2555.77	124.38	42.39
	Claims 2 & 4	8–10	0.72	2542.56	144.42	76.38
	Claim 3	8–10	0.71	2545.54	137.99	73.84
11	Claim 1	19–22	0.89	2578.78	123.41	40.83
	Claims 2 & 4	8–10	0.72	2576.07	158.66	84.53
	Claim 3	8–10	0.68	2567.30	150.31	84.69

Legend:

Claim 1: Concepts and Procedures

Claims 2 & 4: Problem Solving & Modeling and Data Analysis

Claim 3: Communicating Reasoning

6 SCORING

The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium provided the item parameters that are vertically scaled by linking across grades using common items in adjacent grades. All scores are estimated based on these item parameters. Each student received an overall scale score, an overall achievement level, and a performance category for each claim. This section describes the rules used in generating scores and the handscoring procedure.

6.1 ESTIMATING STUDENT ABILITY USING MAXIMUM LIKELIHOOD ESTIMATION

The South Dakota summative tests are scored using maximum likelihood estimation (MLE). The likelihood function for generating the MLEs is based on a mixture of item types.

Indexing items by i , the likelihood function based on the j th person's score pattern for I items is

$$L_j(\theta_j | \mathbf{z}_j, \mathbf{a}, b_1, \dots, b_k) = \prod_{i=1}^I p_{ij}(z_{ij} | \theta_j, a_i, b_{i,1}, \dots, b_{i,m_i}),$$

where $\mathbf{b}_i = (b_{i,1}, \dots, b_{i,m_i})$ for the i th item's step parameters, m_i is the maximum possible score of this item, a_i is the discrimination parameter for item i , z_{ij} is the observed item score for the person j , and k indices the step of the item i .

Depending on the item score points, the probability $p_{ij}(z_{ij} | \theta_j, a_i, b_{i,1}, \dots, b_{i,m_i})$ takes either the form of a two-parameter logistic (2PL) model for items with one point or the form based on the generalized partial credit model (GPCM) for items with two or more points.

In the case of items with one score point, $m_i = 1$,

$$p_{ij}(z_{ij} | \theta_j, a_i, b_{i,1}, \dots, b_{i,m_i}) = \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \frac{\exp(Da_i(\theta_j - b_{i,1}))}{1 + \exp(Da_i(\theta_j - b_{i,1}))} = p_{ij}, \text{ if } z_{ij} = 1 \\ \frac{1}{1 + \exp(Da_i(\theta_j - b_{i,1}))} = 1 - p_{ij}, \text{ if } z_{ij} = 0 \end{array} \right\};$$

in the case of items with two or more points,

$$p_{ij}(z_{ij} | \theta_j, a_i, b_{i,1}, \dots, b_{i,m_i}) = \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \frac{\exp(\sum_{k=1}^{z_{ij}} Da_i(\theta_j - b_{i,k}))}{s_{ij}(\theta_j, a_i, b_{i,1}, \dots, b_{i,m_i})}, \text{ if } z_{ij} > 0 \\ \frac{1}{s_{ij}(\theta_j, a_i, b_{i,1}, \dots, b_{i,m_i})}, \text{ if } z_{ij} = 0 \end{array} \right\},$$

where $s_{ij}(\theta_j, a_i, b_{i,1}, \dots, b_{i,m_i}) = 1 + \sum_{l=1}^{m_i} \exp(\sum_{k=1}^l Da_i(\theta_j - b_{i,k}))$, and $D = 1.7$.

Standard Error of Measurement

With MLE, the standard error (SE) for student j is:

$$SE(\theta_j) = \frac{1}{\sqrt{I(\theta_j)}}$$

where $I(\theta_j)$ is the test information for student j , calculated as

$$I(\theta_j) = \sum_{i=1}^I D^2 a_i^2 \left(\frac{\sum_{l=1}^{m_i} l^2 \exp\left(\sum_{k=1}^l Da_i(\theta_j - b_{ik})\right)}{1 + \sum_{l=1}^{m_i} \exp\left(\sum_{k=1}^l Da_i(\theta_j - b_{ik})\right)} - \left(\frac{\sum_{l=1}^{m_i} l \exp\left(\sum_{k=1}^l Da_i(\theta_j - b_{ik})\right)}{1 + \sum_{l=1}^{m_i} \exp\left(\sum_{k=1}^l Da_i(\theta_j - b_{ik})\right)} \right)^2 \right),$$

where m_i is the maximum possible score point (starting from 0) for the i th item, and D is the scale factor, 1.7. The SE is calculated based only on the answered items for both complete and incomplete tests. The upper bound of the SE is set to 2.5 on the θ metric. Any value larger than 2.5 is truncated at 2.5 on the θ metric.

The algorithm allows previously answered items to be changed; however, it does not allow item skipping. Item selection requires iteratively updating the estimate of the overall and claim ability estimates after each item is answered. When a previously answered item is changed, the proficiency estimate is adjusted to account for the changed responses when the next new item is selected. Although the update of the ability estimates is performed at each iteration, the overall and claim scores are recalculated using all data at the end of the assessment for the final score.

6.2 RULES FOR TRANSFORMING THETA TO VERTICAL SCALE SCORES

The student’s performance in each subject is summarized in an overall test score referred to as a *scale score*. The scale scores represent a linear transformation of the ability estimates (theta scores) using the formula, $SS = a * \theta + b$. The scaling constants a and b are provided by the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium. Table 54 presents the scaling constants for each subject for the theta-to-scale score linear transformation. Scale scores are rounded to an integer.

Table 54. Vertical Scaling Constants on the Reporting Metric

Subject	Grade	Slope (a)	Intercept (b)
ELA/L	3–8, 11	85.8	2508.2
Mathematics	3–8, 11	79.3	2514.9

Standard errors of the MLEs are transformed to be placed onto the reporting scale. This transformation is:

$$SE_{SS} = a * SE_{\theta},$$

where SE_{SS} is the standard error of the ability estimate on the reporting scale, SE_{θ} is the standard error of the ability estimate on the θ scale, and a is the slope of the scaling constant that transforms θ into the reporting scale.

The scale scores are mapped into four achievement levels using three achievement standards (i.e., cut scores). Table 55 provides three achievement standards for each grade and content area.

Table 55. Cut Scores in Scale Scores

Grade	ELA/L			Mathematics		
	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
3	2367	2432	2490	2381	2436	2501
4	2416	2473	2533	2411	2485	2549
5	2442	2502	2582	2455	2528	2579
6	2457	2531	2618	2473	2552	2610
7	2479	2552	2649	2484	2567	2635
8	2487	2567	2668	2504	2586	2653
11	2493	2583	2682	2543	2628	2718

6.3 LOWEST/HIGHEST OBTAINABLE SCORES (LOSS/HOSS)

Although the observed score is measured more precisely in a computer-adaptive test than in a fixed-form test, especially for high- and low-performing students, if the item pool does not include enough easy or difficult items to measure low- and high-performing students, the standard error can be large in the low and high ends of the ability range. The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium decided to truncate extreme, unreliable student ability estimates. Table 56 presents the lowest obtainable score (LOT or LOSS) and the highest obtainable score (HOT or HOSS) in both theta and scale score metrics. Estimated thetas lower than LOT or higher than HOT are truncated to the LOT and HOT values and are assigned LOSS and HOSS associated with the LOT and HOT. LOT and HOT were applied to all tests and all scores (total and claim scores). The standard error for LOT and HOT is computed using the LOT, and HOT ability estimates given the administered items.

Table 56. Lowest and Highest Obtainable Scores

Subject	Grade	Theta Metric		Scale Score Metric	
		LOT	HOT	LOSS	HOSS
ELA/L	3	-5.9110	3.5332	2001	2811
	4	-5.5500	4.1826	2032	2867
	5	-5.2670	4.7546	2056	2916
	6	-5.0000	5.0000	2079	2937
	7	-4.9660	5.3119	2082	2964
	8	-4.7925	5.6063	2097	2989
	11	-4.7305	6.1096	2102	3032
Mathematics	3	-5.6030	3.1219	2071	2762
	4	-5.3601	4.0264	2090	2834
	5	-5.3012	4.7426	2095	2891
	6	-5.1942	5.0000	2103	2911
	7	-5.1311	5.6630	2108	2964
	8	-5.0681	6.0272	2113	2993
	11	-5.0000	7.1896	2118	3085

6.4 SCORING ALL CORRECT AND ALL INCORRECT CASES

In item response theory (IRT) maximum likelihood (ML) ability estimation methods, zero and perfect scores are assigned the ability of minus and plus infinity. For all correct and all incorrect cases, the highest obtainable scores (HOT and HOSS) or the lowest obtainable scores (LOT and LOSS) were assigned in the 2014–2015 administration. Since the 2015–2016 administrations, all incorrect and correct cases were scored by either adding 0.5 to or subtracting 0.5 from an item score with the smallest item discrimination parameter among the administered operational items (CAT and PT) for a student

6.5 RULES FOR CALCULATING STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES FOR CLAIM SCORES

In ELA/L, claim scores are computed for each claim. In mathematics, claim scores are computed for claim 1, claims 2 and 4 combined, and claim 3. For each claim, three performance categories, indicating relative strength and weakness, are produced.

The difference between the proficiency cut score and the claim score plus or minus 1.5 times the standard error of the claim is used to determine the relative strengths and weaknesses. For summative tests, the specific rules are as follows:

- Below Standard (Code = 1): if $\text{round}(SS_{rc} + 1.5 * SE(SS_{rc}), 0) < SS_p$
- At/Near Standard (Code = 2): if $\text{round}(SS_{rc} + 1.5 * SE(SS_{rc}), 0) \geq SS_p$ and $\text{round}(SS_{rc} - 1.5 * SE(SS_{rc}), 0) < SS_p$, a strength or weakness is indeterminable
- Above Standard (Code = 3): if $\text{round}(SS_{rc} - 1.5 * SE(SS_{rc}), 0) \geq SS_p$

where SS_{rc} is the student’s scale score on a claim; SS_p is the proficiency scale score cut (Level 3 cut); and $SE(SS_{rc})$ is the standard error of the student’s scale score on the claim.

6.6 TARGET SCORES

The target-level reports cannot be produced for a fixed-form test because the number of items included per target (i.e., benchmark) is too low to produce a reliable score at the target level. A typical fixed-form test has only one or two items per target. Even when aggregated, these data reflect the benchmark narrowly because they reflect only one or two ways of measuring the target. However, an adaptive test offers a tremendous opportunity for target-level data at the class, school, and district levels. With an adequate item pool, a class of 20 students might respond to 10 or 15 different items measuring any given target. Target scores are computed for attempted tests based on the responded items, in each claim (four claims) in ELA/L, and Claim 1 only in mathematics.

Target scores are computed in two ways: (1) target scores relative to a student’s overall estimated ability (θ), and (2) target scores relative to the proficiency standard (Level 3 cut).

6.6.1 Target Scores Relative to Student’s Overall Estimated Ability

By defining $p_{ij} = p(z_{ij} = 1)$, indicating the probability that student j responds correctly to item i , z_{ij} represents the j th student’s score on the i th item. For items with one score point, the 2PL IRT model is used to calculate the expected score on item i for student j with estimated ability $\hat{\theta}_j$ as:

$$E(z_{ij}) = \frac{\exp(Da_i(\hat{\theta}_j - b_i))}{1 + \exp(Da_i(\hat{\theta}_j - b_i))}$$

For items with two or more score points, using the GPCM, the expected score for student j with estimated ability $\hat{\theta}_j$ on an item i with a maximum possible score of m_i is calculated as:

$$E(z_{ij}) = \sum_{l=1}^{m_i} \frac{l \exp\left(\sum_{k=1}^l Da_i(\hat{\theta}_j - b_{i,k})\right)}{1 + \sum_{l=1}^{m_i} \exp\left(\sum_{k=1}^l Da_i(\hat{\theta}_j - b_{i,k})\right)}$$

For each item i , the residual between observed and expected score for each student is defined as:

$$\delta_{ij} = z_{ij} - E(z_{ij})$$

Residuals are summed for items within a target. The sum of residuals is divided by the total number of points possible for items within the target, T ,

$$\delta_{jT} = \frac{\sum_{i \in T} \delta_{ji}}{\sum_{i \in T} m_i}$$

For an aggregate unit, a target score is computed by averaging individual student target scores for the target, across all students in the aggregate unit.

$$\bar{\delta}_{Tg} = \frac{1}{n_g} \sum_{j \in g} \delta_{jT}, \text{ and } se(\bar{\delta}_{Tg}) = \sqrt{\frac{1}{n_g(n_g - 1)} \sum_{j \in g} (\delta_{jT} - \bar{\delta}_{Tg})^2},$$

where n_g is the number of students who responded to any of the items that belong to the target T for an aggregate unit g . If a student did not happen to see any items on a particular target, the student is NOT included in the n_g count for the aggregate.

A statistically significant difference from zero in these aggregates may indicate that a roster, teacher, school, or district is more effective (if $\bar{\delta}_{Tg}$ is positive) or less effective (negative $\bar{\delta}_{Tg}$) in teaching a given target.

Direct reporting of the statistic $\bar{\delta}_{Tg}$ is not suggested. Instead reporting whether, in the aggregate, a group of students performs better, worse, or as expected on this target is recommended. In some cases, insufficient information will be available, and that will be indicated, as well.

For target level strengths and weaknesses, the following are reported:

- If $\bar{\delta}_{Tg} \geq +1 * se(\bar{\delta}_{Tg})$, then performance is better than on the rest of the test.
- If $\bar{\delta}_{Tg} \leq -1 * se(\bar{\delta}_{Tg})$, then performance is worse than on the rest of the test.
- Otherwise, performance is similar to performance on the test as a whole.
- If $se(\bar{\delta}_{Tg}) > 0.2$, data are insufficient.

6.6.2 Target Scores Relative to Proficiency Standard (Level 3 Cut)

By defining $p_{ij} = p(z_{ij} = 1)$, indicating the probability that student j responds correctly to item i . z_{ij} represents the j th student's score on the i th item. For items with one score point the 2PL IRT model is used to calculate the expected score on item i for student j with $\theta_{Level\ 3\ cut}$ as:

$$E(z_{ij}) = \frac{\exp(Da_i(\theta_{Level\ 3\ cut} - b_i))}{1 + \exp(Da_i(\theta_{Level\ 3\ cut} - b_i))}$$

For items with two or more score points, using the generalized partial credit model, the expected score for student j with *Level 3 cut* on an item i with a maximum possible score of m_i is calculated as:

$$E(z_{ij}) = \sum_{l=1}^{m_i} \frac{\exp\left(\sum_{k=1}^l Da_i(\theta_{Level\ 3\ cut} - b_{i,k})\right)}{1 + \sum_{l=1}^{m_i} \exp\left(\sum_{k=1}^l Da_i(\theta_{Level\ 3\ cut} - b_{i,k})\right)}$$

For each item i , the residual between observed and expected score for each student is defined as:

$$\delta_{ij} = z_{ij} - E(z_{ij})$$

Residuals are summed for items within a target. The sum of residuals is divided by the total number of points possible for items within the target, T .

$$\delta_{jT} = \frac{\sum_{i \in T} \delta_{ji}}{\sum_{i \in T} m_i}$$

For an aggregate unit, a target score is computed by averaging individual student target scores for the target, across all students in the aggregate unit.

$$\bar{\delta}_{Tg} = \frac{1}{n_g} \sum_{j \in g} \delta_{jT}, \text{ and } se(\bar{\delta}_{Tg}) = \sqrt{\frac{1}{n_g(n_g - 1)} \sum_{j \in g} (\delta_{jT} - \bar{\delta}_{Tg})^2},$$

where n_g is the number of students who responded to any of the items that belong to the target T for an aggregate unit g . If a student did not happen to see any items on a particular target, the student is NOT included in the n_g count for the aggregate.

A statistically significant difference from zero in these aggregates may indicate that a class, teacher, school, or district is more effective (if $\bar{\delta}_{Tg}$ is positive) or less effective (negative $\bar{\delta}_{Tg}$) in teaching a given target.

Direct reporting of the statistic $\bar{\delta}_{Tg}$ is not suggested. Instead reporting whether, in the aggregate, a group of students performs better, worse, or as expected on this target is recommended. In some cases, insufficient information will be available, and that will be indicated, as well.

For target-level strengths and weaknesses, the following are reported.

- If $\bar{\delta}_{Tg} \geq +1 * se(\bar{\delta}_{Tg})$, then performance is *above* the Proficiency Standard.
- If $\bar{\delta}_{Tg} \leq -1 * se(\bar{\delta}_{Tg})$, then performance is *below* the Proficiency Standard.
- Otherwise, performance is *near* the Proficiency Standard.

- If $se(\bar{\delta}_{Tg}) > 0.2$, data are insufficient.

6.7 HANDSCORING

Constructed response short-answer (SA) items and essay (i.e., full write) items in English language arts/literacy (ELA/L) and SA items in mathematics for the summative assessments administered by Cambium Assessment Inc. (CAI) are routed to Measurement Incorporated (MI) for scoring. MI provides handscoring using human raters and automated scoring using the Project Essay Grade (PEG) engine. Some Smarter Balanced member states have elected to use handscoring exclusively, while others have elected to use a hybrid automated scoring/handscoring approach. South Dakota has elected to use a hybrid automated scoring/handscoring approach. The methods and results for handscoring and hybrid automated scoring are described in the following sections.

For 2024–2025 summative tests, there were a total of 390 ELA/L SA items, 193 ELA/L essay items, and 347 mathematics items administered from the 2025 Smarter Balanced summative item pool. Table 57 shows the number of handscored items administered from the Smarter Balanced summative operational item pool, by grade and subject.

Table 57. Administered Handscored Items in Smarter Balanced Summative Item Pool, by Grade and Subject

Grade	ELA/L		Mathematics
	Short-Answer	Essay	
3	13	27	50
4	15	28	53
5	14	29	86
6	73	21	51
7	68	29	28
8	90	30	35
11	117	29	44
Total	390	193	347

All guidelines for handscoring responses were specified by Smarter Balanced. Outlined below is the handscoring process MI followed in spring 2025 in accordance with the Smarter Balanced guidelines. This process applied to the scoring of all student’s constructed responses for ELA/L SA and essay items and mathematic items. This section describes rater selection, rater training, qualification and scoring, rater monitoring, evaluation, feedback, and rater agreement for handscoring.

6.7.1 Rater Selection

Rater pool and supplement

MI has developed a pool of approximately five thousand raters experienced in scoring the Smarter Balanced assessments. MI first recruited qualified raters who had experience scoring these assessments. Rater accuracy data, collected during prior administration scoring, was used to prioritize recruitment of the most accurate, experienced raters. Once recruited, experienced raters were assigned to the content area and grade band(s) with which they were most experienced.

To supplement this pool, MI also recruited raters with experience successfully scoring other large-scale assessments. MI assigned those raters to the grade level, subject area, and item type for which they were most qualified based on their performance on similar projects. Returning raters were selected based on experience and performance, as well as attendance, and cooperation with work procedures and MI policies. MI maintains evaluations and performance data for all staff who work on each scoring project in order to determine employment eligibility for future projects. Finally, MI targeted recruitment of new raters as needed, in an effort to continue to identify talent across the country that will best fulfill the handscoring requirements.

Rater and team leader requirements

At minimum, all raters were required to possess a four-year college degree. MI collected proof of degree for all raters as a condition of employment. All raters resided in the United States and properly completed Form I–9 to verify their identity and employment authorization. Raters’ I–9 forms are retained on file as required by law and made available for inspection by authorized government officers as needed. MI is an equal-opportunity employer and believes that a diverse work force is of the utmost importance. When hiring, MI strives to ensure the work force is diverse across age, ethnicity, gender, and other demographic groups.

In selecting team leaders to monitor the raters, MI scoring leadership reviewed records of all returning staff. They looked for people who were experienced team leaders with a record of good performance on previous projects, and they also considered raters who had been recommended for promotion to the team leader position or otherwise displayed exemplary performance.

MI requires all handscoring project staff (scoring directors, team leaders, raters, and clerical staff) to sign a confidentiality/nondisclosure agreement before receiving any training or viewing any secure project materials. The employment agreement indicates that no participant in training and/or scoring may reveal information about the test, the scoring criteria, or the scoring methods to any person.

6.7.2 Rater Training, Qualification, and Scoring

Rater groups

Once hired, raters were assigned to a scoring group corresponding to the subject/grade that they were deemed best suited to score. Raters were trained to score a specific item group of either SA (research, brief write, reading, and mathematics) or essay (i.e., full-write) items. Within each item group, raters were divided into teams supervised by team leaders and a scoring director. Each scoring director, team leader, and rater were assigned a unique ID used to track their scoring work throughout the scoring effort. The number of items an individual rater scored was minimized to allow the rater to more quickly develop experience scoring responses to a small number of items.

Training modules and materials

When beginning working, all scoring personnel logged in to MI’s secure Scoring Resource Center (SRC). SRC includes all online training modules, serves as the portal to MI’s Virtual Scoring Center (VSC) interface, and hosts scoring reports used for rater monitoring. MI’s training system (VSC Train) provides a remote, secure application for training both team leaders and raters. VSC Train provided each trainee with a training lesson for each item that allowed the trainee to complete the following steps:

- 1) Review the anchor set(s)

- 2) Score the practice set(s)
- 3) Review an annotated version of the practice set(s) after submitting scores
- 4) Score the qualification sets

All raters hired to score the Smarter Balanced assessments were trained using the rubric(s), anchor sets, and training/qualifying sets provided by Smarter Balanced. Many of these sets were created during the original field-test scoring in 2014 and were approved by Smarter Balanced. Additional sets were created as new items were field-tested. The same anchor sets are used each year.

Additionally, MI conducts an annual review of the rater agreement and scoring materials to inform the development of item-specific, supplemental training materials. Supplemental materials are developed each summer and implemented in the subsequent operational administration. These additional materials are developed with a focus on challenging areas identified during the previous operational administration, as indicated by suboptimal rater accuracy (based on validity responses) and/or rater agreement.

Supplemental materials may address item- or response-specific concerns. Supplemental materials are also created for newly operational items for which MI identifies a need for additional examples. For instance, MI may find an approach to a mathematics item that was not encountered during field testing but appears frequently during operational scoring, or an uncommon but valid way to address a Research prompt that is not reflected in the existing rubric. In these cases, MI provides examples of these specific approaches along with guidance on how to score them correctly. MI also supplements materials to provide raters with additional guidance for content-wide challenging spots—such as full write conventions—or to help them more accurately identify responses that should be flagged as non-scorable.

The VSC score resource library

Following training, all training materials remained available to raters throughout scoring via the VSC Score Resource Library. This library included the item and rubric, the annotated anchor and practice sets, and any associated supplemental materials.

Training and practice

All raters, regardless of experience, were required to train on all anchor and training sets. Following training and practice, all raters were required to pass a qualification to prove that they understood and could apply the criteria accurately. The scoring director and team leaders had access to all practice and qualification results, which were reviewed to identify frequently mis-scored responses and inform initial monitoring and feedback needs.

Until a rater had trained and qualified successfully, the rater was not permitted to score operational student responses. Training was structured so that raters understood that all scoring decisions must be grounded in the training materials. In addition, raters learned how to navigate the anchor set, developed the knowledge and flexibility needed to evaluate or escalate them through the established leadership chain when concerns were identified (including at-risk alters, non-scorable verification, or unresolved scoring criteria), and maintained the consistency required to score all response accurately.

Training time

Rater training time varied by grade and content area. Training for SA brief write, reading, research, and mathematics items could typically be accomplished in one day, while training for essay items took up to five days to complete. Raters generally worked 3–7 hours per day. The hours worked per day were

flexible, based on the raters' shift preference and item(s) being scored. At a minimum, most raters scored 20 hours per week (day shift) or 15 hours per week (evening shift), with many scoring over 30 hours per week (day shift) or 20 hours per week (evening shift).

Qualification

Training and qualification design varied slightly depending on Smarter Balanced item type:

- ELA/L full write: Raters trained and qualified on a baseline training lesson for a grade and writing purpose (e.g., grade 3 narrative, grade 6 argumentative, etc.). After qualifying on the baseline, raters then completed qualifying sets for each item associated with that grade and purpose. Raters could only score those items for which they passed the qualifying set.
- ELA/L brief write, reading, and research SA: Raters trained and qualified on a baseline lesson within a specific grade band and target. Qualification on the baseline lesson permitted the rater to score all items in that grade band and target.
- Mathematics SA: Raters trained and qualified on baseline lessons within a specific grade band. Qualification on a baseline lesson permitted the rater to score that item and all items associated with it; for items with no associated items, training was for the specific item.

An additional validation stage was implemented to supplement the training and qualification process for full write, brief write, and research raters. After completing these initial steps, all prospective raters were required to score a set of validity responses. As in the qualification stage, raters were required to meet established accuracy standards during this validation in order to be approved to score operational responses for a given item.

Raters who failed to meet accuracy standards on the validity responses received continued retraining and were given additional opportunities to improve. Those who were unable to meet the required standards—despite having passed the qualification stage—were disqualified from scoring that item.

Scoring

When scoring, raters had access only to those items for which they had successfully trained and qualified. The handscoring system sorts individual student responses into sets of 5–10, grouped by item. When a rater is qualified to score multiple items, this approach eases cognitive load by presenting the rater with a scoring set in which all responses relate to the same item.

In addition to item-specific scoring expectations, a variety of substantive procedural and policy information was provided to each trainee during training. These included instructions for how to identify and flag certain types of responses as well as how to communicate with leadership during hand scoring.

Flagging nonscorable responses

Raters were trained to recognize non-scorable responses, and these responses were systematically routed to scoring supervisors for final condition-code assignment per Smarter Balanced requirements. For some item types, such as essays, condition-code responses were scored by scoring leaders trained to specialize in the scoring of these types of responses.

An “alerts” procedure was explained to raters during training sessions, where raters are trained to recognize “alerts” in their various forms, including those for suicide, criminal activity, alcohol or drug

use, extreme depression, violence, rape, sexual or physical abuse, self-harm, intent to harm others, and neglect.

The training process, including this additional information, ensured that raters were fully prepared to hand-score responses and understood all responsibilities and scoring requirements before they began operational scoring.

Minimizing rater bias

Multiple strategies were employed to minimize rater bias during scoring. First, raters did not have access to any student identifiers. Unless the students signed their names, wrote about their hometowns, or provided any other identifying information as part of their response, the raters had no knowledge of student characteristics. Second, all raters were trained using materials provided by Smarter Balanced, which were approved as unbiased examples of responses at the various score points. Training involved constant comparisons with the rubric and anchor papers so that raters' judgments were based solely on the scoring criteria. Finally, following training, a cycle of diagnosis and feedback was maintained to identify any issues. Specifically, raters were closely monitored during scoring, and any instances of raters making scoring decisions based on anything except the criteria were discussed with the raters. After this feedback had been provided, raters were further monitored, and if any continue to exhibit bias after receiving a reasonable amount of feedback, they were dismissed.

Score accuracy

A series of automated score verifications were implemented to further ensure the accuracy of scores. For example, a blank check was conducted, which reset scores when a condition code of "blank" was assigned to a response that had one or more characters in the response string (e.g., a response comprised of spaces or tabs). In this case, only after three independent raters had assigned a condition code of "blank" to a response that appeared blank, but which included characters in the response string, was the score recorded. A similar check was run when a score or condition code other than "blank" was assigned to a response that included no characters in the response string. Automatic resetting of double-scored responses when two raters assign non-adjacent scores, mismatched condition codes, or a combination of a condition code and a numeric score provided an additional score verification. In addition to automatically resetting and rescored these responses, the raters' information was captured in a report and reviewed by scoring directors, one of many tools used to determine retraining needs.

6.7.3 Rater Monitoring, Feedback, and Evaluation

During scoring, rater monitoring using validity responses and second read is performed, and rater performance metrics are generated and evaluated. Additionally, automated feedback based on recent rater performance is provided.

Rater monitoring

During operational scoring, five percent of the responses scored comprised pre-approved validity responses. Validity responses serve as benchmark responses as the most appropriate score for each validity response is predetermined by key stakeholders. A small set of validity responses is provided by Smarter Balanced for all vendors to use, and these are supplemented with responses selected and approved by MI scoring management. The validity pool includes anchor validity responses originating

from the field test administration.¹ The pool of validity responses is selected to be generally representative of operational responses, while ensuring sufficient examples of each score point. Validity results compare the score assigned by a rater to a validity response with the benchmark score of the same response. Validity responses provide a more direct measurement of rating quality than measures of inter-rater reliability (Raczynski et al., 2015).

Scoring accuracy

Scoring accuracy during handscoring was maintained by continuously assessing rater performance using validity responses. MI specifically evaluated how closely raters' scores aligned with the benchmark scores of these validity responses. Key performance measures included the agreement between rater and benchmark scores, quantified using Quadratic Weighted Kappa (QWK)², and the comparison of standardized mean differences (SMD) between the distributions of benchmark and rater-assigned scores.

Rater accuracy calibration and second read procedures

MI calibrates validity responses to fit a unidimensional Item Response Theory (IRT) model for each content area/item type. This approach involves transforming raters' validity response scores into accuracy scores. Specifically, if the rater's score matches the "true" score of the validity response, an accuracy score of 2 is assigned. If the rater's score is adjacent to the score of the validity response, an accuracy score of 1 is assigned. Otherwise, for scores that are non-adjacent, an accuracy score of 0 is assigned. All accuracy score data for validity responses and raters are then fitted to a Generalized Partial Credit Model (GPCM). Utilizing the resulting IRT parameters, MI calculates accuracy values for each rater based on a given set of validity responses. This calculation is conducted several times each day during scoring, providing real-time measures of rater accuracy.

In addition to validity responses, 15% of handscored responses received blind second reads, the results of which were used to calculate inter-rater reliability. To support interpretability, second reads were conducted exclusively by expert (i.e., highly accurate) raters, described below.

The VSC system automatically and randomly routed the requisite number of responses to raters for second reads and validity in an inconspicuous manner. In this way raters had no means of discerning whether they were scoring a first read, a second read, or a validity response. This system also prohibited raters from being eligible to score second reads for responses they had already scored.

Rater performance evaluation

The system automatically generated performance metrics several times a day based on the most recent data, providing raters and scoring managers with daily, automated summaries of rater performance. This ensured that all handscoring staff were kept informed of their current performance and any issues that needed attention. In addition to these daily summaries, detailed manager-level reports were produced to identify raters who required retraining or, if necessary, removal due to accuracy or productivity concerns.

¹ Responses and results of the 2014–15 Smarter Balanced field test administration were used to derive the base scale to which subsequent item parameters are aligned.

² QWK is a measure used to assess the agreement between two raters, accounting for the possibility of agreement occurring by chance and giving more weight to larger discrepancies between ratings.

These reports enabled scoring management to direct scoring leaders to specific VSC reports, allowing them to pinpoint the areas where individual raters needed improvement.

The monitoring system afforded the objective, dynamic identification of the most accurate raters, referred to as “expert raters.” Specifically, expert raters are those who demonstrate highly accurate and consistent scoring of validity responses. Rater status changed daily based on current rater performance to ensure that any rater drift did not negatively impact scoring accuracy. Expert rater status was a precondition for conducting second readings.

Automated feedback

During scoring, raters received automated feedback based on recent performance. The automated feedback system identifies raters who require additional feedback—based on accuracy metrics—and automatically notifies them to review a set of responses that reflect their observed scoring challenge(s). The system functions at the item level, thus providing feedback even to those raters with relatively high accuracy when the data identifies there are one or more items on which they can improve.

VSC provided real-time reports throughout the scoring effort. These reports were available for access by handscoring management and clients. Inter-rater reliability reports provide the percentage of exact, adjacent, and non-adjacent agreement for scorable responses. Score point frequency distribution reports provide the percentage per score point and include the mean and standard deviation for each item. Validity performance reports provide the percentage of exact, adjacent, and non-adjacent agreement for validity responses and were used to monitor drift. Validity performance reports are typically used to monitor and correct drift at the group level. If the data indicate that raters as a group are scoring validity responses either consistently high or consistently low, leadership will recalibrate the group by having raters review key training responses that reflect the types of responses being missed in validity. Leadership may also provide raters with a supplemental set of responses that help reinforce the lines for the various score-points and re-anchor the raters to the proper position, arresting groupwide drift.

Reports using item-level accuracy expectations identified any items not meeting the expected levels of agreement. Specifically, these reports indicated the difference between expected accuracy and current accuracy for each item. In this way, reports informed improvements to the scoring accuracy of all items.

Automated removal of raters and score resets were performed when item and rater performance failed to meet accuracy expectations. In these cases, all responses scored by a rater during a period of poor performance were reset and redistributed to other qualified raters for rescoring. By limiting raters to scoring relatively fewer items, this approach also maximized accuracy across items.

In addition to automated feedback, scoring leadership provided individualized feedback to raters based on their performance. Specifically, leadership reviewed the rater’s performance on validity responses to look for a trend that suggested the rater had drifted from the anchored responses. If such a trend was present, leadership tailored feedback specific to that rater, typically by presenting them with live responses they had mis-scored in a way that was reflective of their overall drift from the anchor set criteria and by providing targeted, thoughtful rationales for the “correct” scores.

Finally, as a supplement to automated assessments, team leaders spot-checked (i.e., read behind) raters’ scoring to ensure that the raters were on target, and conducted one-on-one retraining sessions to address any problems found. At the beginning of the project, team leaders read behind every rater every day; they became more selective about the frequency and number of read-behinds as raters became more proficient at scoring.

6.7.4 Rater Agreement

Rater inter-rater reliability (IRR) was computed based only on scorable responses (numeric scores) scored by two independent raters. Non-scorable responses (e.g., off-topic, off-purpose, or foreign-language responses) were scored by scoring leadership per the handscoring rules—and not by one expert and one random rater—and were thus excluded from IRR computations. For the handscored items, the human-human agreement was computed based on the 2024–2025 South Dakota summative assessment data.

In ELA/L essay (i.e., full writes) item responses were scored in three dimensions: conventions (0–2 rubric), evidence/elaboration (1–4 rubric), and organization/purpose (1–4 rubric). All ELA/L SA items were scored using a 0–2 rubric. Mathematics SA items were scored using 0–1, 0–2, or 0–3 rubrics.

Table 58 through Table 60 provide a summary of the human-human IRR based on items with a sample size greater than or equal to 50. For Mathematics and ELA/L essay items, the tables show the majority of the items administered. For ELA/L SA items, relatively fewer items reached a sample size greater than or equal to 50, and thus a subset of the items administered are represented in the tables. The IRR is presented with the mean percent exact agreement, minimum and maximum percent exact agreements, combined percent exact and adjacent agreement, and the mean, minimum and maximum QWK. Additionally, the Tables present the average number of responses, as well as minimum and maximum number of responses to a given item.

Table 58. Inter-Rater Agreement for ELA/L Short-Answer Items

Grade	Number of Items	Number of Responses			% Exact			% (Exact + Adjacent)	QWK		
		Mean	Min	Max	Mean	Min	Max		Mean	Min	Max
3	6	55.3	50	59	81.6	73.7	89.5	100.0	0.80	0.74	0.84
4	2	54.0	54	54	75.0	72.2	77.8	100.0	0.75	0.74	0.77
5	2	51.0	51	51	78.4	76.5	80.4	100.0	0.80	0.79	0.81
6	15	70.9	50	118	72.2	64.1	89.7	100.0	0.66	0.54	0.92
7	8	67.4	50	132	68.1	56.9	77.4	100.0	0.67	0.52	0.80
8	3	51.7	50	55	72.9	63.6	80.0	100.0	0.74	0.66	0.83
11	7	68.6	53	92	66.5	58.3	78.2	100.0	0.60	0.48	0.76

Table 59. Inter-Rater Agreement for ELA/L Essay Items

Grade	Trait	Number of Items	Number of Responses			% Exact			% (Exact + Adjacent)	QWK		
			Mean	Min	Max	Mean	Min	Max		Mean	Min	Max
4	Conventions	1	51.0	51	51	80.4	80.4	80.4	100.0	0.82	0.82	0.82
	Evid/Elab	1	51.0	51	51	62.7	62.7	62.7	100.0	0.63	0.63	0.63
	Org/Purp	1	51.0	51	51	62.7	62.7	62.7	100.0	0.64	0.64	0.64
5	Conventions	1	50.0	50	50	74.0	74.0	74.0	100.0	0.67	0.67	0.67
	Evid/Elab	1	50.0	50	50	76.0	76.0	76.0	100.0	0.80	0.80	0.80
	Org/Purp	1	50.0	50	50	76.0	76.0	76.0	100.0	0.80	0.80	0.80
6	Conventions	12	62.3	51	70	74.6	67.2	80.6	100.0	0.70	0.59	0.82
	Evid/Elab	12	62.3	51	70	69.3	53.7	78.8	100.0	0.72	0.62	0.81
	Org/Purp	12	62.3	51	70	69.8	55.2	78.8	100.0	0.72	0.63	0.81
7	Conventions	3	50.0	50	50	74.7	70.0	78.0	100.0	0.64	0.61	0.67
	Evid/Elab	3	50.0	50	50	71.3	68.0	74.0	100.0	0.72	0.70	0.75

Grade	Trait	Number of Items	Number of Responses			% Exact			% (Exact + Adjacent)	QWK		
			Mean	Min	Max	Mean	Min	Max		Mean	Min	Max
8	Org/Purp	3	50.0	50	50	70.7	66.0	74.0	100.0	0.71	0.67	0.73
	Conventions	2	50.5	50	51	74.3	74.0	74.5	100.0	0.70	0.68	0.71
	Evid/Elab	2	50.5	50	51	61.4	56.9	66.0	100.0	0.68	0.62	0.74
	Org/Purp	2	50.5	50	51	61.4	56.9	66.0	100.0	0.68	0.62	0.74

Note. 1) Evid/Elab: Evidence/Elaboration, Org/Purp: Organization/Purpose

2) Grades 3 and 11 essay items did not reach a sample size greater than or equal to 50; therefore, inter-Rater Agreement is not represented in the table.

Table 60. Inter-Rater Agreement for Mathematics Items

Grade	Score Point Range	Number of Items	Number of Responses			% Exact			% (Exact + Adjacent)	QWK ^a		
			Mean	Min	Max	Mean	Min	Max		Mean	Min	Max
3	0–1	6	72.5	58	82	89.4	82.4	93.2	100.0	NA	NA	NA
4	0–1	8	69.4	50	80	90.3	82.3	98.0	100.0	NA	NA	NA
5	0–1	5	59.4	56	64	97.3	94.8	100.0	100.0	NA	NA	NA
6	0–1	6	88.0	62	101	96.4	90.1	100.0	100.0	NA	NA	NA
7	0–1	10	89.5	66	107	95.4	77.9	100.0	100.0	NA	NA	NA
8	0–1	9	110.6	91	121	85.9	73.9	100.0	100.0	NA	NA	NA
11	0–1	3	85.0	75	100	94.5	92.0	96.3	100.0	NA	NA	NA
3	0–2	18	77.7	62	88	88.3	80.0	96.3	100.0	0.88	0.75	0.97
4	0–2	20	73.4	54	78	90.5	79.2	100.0	100.0	0.87	0.43	1.00
5	0–2	29	55.9	50	63	89.2	76.8	98.1	100.0	0.80	0.35	0.98
6	0–2	30	90.1	53	101	89.4	73.3	98.9	100.0	0.83	0.60	0.99
7	0–2	12	99.9	67	112	87.6	81.6	95.9	100.0	0.81	0.63	0.95
8	0–2	12	103.3	55	119	89.2	76.7	99.0	100.0	0.86	0.61	0.96
11	0–2	11	87.6	60	104	91.4	75.0	100.0	100.0	0.81	0.35	1.00
3	0-3	2	81.5	80	83	88.3	86.3	90.4	100.0	0.92	0.91	0.93
5	0-3	6	56.0	53	59	88.4	78.9	98.3	100.0	0.86	0.69	0.96
7	0-3	1	109.0	109	109	95.4	95.4	95.4	100.0	0.96	0.96	0.96
8	0-3	4	103.0	82	118	77.9	76.3	79.3	100.0	0.92	0.90	0.94
11	0-3	7	98.3	94	103	87.4	83.7	92.6	100.0	0.71	0.19	0.91

Note. ^aQWK is not presented for 0–1 items due to the binary score scale.

6.8 AUTOMATED SCORING

MI’s PEG automated scoring technology was used to score eligible SA and essay items in ELA/L and SA items in mathematics. This section describes PEG, the model training and validation sample and process, and the automated scoring process, concluding with the human-machine (HM) agreement statistics.

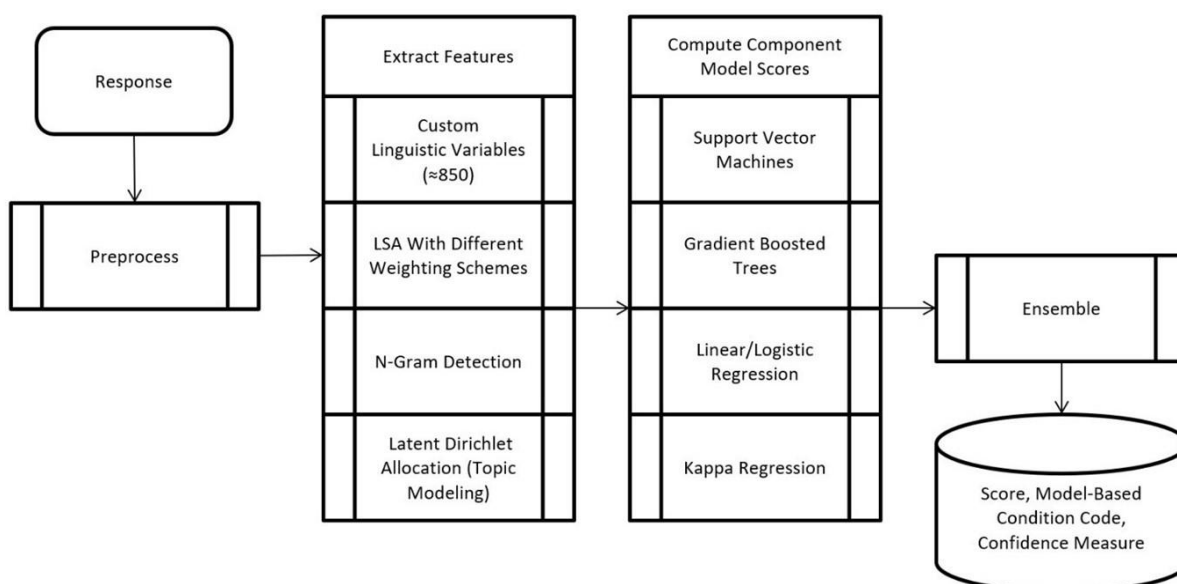
6.8.1 Project Essay Grade (PEG)

Figure 13 presents the architecture of MI’s PEG engine. During engine training, this architecture allows PEG to generate hundreds of custom linguistic (rule-based) features, which are determined by codified English linguistic rules such as syntax and semantics and extracted from representative student responses.

In addition to rule-based features, PEG also includes features extracted by Latent Semantic Analysis (LSA) and Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) procedures.

PEG’s item and trait specific scoring models use computed features from the training responses along with the scores assigned to them by expert human raters. Using hundreds of parameterizations across several machine-learning algorithms, via cross-validation and optimization, PEG determines which algorithms best predict the expert-assigned scores. These algorithms draw on many of the latest advances in the field of machine learning to generate linear and non-linear classification and regression models. These approaches typically result in 100 candidate models for a single item or trait. PEG then uses an ensembling procedure to combine the best models into a robust final model. The ensembling procedure utilizes linear regression, where the objective is to maximize a continuous relaxation of QWK, thus maximizing PEG’s agreement with the expert human raters.

Figure 13. PEG Architecture



The sections that follow describe the process used to train and validate the engine, followed by a description and results of the hybrid human-automated scoring process.

6.8.2 Model Training and Validation

Sample

Automated scoring models were not created for items that had an insufficient quantity of training responses. This was the case for items with low exposure to students, as dictated by the adaptive testing algorithm. Table 61 shows that pretrained models existed for 650 items, thus, no additional training was conducted in preparation for the spring 2025 administration. The remainder of this section describes the process used to train and validate the existing models associated with the 650 items.

Table 61. Number of Items Eligible for Model Training, by Grade and Subject Area

Grade	Item with existing model			Items without models		
	ELA/L		Mathematics	ELA/L		Mathematics
	Short-Answer	Essay		Short-Answer	Essay	
3	13	19	40	0	0	0
4	15	22	42	0	0	0
5	14	21	69	0	0	0
6	34	16	45	0	0	0
7	43	19	21	0	0	0
8	50	15	31	0	0	0
11	55	21	45	0	0	0
Total	224	133	293	0	0	0

Training Data

Student responses used for training and validation were sourced from the 2018–2019 through 2023–2024 Smarter Balanced operational test administrations. Responses were randomly sampled from available on-grade responses in the operational population. For each item, the sample included 1500–2000 responses, stratified by score point. The score of record used to train the engine was the score assigned to each response by an expert rater.

For each item, the sample was divided as follows:

- Approximately 85% of the responses were assigned to a training set used to build the model.
- Approximately 15% of the responses were assigned to a validation set used to evaluate the accuracy of the model.

Model Training

Essay scoring model

Component model training requires inputs of response “features.” For items that assess writing quality (e.g., essays), PEG processes the responses and calculates approximately 850 linguistic variables that describe the responses in mathematical terms. These variables range in complexity from simple to highly complex. Examples of simple variables are measures such as word count or sentence length, word choice and spelling errors, and the number and severity of grammatical errors. The most complex variables measure patterns that represent style, fluidity, smoothness of transitions, clarity of communication, and other sophisticated concepts.

To build an essay scoring model, PEG examines the variables and text features of responses, correlates them with the human scores previously assigned, and identifies those variables that have high predictive value.

Content scoring model

For content-based items (e.g., SA mathematics items), the number of variables is unknown until the models are built. Because the content varies significantly from item to item, and therefore from model to model, PEG examines training responses and identifies the variables that most accurately capture the

content in question. To do this, MI uses techniques like LSA, N-Gram Detection, and LDA. To further refine the variable generation process, MI built a computer language to perform a simultaneous search over semantic, lexicographic and syntactic features of responses.

To build a content scoring model, PEG analyzes training responses and calculates features that pertain to the content in question. PEG then sends the features to hundreds of different algorithms that compete to see which algorithms best associate the features with the human-assigned scores. These algorithms draw on many of the latest advances in the field of machine learning to generate both linear and non-linear models. Examples of approaches used include Support Vector Machines, Gradient Boosted Trees, and various regression approaches.

Component models

Note that building component models for each item—and for multi-dimensional items, each trait or dimension—prevents variables from being generalized across items or traits, allowing PEG to faithfully reproduce humans’ application of the scoring rubrics. This means that the resultant models are reasonably robust to gaming attempts, as each represents a unique valuation of the item- (or trait-) specific text features similarly valued by expert professional raters.

The approaches just described typically result in 100 models for a single item or essay trait. Ensembling is the process of selecting the “best of the best” models, to result in a small set of strong, yet dissimilar component models. A linear-kappa regression is used to determine the model ensembling weights. The more accurate a given model is, the more weight it carries in the final score decision.

Scoring a response involves first preprocessing the response. The purpose of preprocessing is twofold: (1) create raw and canonical representations of the response from which features can be extracted, and (2) filter out responses for which the scoring model does not apply (e.g., blank or insufficient responses). The response is then scored with the associated component models. A final score is produced performing a weighted sum using the ensembling weights.

Model Validation

Model validation involved a two-phase approach: an initial validation using held-out training data and a secondary validation using operational data from the current administration.

Initial Validation

Initial validation was conducted by applying each model to score a respective validation set of responses. The validation set is independent of the training set, in that none of the responses it contains have been used to build the model. It should be noted that two or more professional raters will not always agree on what score to give a student’s response; therefore, modeling is considered successful when the engine produces scores that agree with professional raters to the same or greater extent than the raters agree with each other. The initial evaluation was made using the criteria shown in Table 62, based on criteria proposed by Williamson, Xi, and Breyer (2012). While Williamson et al. (2012) recommend a QWK of 0.70 between human and machine scores for normally distributed data, a QWK threshold of 0.65 was adopted due to the prevalence of skewed distributions in response data. For human-human score agreement, the degradation (QWK) criterion of 0.07 is slightly more stringent than proposed by Williamson et al. (2012). The evaluation process was used for both the item-specific scoring models and the condition code models.

Table 62. Initial Model Evaluation Criteria

Criterion	Threshold
Agreement of automated scores with human scores	$QWK_{H:M} \geq 0.65$
Degradation from the human-human score agreement	$QWK_{H:H} - QWK_{H:M} < 0.07$
Standardized mean score difference between human and automated scores	$ SMD_{H:M} < 0.15$

Note. QWK = Quadratic weighted kappa. SMD = Standardized mean difference. H:H = human:human. H:M = human:machine.

Bias Considerations

Subgroup differences in responses to constructed response items can introduce construct-irrelevant variance in scores, in turn threatening valid score interpretations. MI investigated potential sources of bias annually, for newly modeled items, as part of the initial validation process using available data from previous summative administration. **Error! Reference source not found.** shows the demographic variables and categories considered. MI received separate data files containing hand-score data and student demographic data associated with responses.

Table 63. Demographic Variables and Categories

Demographic Variable	Categories
Gender	Male Female
Race/Ethnicity	American Indian or Alaska Native Asian Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander Filipino Hispanic or Latino Black or African American White Two or More Races
LEP Status	LEP Non LEP

For each new item being modeled, we analyzed a subgroup if there were at least 10 observations (human–machine score pairs). A subgroup was flagged for potential bias if the absolute SMD between human and machine scores exceeded 0.125 and the difference was statistically significant, controlling the family-wise error rate at $\alpha = 0.05$ via a Bonferroni correction (i.e., using a Bonferroni-adjusted two-sided α for each subgroup comparison).

Secondary Validation

All models associated with items that passed initial validation were subject to a secondary validation at the start of the spring 2025 administration using an early sample of operational responses from that administration. This sample was comprised of the first available 500 responses/item across states, at a minimum. Responses from this sample were scored by both the automated scoring engine and an expert rater. During this stage the human score was reported as the score of record. If the PEG scores were found to be consistent with the scores assigned by the expert raters, subsequent student responses for a given item were scored by PEG using a hybrid human-automated scoring approach. If not, the item was

handscored. Table 64 presents the secondary validation criteria. Note that since expert raters are the only humans that score the secondary validation sample, a second human score is not collected and thus QWK degradation is not part of the criteria.

Table 64. Secondary Validation Criteria

Criterion	Threshold
Agreement of automated scores with human scores	$QWK_{H:M} \geq 0.65$
Standardized mean score difference between human and automated scores	$ SMD_{H:M} \leq 0.15$

Note. QWK = Quadratic weighted kappa. SMD = Standardized mean difference. H:M = human:machine.

Table 65 presents the secondary validation results. Of the 650 items with existing models subject to secondary validation, models associated with 540 of the items (83.1%) passed all secondary evaluation criteria.

Table 65. Summary of Secondary Validation Results, by Grade and Subject Area

Grade	Items with all Models Passing Initial Validation Criteria			Items with all Models Passing Secondary Validation Criteria		
	ELA/L		Mathematics	ELA/L		Mathematics
	Short-Answer	Essay		Short-Answer	Essay	
3	13	19	40	9	12	38
4	15	22	42	14	19	37
5	14	21	69	12	11	60
6	34	16	45	31	10	41
7	43	19	21	31	14	18
8	50	15	31	43	13	24
11	55	21	45	50	14	39
Total	224	133	293	190	93	257

Live Training and Validation

Additionally, in April-May 2025 when operational scoring was underway, a live training and validation effort was undertaken for those handscored items lacking validated models from prior efforts but having sufficient 2025 operational responses to train and validate new models. In general, these items were associated with models that had previously failed an initial and/or secondary validation. In such cases, training with 2025 operational responses offered potential to improve model performance. All models associated with these items were thus trained using either exclusively 2025 responses (when a minimum of 1,400 2025 responses/item existed) or 2025 responses supplemented with 2024 responses. In either case, the validation sets consisted exclusively of 2025 responses. Because this live validation involved operational data, it was unnecessary to conduct a secondary validation.

Table 66 summarizes the results of the live training and validation. Of the 261 items associated with models that underwent live training and validation, models associated with 214 of the items (82%) passed all evaluation criteria. Following initial validation, secondary validation, and live training and validation, a total of 754 items, comprised of 271 ELA/L SA, 173 essay, and 310 mathematics SA, were scored using a hybrid process, described next.

Table 66. Summary of Live Training and Validation Results, by Grade and Subject Area

Grade	Items Trained			Items with all Models Passing Initial Validation Criteria		
	ELA/L		Mathematics	ELA/L		Mathematics
	Short-Answer	Essay		Short-Answer	Essay	
3	8	10	12	8	9	7
4	3	4	13	3	3	8
5	4	15	26	4	15	10
6	14	10	10	11	10	6
7	21	13	10	19	13	8
8	28	15	11	25	14	10
11	13	16	5	11	16	4
Total	91	83	87	81	80	53

6.8.3 Automated Scoring Process

Hybrid Scoring Process

As all models associated with a given item passed secondary validation (or live validation), subsequent student responses were scored using a hybrid human-automated scoring approach. If all models associated with a given item did not pass secondary validation, responses associated with the item continued to be hand-scored by the larger pool of raters. These raters were monitored and evaluated as described in the handscoring section above.

Figure 14 shows the response routing rules under the hybrid scoring process. In the hybrid model, responses with associated scoring models were first pre-processed for automated scoring; “alert” responses with an alert and certain non-scorable cases (e.g., insufficient text to score or high proportion of copied prompt text) were filtered and flagged. Tables 67 and 68 present the flags and model settings used to indicate condition codes as defined in the handscoring criteria. **Error! Reference source not found.**For example, PEG flags responses that lack proper development, lack enough content to be scored, are written in an unsupported language, or contain vulgar language or other alert words or phrases that indicate that the response should be reviewed by the client. Standard scoring responses were then sent to the automated scoring engine, where text features were extracted, the scoring model(s) applied, and responses assigned a score and a measure of score confidence. Low-confidence responses straddle the lines between score point values on a rubric and are difficult to score accurately because they exhibit characteristics of multiple score points. Higher-confidence responses received the engine score as the score of record, while lower-confidence responses were routed directly to expert raters, who assigned the score of record. Note that the expert rater pool was dynamic, and raters were added or removed several times each day based on their current performance. Overall, approximately 15% of responses to engine-scored items were flagged as low confidence and scored by expert raters. Upon receipt and validation of each response, MI routed responses for those items eligible for automated scoring to PEG and the remainder of the responses to the VSC handscoring system.

Figure 14. Response Routing Rules

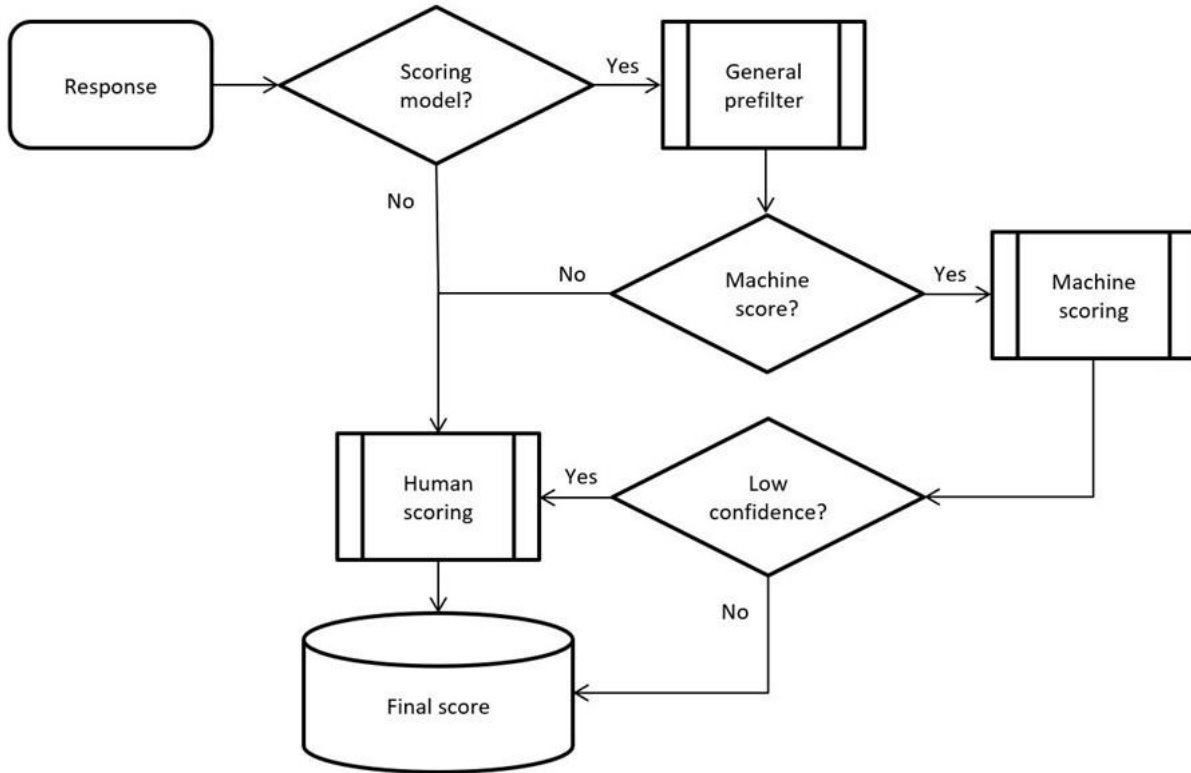


Table 67. Flags Currently Established

FLAG	USAGE DESCRIPTION	*SCORABLE
0	Standard scoring	YES
200	Too few words (i.e., blank, or extremely short response)	NO
240	Too long (i.e., too many characters submitted; 30,000 characters is the current limit)	NO
250	Expected essay fields are null or empty; set when nulls are discovered within the processing pipeline. Not client configurable.	NO
400	Unexpected item_id (i.e., the item_id is not one of the items PEG AI has modeled)	NO
500	Scorable alert (i.e., an essay which seems perfectly scorable, but happens to contain alert language); client may configure alert scanning to “on” or “off”, but other changes are not recommended.	YES
501-599	Non-scorable alert (i.e., alert language was detected, and the essay could not be scored). If alert scanning is “on”, then any code in the 500-599 range is possible. Not client configurable.	NO
620	Applies when the ratio of copied characters exceeds specified threshold (e.g.; 0.5 means 50%). Can be used for all Smarter items for which prompt content was provided.	YES
650	Insufficient Condition Code (I): Response holds strong general resemblance to those marked ‘Insufficient’ by human readers, but is nonetheless PEG scorable (and, so scores are provided). <i>PEG Configuration:</i> Item agnostic; but for 2021 onwards, applicable to ELA/L items only.	YES

FLAG	USAGE DESCRIPTION	*SCORABLE
660	Language Non-English Condition Code (L): Response holds strong general resemblance to those marked 'Non-English' by human readers, but is nonetheless PEG scorable (and, so scores are provided). <i>PEG Configuration:</i> Item agnostic; but for 2021 onwards, applicable to ELA/L items only.	YES
670	Off-Topic: Applicable to ELA/L essays only and is item specific in the PEG environment.	YES
680	Off-Mode: Applicable to ELA/L essays only and is item specific in the PEG environment.	YES
900	Timeout (i.e., unable to complete essay score prediction within time limits). Not client configurable.	NO
950	System error processing essay (i.e., internal PEG error). Not client configurable.	NO

Note. Scorable flags indicate instances where PEG will return both the applicable flag and a score.

Table 68. Model Setting

TYPE	ASSOCIATED FLAG(S)	DESCRIPTION	VALUES
Minimum Words	200	Triggers if there are fewer than the associated value of word-tokens in a response. The flag may also appear regardless of setting if the response is blank.	0-15
Alert	501-599	Current setting (PREDC...1) is for the standard alert scan.	Standard settings in place
Plagiarism	620	Prompt and source material text is included in model configuration.	50% of prompt and source material characters triggers flag

Scoring Infrastructure

During the automated scoring process, response data are transferred from CAI to MI’s IT project team. Data are then passed to PEG from the IT project team via an internal server, at which point they are scored by the PEG Streaming Scoring Service. Scored batches are typically completed within one day. All data are then transferred from PEG to the IT project team, who ultimately sends the data/scores back to CAI.

PEG Streaming Scoring Service is a cloud-deployed, horizontally scalable, distributed parallel computing application. In practical terms, the service is hosted in a cloud computing environment, such as Microsoft Azure, rather than in a traditional data center. The overall service is composed of several individual components that are deployed independently and can be scaled up and down as load demands. The services communicate with one another using a service bus to provide resilience and decoupling.

Score Delivery

As scores were assigned by PEG, MI verified and delivered them to CAI. MI received confirmation from CAI that each response had been received and had passed data validation.

Quality Assurance

MI’s hybrid scoring approach included numerous quality assurance steps. First, models were trained exclusively using scores assigned by expert raters and the associated responses. Second, each automated scoring model was subjected to an evaluation process, as described in the model validation section. This involved evaluating the quality of the human-scored training data, as well as comparing the performance of the engine to the performance of expert raters. Third, for models trained using responses from prior administrations, the generalizability of each model to the 2024–2025 operational responses were confirmed via a secondary validation. Finally, quality was further assured during scoring by routing a minimum of 15% of the responses that were most different from the training responses to expert raters and assigning the human score.

“Alert” Procedures

MI implemented a process for routing any student responses flagged by the automated scoring engine as possible alerts to expert raters for review. Any responses identified as alerts by expert raters and/or scoring leadership are sent to CAI, who associates the pertinent student information with the response(s) and contacts the state for follow-up.

6.8.4 Human-Machine Agreement

This section summarizes the HM agreement for all items scored using a hybrid process in spring 2025 including (1) items passing initial model validation, (2) items passing secondary validation, and (3) items passing live validation.

Table 69 through Table 71 present the HM agreement rates on the initial and secondary validation samples for ELA/L SA items, ELA/L essay items, and mathematics SA items, respectively. The human-machine agreement was computed based on the combined data across all states with hybrid scoring in the 2024–2025 summative assessment.

Table 69. Human-Machine Agreement for ELA/L Short-Answer Items on Initial and Secondary Validation Samples, by Grade

Grade	Initial Validation				Secondary Validation			
	Number of Items	% Exact	% Exact & Adj.	QWK	Number of Items	% Exact	% Exact & Adj.	QWK
3	9	79.6	99.6	0.81	9	83.3	99.8	0.80
4	14	80.1	99.8	0.84	14	82.0	99.8	0.82
5	12	75.4	99.6	0.81	12	79.1	99.9	0.82
6	31	78.7	99.5	0.81	31	79.0	99.6	0.76
7	31	76.3	99.4	0.79	31	78.1	99.6	0.76
8	43	76.2	99.5	0.78	43	75.4	99.6	0.76
11	50	77.2	99.5	0.79	50	76.4	99.6	0.77

Table 70. Human-Machine Agreement for ELA/L Essay Items on Initial and Secondary Validation Samples, by Grade

Grade	Trait	Initial Validation				Secondary Validation			
		Number of Items	% Exact	% Exact & Adj.	QWK	Number of Items	% Exact	% Exact & Adj.	QWK
3	Conventions	12	72.1	99.8	0.73	12	72.0	99.5	0.71
	Evid/Elab	12	77.7	99.3	0.83	12	76.2	99.4	0.78
	Org/Purp	12	75.3	99.7	0.82	12	76.9	99.6	0.79
4	Conventions	18	69.5	98.9	0.74	18	68.9	99.1	0.72
	Evid/Elab	18	72.7	99.6	0.84	18	73.7	99.5	0.79
	Org/Purp	18	72.2	99.2	0.83	18	74.5	99.5	0.79
5	Conventions	10	71.7	99.6	0.70	10	71.1	99.7	0.71
	Evid/Elab	10	72.0	99.2	0.81	10	73.3	99.5	0.81
	Org/Purp	10	72.2	99.6	0.83	10	73.6	99.4	0.81
6	Conventions	10	75.5	99.0	0.72	10	75.5	99.4	0.74
	Evid/Elab	10	71.4	98.7	0.78	10	74.7	99.4	0.79
	Org/Purp	10	74.5	98.7	0.81	10	75.6	99.6	0.80
7	Conventions	14	76.1	99.7	0.70	14	73.0	99.5	0.71
	Evid/Elab	14	75.6	99.7	0.83	14	77.7	99.8	0.82
	Org/Purp	14	75.6	99.6	0.84	14	77.6	99.7	0.81
8	Conventions	13	77.0	99.1	0.71	13	74.4	99.6	0.72
	Evid/Elab	13	73.7	99.1	0.82	13	76.0	99.7	0.82
	Org/Purp	13	75.1	99.7	0.84	13	76.0	99.8	0.82
11	Conventions	14	79.1	99.7	0.75	14	78.4	99.7	0.73
	Evid/Elab	14	76.5	99.7	0.86	14	76.0	99.7	0.83
	Org/Purp	14	76.4	99.7	0.86	14	76.1	99.8	0.83

Note. Evid/Elab: Evidence/Elaboration, Org/Purp: Organization/Purpose

Table 71. Human-Machine Agreement for Mathematics Items on Initial and Secondary Validation Samples, by Grade

Grade	Score Point Range	Initial Validation				Secondary Validation			
		Number of Items	% Exact	% Exact & Adj.	QWK	Number of Items	% Exact	% Exact & Adj.	QWK ^a
3	0-1	11	94.2	100.0	NA	11	95.5	100.0	NA
4	0-1	5	91.0	100.0	NA	5	94.2	100.0	NA
5	0-1	9	92.6	100.0	NA	9	94.3	100.0	NA
6	0-1	8	96.6	100.0	NA	8	96.0	100.0	NA
7	0-1	8	96.9	100.0	NA	8	95.8	100.0	NA
8	0-1	4	90.2	100.0	NA	4	92.7	100.0	NA
11	0-1	15	95.6	100.0	NA	15	95.5	100.0	NA
3	0-2	23	90.8	99.3	0.91	23	91.8	99.4	0.90
4	0-2	28	91.0	99.7	0.91	28	92.8	99.8	0.90
5	0-2	48	88.3	99.6	0.88	48	87.4	99.6	0.85
6	0-2	33	88.9	99.6	0.86	33	89.1	99.5	0.85
7	0-2	10	87.0	99.4	0.80	10	87.0	99.5	0.79
8	0-2	18	89.1	99.8	0.89	18	90.7	99.7	0.88

Grade	Score Point Range	Initial Validation				Secondary Validation			
		Number of Items	% Exact	% Exact & Adj.	QWK	Number of Items	% Exact	% Exact & Adj.	QWK ^a
11	0-2	17	89.1	99.4	0.88	17	90.8	99.5	0.87
3	0-3	4	91.1	99.8	0.96	4	91.7	99.8	0.95
4	0-3	4	87.9	99.8	0.94	4	87.5	99.7	0.92
5	0-3	3	90.9	98.4	0.94	3	90.3	98.9	0.91
8	0-3	2	78.2	98.0	0.88	2	75.0	97.9	0.88
11	0-3	5	85.5	99.0	0.89	5	89.8	99.3	0.90

Note. ^aQWK is not presented for 0-1 items due to the binary score scale.

Table 72 through Table 74 present the HM agreement rates on the live validation samples for ELA/L SA items, ELA/L essay items, and mathematics SA item, respectively. Recall live training did not involve secondary validation since 2024–2025 operational data were used to build the models.

Table 72. Human-Machine Agreement for ELA/L Short-Answer Items on Live Validation Sample, by Grade

Grade	Live Validation			
	Number of Items	% Exact	% Exact & Adj.	QWK
3	8	80.2	99.6	0.78
4	3	78.9	99.4	0.78
5	4	78.0	99.9	0.80
6	11	80.0	99.7	0.75
7	19	78.1	99.6	0.74
8	25	78.0	99.7	0.75
11	11	77.9	99.8	0.74

Table 73. Human-Machine Agreement for ELA/L Essay Items on Live Validation Sample, by Grade

Grade	Trait	Live Validation			
		Number of Items	% Exact	% Exact & Adj.	QWK
3	Conventions	8	75.0	99.6	0.72
	Evid/Elab	8	76.6	99.2	0.77
	Org/Purp	8	75.9	99.1	0.77
4	Conventions	3	73.0	99.4	0.74
	Evid/Elab	3	68.5	97.6	0.72
	Org/Purp	3	70.6	98.2	0.76
5	Conventions	12	74.5	99.7	0.71
	Evid/Elab	12	74.3	99.5	0.80
	Org/Purp	12	75.1	99.6	0.81
6	Conventions	10	76.1	99.6	0.74
	Evid/Elab	10	73.0	99.6	0.81
	Org/Purp	10	73.0	99.7	0.80
7	Conventions	12	75.5	99.8	0.73
	Evid/Elab	12	76.4	99.8	0.84

Grade	Trait	Live Validation			
		Number of Items	% Exact	% Exact & Adj.	QWK
	Org/Purp	12	76.7	99.4	0.84
8	Conventions	14	76.8	99.7	0.73
	Evid/Elab	14	75.4	99.7	0.83
	Org/Purp	14	74.7	99.8	0.83
11	Conventions	16	77.3	99.4	0.73
	Evid/Elab	16	77.1	99.9	0.85
	Org/Purp	16	77.1	99.8	0.85

Notes.: 1) Evid/Elab: Evidence/Elaboration, Org/Purp: Organization/Purpose
2) The number of items is slightly fewer than in Table 10 for grades 3, 5, and 7 due to missing data.

Table 74. Human-Machine Agreement for Mathematics Items on Live Validation Samples, by Grade

Grade	Score Point Range	Live Validation			
		Number of Items	% Exact	% Exact & Adj.	QWK ^a
3	0–1	1	92.9	100.0	NA
4	0–1	5	89.6	100.0	NA
5	0–1	2	94.4	100.0	NA
6	0–1	1	86.4	100.0	NA
7	0–1	3	94.9	100.0	NA
8	0–1	5	85.3	100.0	NA
11	0–1	1	92.0	100.0	NA
3	0–2	6	88.8	99.7	0.89
4	0–2	3	86.0	99.1	0.83
5	0–2	7	85.1	99.4	0.77
6	0–2	5	89.8	99.1	0.84
7	0–2	4	87.2	98.6	0.86
8	0–2	3	81.2	99.4	0.82
11	0–2	2	91.1	100.0	0.91
5	0–3	1	79.5	97.7	0.86
7	0–3	1	88.2	98.1	0.86
8	0–3	2	82.5	97.7	0.93
11	0–3	1	78.4	99.0	0.85

Note. ^aQWK is not presented for 0-1 items due to the binary score scale.

6.8.5 Recommendations

The 2023–2024 summative administration identified two key areas for improvement: (a) strengthening automated oversight and refining accuracy monitoring, which led to expanding the additional rater-validation stage to all ELA/L item types and adding mean-score distribution checks alongside QWK; and (b) addressing production risk by improving rater availability and hours worked. The 2023–2024 technical report also noted variability in some ELA short-answer items, where relatively low minimum QWK values indicated a need for targeted calibration.

In 2025, MI piloted a core pool of seasonal full-time contractors with guaranteed hours and introduced higher minimum work-hour requirements. While uptake into the core pool was lower than anticipated, those who accepted the role performed well, and the minimum-hours requirement was successfully implemented. These changes supported consistency and reliability; however, there remain opportunities to further improve score accuracy and manage workflows to ensure that 100% of responses are scored on time.

Maintaining and refining the core seasonal contractor model could strengthen performance and reliability. A guaranteed-hours arrangement for raters and team leaders—paired with higher compensation tied to training participation, qualification results, production, and accuracy—would help retain skilled staff. Recruitment efforts could begin earlier in the year, with contingent offers extended ahead of peak scoring months to secure commitments. Completion incentives could reinforce season-long engagement, while flexibility in scheduling (including evening and weekend options) should be balanced with strict enforcement of the 37.5-hour weekly minimum. Clear accountability measures and early identification of underperforming contractors would allow for timely reassignment or contract termination, keeping the pool productive and high-quality throughout the scoring season.

In addition, certain ELA short-answer items with a history of lower QWK values should continue to be a focus for targeted calibration. Building on the enhanced validity pool and monitoring tools introduced in 2025, MI could deploy supplemental materials—such as annotated exemplars, guided scoring exercises, and focused discussions of common scoring pitfalls—for these specific items. Intensified calibration at the start of the scoring season, followed by ongoing monitoring and rapid feedback when accuracy falls below thresholds, would help sustain reliability for these more challenging items and reinforce consistency across the scoring population.

Finally, reducing production pressure could be supported by improving rater preparation prior to operational scoring. Training could incorporate learning-science principles while continuing to comply with Smarter Balanced training requirements, emphasizing both accuracy and efficiency from the outset. Strategies might include breaking content into manageable portions, providing scaffolded examples, and offering regular deliberate practice with varied responses and timely feedback. Encouraging raters to reflect on and explain their scoring decisions could further strengthen consistency. Advancement through training could remain contingent on meeting clear performance thresholds, with targeted remediation for those who do not qualify.

7 REPORTING AND INTERPRETING SCORES

The Reporting System generates a set of online score reports that describes student performance for students, parents, educators, and other stakeholders. The online score reports are produced immediately after students complete tests and handscored items are scored. Because the score reports on students' performance are updated each time students complete tests and handscored items are scored, authorized users (e.g., school principals, teachers) can quickly access information on students' performance and use it to improve student learning. In addition to individual student's score reports, the Reporting System also produces aggregate score reports by class, school, district, and state. The timely accessibility of aggregate score reports help users monitor students' performance in each subject by grade, evaluate the effectiveness of instructional strategies, and inform the adoption of strategies to improve student learning and teaching during the school year.

This section contains a description of the types of scores reported in the Reporting System and a description of the ways to interpret and use these scores in detail.

7.1 REPORTING SYSTEM

The Reporting System is designed to help educators and students answer questions about how well students have performed on English language arts/literacy (ELA/L) and mathematics assessments. The Reporting System is the online tool that provides all stakeholders with timely, relevant score reports. The Reporting System for the South Dakota assessments was designed such that score reports are easy to read and understand for all stakeholders. This is achieved by using plain, non-technical language to facilitate review by parents and the general public. The Reporting System is also designed to present student performance in a uniform format. For example, similar colors are used for groups of similar elements, such as achievement levels, throughout the design. This design strategy allows readers to compare similar elements and avoid comparing dissimilar elements.

Generally, the Reporting System provides two categories of online score reports: (1) aggregate score reports, and (2) student score reports. Table 75 summarizes the types of online score reports available at the aggregate level and the individual student level. Detailed information about the online score reports and instructions on navigating the Reporting System can be found in the *Reporting System User Guide*, located via a help button on the Reporting System

Table 75. Types of Online Score Reports by Level of Aggregation

Level of Aggregation	Types of Online Score Reports
State District School Teacher Roster	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of students tested and percentage of students proficient (for overall students and by subgroup) • Average scale score and standard error of average scale score on the overall test and claim (for overall students and by subgroup) • Percentage of students at each achievement level on the overall test and claim (for overall students and by subgroup) • Performance category in each target (for overall students and by subgroup) • On-demand student roster report
Student	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total scale score and standard error of measurement • Achievement level on overall score and claim score with achievement-level descriptors • Average scale scores and standard errors of average scale scores for student’s school, district, and state • Student growth in scale score and achievement level over time • Writing performance descriptors and scores by dimensions

Aggregate score reports at a selected aggregate level are provided for students overall and by subgroup. Users can view student assessment results in any of the subgroups. Table 76 presents the types of subgroups and subgroup categories provided in the Reporting System.

Table 76. Types of Subgroups

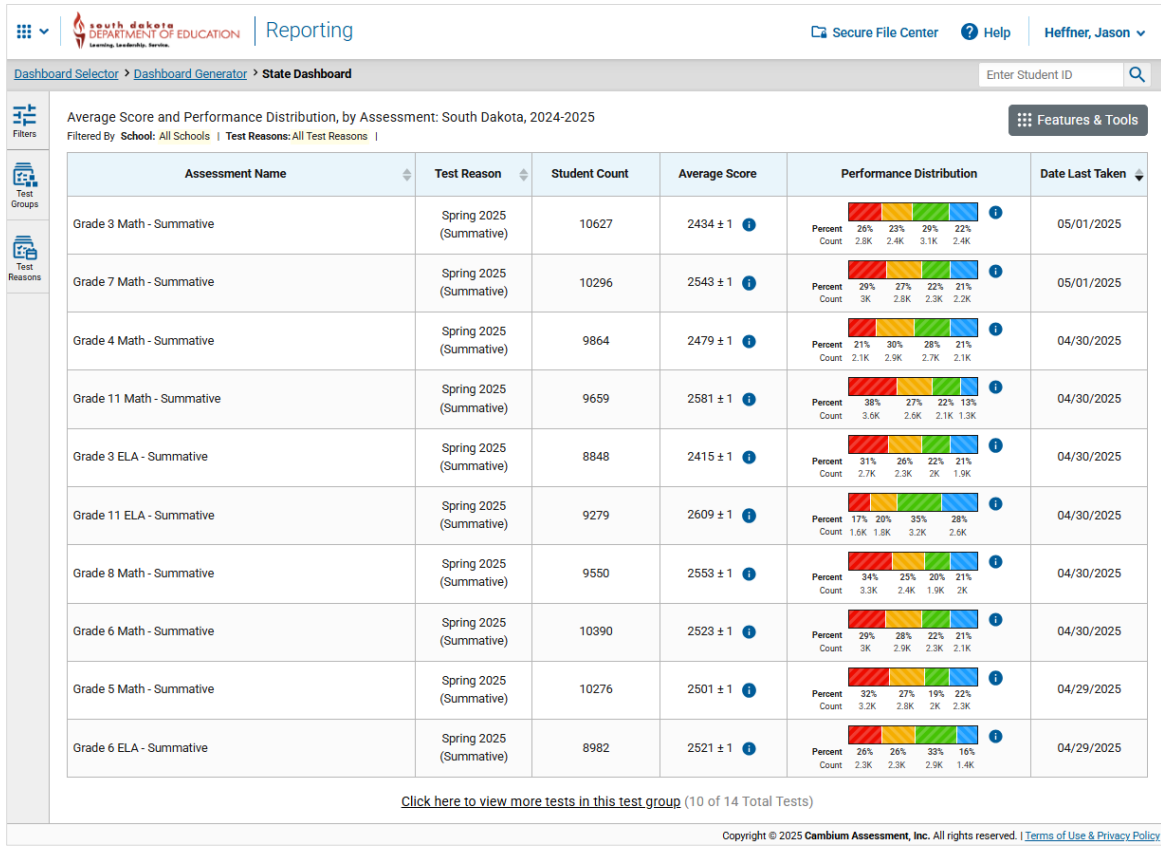
Subgroup	Subgroup Category
Gender	Male Female
IDEA Indicator	Yes No
Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Status	Yes No
Section 504 Status	Yes No Unknown/Cannot Provide
Race/Ethnicity	African American American Indian/Alaskan Native Asian Hispanic Pacific Islander White Multi-Racial

7.1.1 Dashboard

The Reporting System provides a state dashboard for authorized state-level users to track student performance for a test across the entire state. The dashboard summarizes students’ performance for both ELA/L and mathematics in each grade, including (1) student count, (2) average scale score and standard error of the average scale score, (3) percentage and counts of students at each achievement level, and (4) test date last taken. Users can specify the test and administration year to display in the report.

Exhibit 1 presents an example dashboard page at the state level.

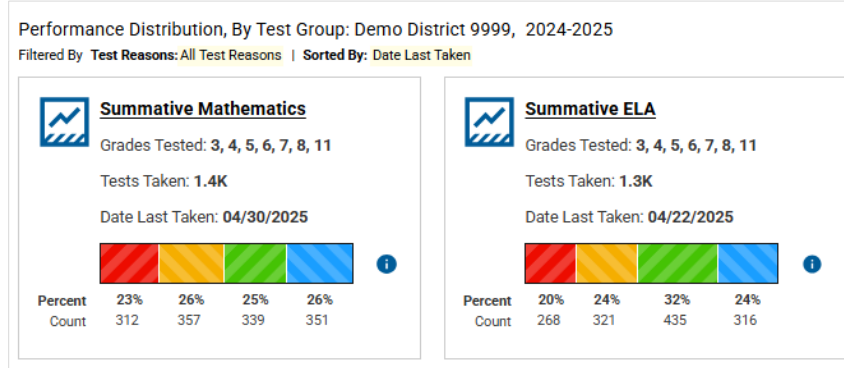
Exhibit 1. Dashboard: State Level



Once authorized users in the district, school, and teacher level log in to the Reporting System, the dashboard page shows overall test results for all tests that the students have taken grouped by test family (e.g., South Dakota Summative ELA/L). The dashboard summarizes students’ performance by test family for both ELA/L and mathematics across all grades, including (1) the grades of the students who have tested, (2) the number of tests taken, (3) the test date last taken, and (4) the percentage and counts of students at each achievement level. District personnel see district summaries, school personnel see school summaries, and teachers see summaries of their students.

Exhibit 2 presents an example dashboard page at the district level.

Exhibit 2. Dashboard: District Level



Once the user clicks on the test family that he or she wants to explore further, it will take the user to a detailed dashboard, where the results are shown by test (e.g., Grade 3 ELA–Summative). The detailed dashboard page will appear by test in each grade. The detailed dashboard summarizes students’ performance by test in each grade, including (1) student count, (2) average scale score and standard error of the average scale score, (3) the percentage and counts of students at each achievement level, and (4) test date last taken.

Exhibit 3 presents an example detailed dashboard page for summative ELA/L at the district level.

Exhibit 3. Detailed Dashboard: District Level

Assessment Name	Test Group	Test Grade	Test Reason	Student Count	Average Score	Performance Distribution	Date Last Taken
Grade 8 ELA - Summative	Summative	8	Spring 2025 (Summative)	208	2587 ± 7	Percent: 17%, 21%, 40%, 23% Count: 35, 43, 83, 47	04/22/2025
Grade 7 ELA - Summative	Summative	7	Spring 2025 (Summative)	196	2560 ± 7	Percent: 18%, 29%, 32%, 21% Count: 36, 56, 63, 41	04/22/2025
Grade 11 ELA - Summative	Summative	11	Spring 2025 (Summative)	205	2634 ± 8	Percent: 13%, 18%, 34%, 36% Count: 26, 36, 70, 73	04/16/2025
Grade 3 ELA - Summative	Summative	3	Spring 2025 (Summative)	187	2411 ± 6	Percent: 32%, 30%, 20%, 18% Count: 60, 56, 37, 34	04/16/2025
Grade 6 ELA - Summative	Summative	6	Spring 2025 (Summative)	185	2537 ± 7	Percent: 20%, 23%, 34%, 23% Count: 37, 43, 63, 42	04/15/2025
Grade 4 ELA - Summative	Summative	4	Spring 2025 (Summative)	185	2478 ± 6	Percent: 20%, 24%, 33%, 23% Count: 37, 44, 61, 43	04/15/2025
Grade 5 ELA - Summative	Summative	5	Spring 2025 (Summative)	174	2509 ± 7	Percent: 21%, 25%, 33%, 21% Count: 37, 43, 58, 36	04/14/2025

Rows per page: 70 7 Items: 1 of 1

7.1.2 Aggregate Score Reports: Overall Performance

Student performance for each grade in a subject area for a selected aggregate level is presented when users select a specific assessment name. On each aggregate report, the summary report presents the summary results for the selected aggregate unit and the summary results for the state and the aggregate unit both

above and below the selected aggregate. For example, if a district is selected, the summary results of the state and individual schools within the district and the district summary results are provided to facilitate a comparison between the district’s performance and the other aggregate levels. The aggregated subject summary report provides the summaries on a specific grade in a subject, including (1) student count, (2) the average scale score and standard error of the average scale score, (3) the percentage and counts of students in each achievement level, and (4) the percentage of proficient students. The summaries are also presented for students overall and by subgroup.

Exhibit 4 presents an example overall performance summary result for grade 8 ELA/L at the district level, and Exhibit 5 presents an example summary by gender.

Exhibit 4. Overall Performance Summary Results for Grade 8 ELA/L: District Level

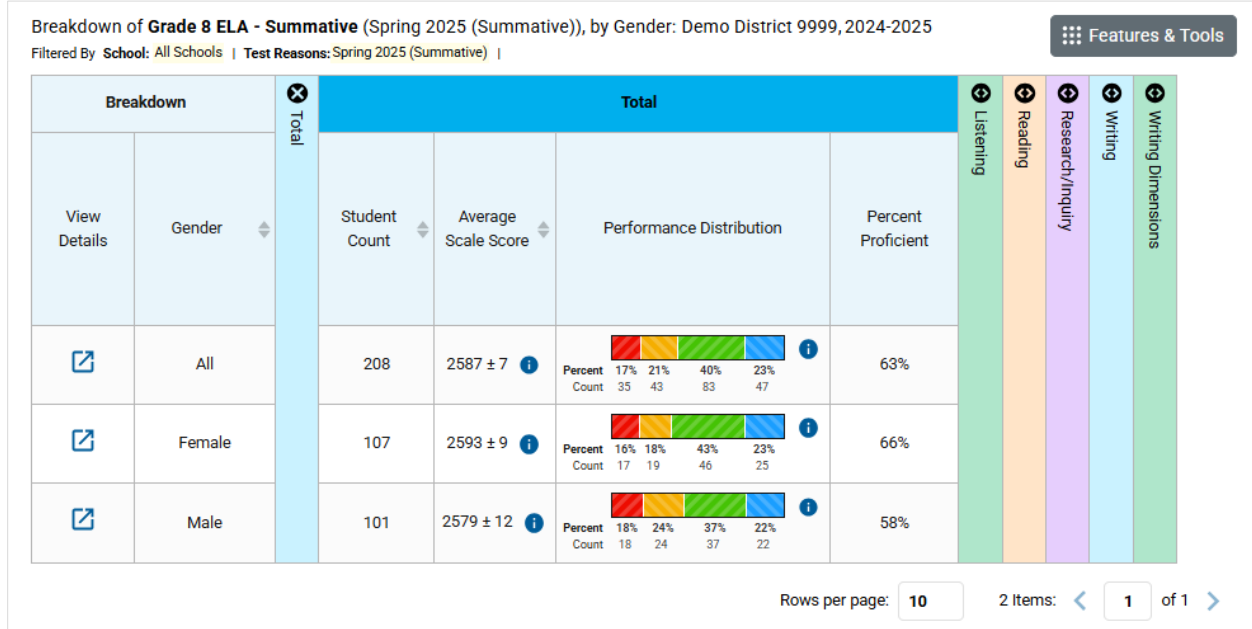
Average Score and Performance Distribution for Grade 8 ELA - Summative (Spring 2025 (Summative)), by School and Features & Tools

Reporting Category: Demo District 9999, 2024-2025
Filtered By: School: All Schools | Test Reasons: Spring 2025 (Summative) |

School	Total	Total				Listening	Reading	Research/Inquiry	Writing	Writing Dimensions
		Student Count	Average Scale Score	Performance Distribution	Percent Proficient					
State	8625	2562 ± 1	 Percent: 22% 28% 35% 15% Count: 1.9K 2.4K 3K 1.3K	50%						
District	208	2587 ± 7	 Percent: 17% 21% 40% 23% Count: 35 43 83 47	63%						
Demo 2 Elementary	11	2531 ± 17	 Percent: 27% 45% 27% Count: 3 5 3	27%						
DemoSchool-99999	192	2588 ± 8	 Percent: 17% 19% 41% 23% Count: 32 37 79 44	64%						
Demo Elementary	3	2605 ± 49	 Percent: 33% 33% 33% Count: 1 1 1	67%						
DemoSchool-9999	2	2687 ± 7	 Percent: 100% Count: 2	100%						

Rows per page: 100 4 items: 1 of 1

Exhibit 5. Overall Performance Summary Results for Grade 8 ELA/L by Gender: District Level



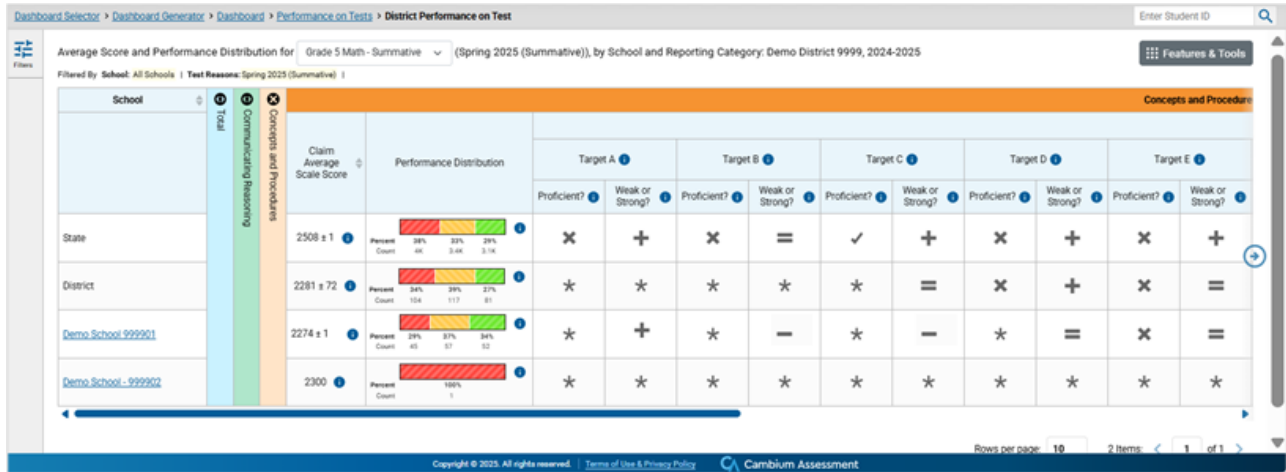
7.1.3 Aggregate Score Reports: Claim and Target Performance

Detailed summaries on aggregated claim and target results are also available on the same report page when a claim on the right side of the page is selected. For the claim result, both the average scale score and standard error of the average scale score are presented. For the target result, the strength or weakness indicators on each target within a claim are presented. These strength or weakness indicators are presented in two ways. The “Proficient?” measure indicates whether the group’s performance on each target is better than (checkmark), less than (x mark), or not different from (half-filled circle) the proficiency standard for the selected test. The “Weak or Strong?” measure presents whether the group’s performance on each target is lower than (minus sign), higher than (plus sign), or not different from (equal sign) the group’s overall performance. If there is insufficient information in the “Proficient?” measure or “Weak or Strong?” measure, this is indicated with a star sign (*).

Like the overall performance summary results, the summary report presents results for the selected aggregate unit, the state, and the aggregate units above and below the selected aggregate unit. Also, the summaries on claim- and target-level performance can be presented for overall students and by subgroup.

Exhibit 6 presents an example of claim- and target-level results for grade 5 mathematics at the district level.

Exhibit 6. Claim- and Target-Level Results for Grade 5 Mathematics: District Level

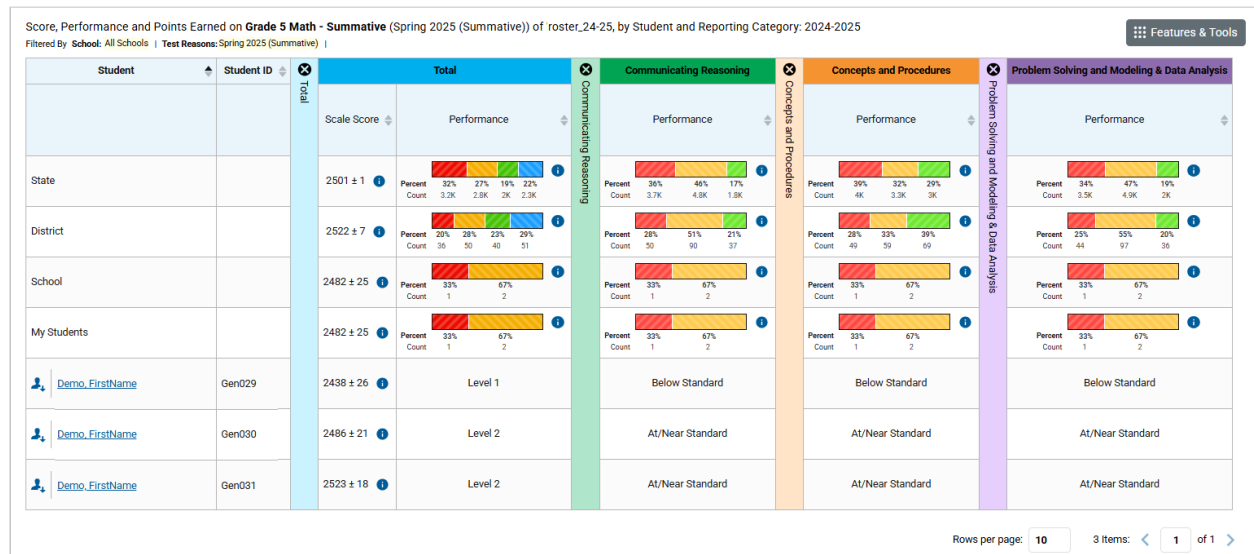


7.1.4 Roster Performance Report

Class, teacher, and school performance rosters provide users with performance data for a group of students belonging to a system-defined or user-defined class. The report includes (1) the student’s overall subject scale scores with standard error of measurement, (2) the achievement level, and (3) the performance category for each claim.

Exhibit 7 shows a sample roster performance report for grade 5 mathematics.

Exhibit 7. Roster Performance Report for Grade 5 Mathematics

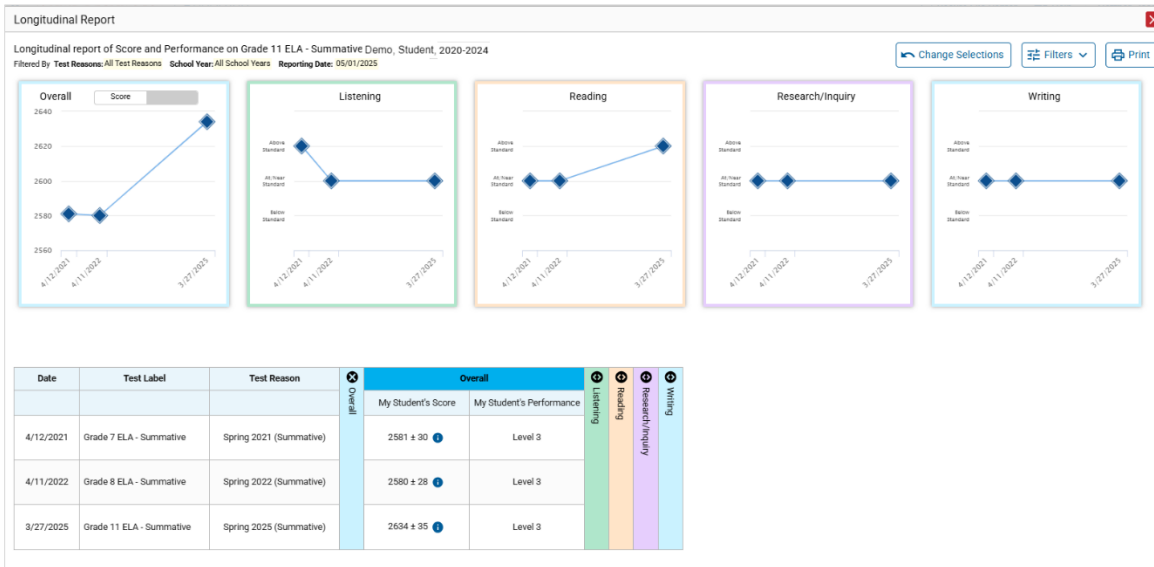


7.1.5 Trend Report

The trend (i.e., longitudinal) page provides the trend of student performance for individual level and aggregate level over time. The trend report can be set to plot either average scale scores or percentage of students in each achievement level on the graph for the selected aggregate unit. The trend report is also

available at the individual student level. Exhibit 8 presents an example trend report page for ELA/L at the individual student level.

Exhibit 8. Trend Report for ELA/L: Student Level



7.1.6 Individual Student Report

When a student completes a test and any hand-scored items have been scored, an individual student report (ISR) can be generated and exported as a PDF file. The ISR shows the student’s overall performance on the test with detailed information on multiple pages. The ISR provides (1) the scale score and standard error of measurement (SEM); (2) the achievement level for the overall test; (3) the performance category in each claim; (4) the average scale scores for student’s state, district, and school in each subject area; and (5) the writing scores and performance descriptors in each dimension (ELA/L only).

The student’s name, scale score with the SEM, and achievement level are shown at the top of the first page of the ISR. In the middle section, the student’s performance is described in detail using a barrel chart. The student’s scale score is presented with the SEM using a “±” sign in the barrel chart. The SEM represents the precision of the scale score, or the range in which the student would likely score if a similar test were administered multiple times. The achievement-level descriptors (ALDs) with cut scores at each achievement level are also provided in the barrel chart. This defines the content-area knowledge, skills, and processes that test takers at the achievement level are expected to possess.

Average scale scores and standard errors of the average scale scores for the student’s state, district, and school are displayed under the barrel chart so the student’s achievement can be compared with the above aggregate levels. It should be noted that the “±” next to the student’s scale score is the standard error of measurement of the scale score, whereas the “±” next to the average scale scores for aggregate levels represents the standard error of the average scale scores.

On the following page, the student’s performance on each claim is displayed alongside a description of his or her performance on each claim. At the bottom of the page, the student’s performance in writing dimension scores (ELA/L only) is displayed alongside a description of his or her performance on each writing dimension. The third page shows the trend of student performance over time.

Exhibit 9 presents an example of an ISR for grade 5 ELA/L.

Exhibit 9. Individual Student Report for ELA/L

Reporting

Individual Student Report

Demo, Demo

Student ID: 999999999 | Student DOB: 3/10/2014 | Enrolled Grade: 5
Date Taken: 3/31/2025

Grade 5 ELA - Summative 2024-2025

Demo District 99-9
Demo School - 99

Scale Score: 2586±29 Performance: Level 4

How Did Your Child Do on the Test?

Score
2586 ±29

2916

2582

2502

2442

2056

Meets State Standard

Does Not Meet State Standard

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 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 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 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 needed for likely success in future coursework.

How Does Your Child's Score Compare?


Name	Average Scale Score
South Dakota	2495±1
Demo District 99-9	2509±7
Demo School - 99	2522±10

Information on Standard Error of Measurement

A student's score is best interpreted when recognizing that the student's knowledge and skills fall within a score range and not just a precise number. For example, 2300 (±10) indicates a score range between 2290 and 2310.

Generated on 5/1/2025
Page 1 of 3
Copyright © 2025 Cambium Assessment, Inc. All rights reserved.

Exhibit 10. Individual Student Report for ELA/L (Continued)



Reporting

Individual Student Report

Demo, Demo

Student ID: 999999999 | Student DOB: 3/10/2014 | Enrolled Grade: 5
Date Taken: 3/31/2025

Grade 5 ELA - Summative 2024-2025





Demo District 99-9
Demo School - 99

Scale Score: 2586±29 Performance: Level 4

How Did Your Child Perform on Different Areas of the Test?

The table and the graph below indicate student performance on individual reporting categories. The black dot indicates the student's score on each reporting category. The lines to the left and right of the dot show the range of likely scores your student would receive if he or she took the test multiple times.

▲ Below Standard At/Near Standard ✔ Above Standard


Category	Performance	Performance	Performance Description
Listening		At/Near Standard	<p>What These Results Mean Student may be able to employ effective listening skills for a range of purposes and audiences.</p> <p>Next Steps Watch a documentary with your child, and ask him or her to focus on the speaker's purpose, reasoning, and claims. Ask your child to use his or her own words to explain how claims are supported by evidence.</p>
Reading		✔	<p>What These Results Mean Student can read closely and analytically to comprehend a range of increasingly complex literary and informational texts.</p> <p>Next Steps Have your child explain how events and ideas from different texts on the same topic are organized. Talk about how two or more characters or events interact and how this information adds knowledge or changes outcomes.</p>
Research/Inquiry		At/Near Standard	<p>What These Results Mean Student may be able to engage in research and inquiry to investigate topics, and to analyze, integrate, and present information.</p> <p>Next Steps Help your child learn about a topic by researching and organizing source information from books, articles, and the Internet. Ask your child to take notes, decide if a source can be used, and then summarize the results.</p>
Writing		✔	<p>What These Results Mean Student can produce effective and well-grounded writing for a range of purposes and audiences.</p> <p>Next Steps Ask your child to write essays that share an opinion, examine a topic, or are narratives of real or imaginary events. The writing should be logically organized, detailed, and supported and have a strong conclusion.</p>

How Did Your Child Perform on the Essay?

Essay	Raw Score	Conventions	Evidence/Elaboration	Purpose
Narrative	8 out of 10 points	The narrative response shows an adequate understanding of correct sentence formation, punctuation, capitalization, grammar usage, and spelling. (2 out of 2 points)	The narrative response provides adequate elaboration to support the development of the narrative including connections to sources; adequate narrative techniques; and sensory, concrete and figurative language that generally advance the story. (3 out of 4 points)	The narrative response is adequately sustained and includes a recognizable plot of real or imagined events, an established setting, and developed characters. The events follow an adequate sequence and are linked by some transitions. (3 out of 4 points)

Generated on 5/1/2025
Page 2 of 3
Copyright © 2025 Cambium Assessment, Inc. All rights reserved.

Exhibit 11. Individual Student Report for ELA/L (Continued)



Reporting

Individual Student Report

Demo, Demo

Student ID: 999999999 | Student DOB: 3/10/2014 | Enrolled Grade: 5
Date Taken: 3/31/2025

Grade 5 ELA - Summative 2024-2025

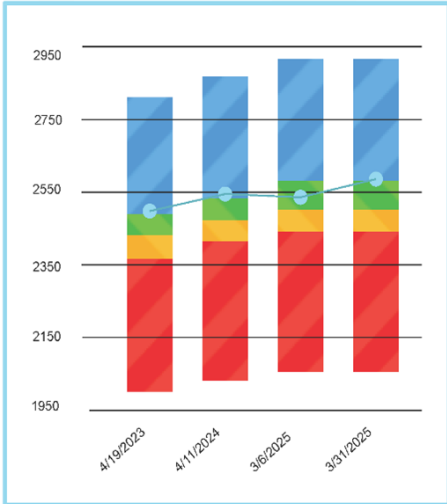
Demo District 99-9
Demo School - 99

Scale Score: 2586±29 Performance: Level 4

Your Child's Progress

Longitudinal Trend Chart Information

The chart below reports your child's performance over time. The shaded areas in multiple colors indicate the scale score range in each achievement level. Each mark on the graph represents your child's score and indicates whether he or she met the standards that year.



Legend

- Level 4
- Level 3
- Level 2
- Level 1
- +
 Student Score

Generated on 5/1/2025

Page 3 of 3

Copyright © 2025 Cambium Assessment, Inc. All rights reserved.

7.2 INTERPRETATION OF REPORTED SCORES

Students' test performance is reported in a scale score and as an achievement level for the overall test and each claim. Students' scores and achievement levels are also summarized at the aggregate levels. The next section describes how to interpret these scores.

7.2.1 Scale Score

A scale score is used to describe how well a student performed on a test and can be interpreted as an estimate of the student's knowledge and skills measured. The scale score is the transformed score from a theta score, which is estimated based on mathematical models. Low scale scores can be interpreted to mean that the student does not possess sufficient knowledge and skills measured by the test. Conversely, high scale scores can be interpreted to mean that the student has proficient knowledge and skills measured by the test. Scale scores can be used to measure student growth across school years. Interpretation of scale scores is more meaningful when the scale scores are used along with achievement levels and achievement-level descriptors (ALDs).

7.2.2 Conditional Standard Error of Measurement

A scale score (the observed score on any test) is an estimate of the true score. If a student takes a similar test multiple times, the resulting scale score will vary across administrations, sometimes being a little higher, a little lower, or the same. The standard error of measurement (SEM) represents the precision of the scale score, or the range in which the student would likely score if a similar test were administered multiple times. When interpreting scale scores, it is recommended to consider the range of scale scores incorporating the SEM of the scale score.

The “±” next to the student's scale score provides information about the certainty, or confidence, of the score's interpretation. The boundaries of the score band are one SEM above and below the student's observed scale score, representing a range of score values likely to contain the true score. For example, $2,680 \pm 10$ indicates that if a student were tested again, it is likely that he or she would receive a score between 2,670 and 2,690. The SEM can be different for the same scale score, depending on how closely the administered items match the student's ability.

7.2.3 Achievement Level

Achievement levels are proficiency categories on a test that students fall into based on their scale scores. The South Dakota assessments scale scores are mapped into four achievement levels (Level 1, Level 2, Level 3, and Level 4) using three achievement standards (i.e., cut scores). ALDs are a description of content-area knowledge and skills that test takers at each achievement level are expected to possess. Thus, achievement levels can be interpreted based on ALDs. For instance, the ELA/L grade 6 Level 3 ALDs are described as “The student has met the achievement standard and demonstrates progress toward mastery of the knowledge and skills in ELA/L needed for likely success in entry-level credit-bearing college coursework after high school.” Generally, students performing at Levels 3 and 4 on South Dakota assessments are considered to be on track and demonstrating progress toward mastery of the knowledge and skills necessary for college and career readiness.

7.2.4 Performance Category for Claims

Student performance on each claim is reported in three categories: (1) Below Standard, (2) At/Near Standard, and (3) Above Standard. Unlike the achievement level for the overall test, student performance on each claim is evaluated with respect to the “Meets Standard” achievement standard. For students performing at “Below Standard” or “Above Standard,” this can be interpreted to mean that their performance is clearly below or above the “Meets Standard” cut score for a specific claim. For students performing at “At/Near Standard,” this can be interpreted to mean that their performance does not provide enough information to tell whether they reached the “Meets Standard” mark for the specific claim.

7.2.5 Performance Category for Targets

In addition to the claim-level reports, teachers and educators can ask for additional reports on student performance for instructional needs. Target-level reports are produced for the aggregate units only, not for individual students, because each student is administered too few items in a target to produce a reliable score for each target.

Target reports are produced for each target within a claim. Two types of relative strength and weakness scores for each target within a claim are reported. The strengths and weaknesses reports are generated for aggregate units of classrooms, schools, and districts and provide information about how a group of students in a class, school, or district performed on each target, either relative to the proficiency standard (i.e., “Proficient?” target measure) or their overall performance on the test (i.e., “Weak or Strong?” target measure).

For the “Weak or Strong?” target measure, students’ observed performance on items within the reporting element is compared with the expected performance based on the overall ability estimate. At the aggregate level, when the observed performance within a target is greater than the expected performance, the reporting unit (e.g., roster, teacher, school, district) shows relative strength in that target. Conversely, when observed performance within a target is below the level expected based on overall achievement, the reporting unit shows a relative weakness in that target.

For the “Proficient?” target measure, students’ observed performance on items within the reporting element is compared to the expected performance on those items of someone who has an ability equal to the proficiency cut (i.e., the Achievement Level 3 cut). At the aggregate level, when observed performance within a target is greater than the proficiency cut, the reporting unit shows relative strength in that target compared to the proficiency standard. Conversely, when observed performance within a target is below the proficiency cut, the reporting unit shows a relative weakness in that target.

Although performance categories for targets provide some evidence to help address students’ strengths and weaknesses, they should not be over interpreted because student performance on some targets may be based on relatively few items, especially for a small group.

7.2.6 Aggregated Scale Score

Students’ scale scores are aggregated at the roster, teacher, school, district, and state levels to represent how a group of students performs on a test. When students’ scale scores are aggregated, the average scale scores can be interpreted as an estimate of the knowledge and skills that a group of students possesses. Given that student scale scores are estimates, the average scale scores are also average estimates and subject to measures of uncertainty. In addition to the average scale scores, the percentage of students in each

achievement level overall and by claim are reported at the aggregate level to represent how well a group of students performs.

7.3 APPROPRIATE USES OF TEST RESULTS

Assessment results can provide information about individual students' achievements on the test. Overall, assessment results show what students know and are able to do in certain subject areas and provide further information on whether students are on track to demonstrate the knowledge and skills necessary for college and career readiness. Additionally, assessment results can be used to identify students' relative strengths and weaknesses in certain content areas. For example, performance categories for targets can be used to identify a group's relative strengths and weaknesses among targets within a claim.

Assessment results on student achievement on the test can help teachers or schools make decisions on how best to support students' learning. Aggregate score reports at the teacher and school levels provide information regarding the strengths and weaknesses of their students and can be utilized to improve teaching and student learning. For example, a group of students may perform very well overall on the test but potentially not perform as well in several targets compared to their overall performance. In this case, teachers and schools would be able to identify their students' strengths and weaknesses through the group performance by claim and target. They could then promote instruction in the specific claim or target areas in which their students performed relatively lower. Further, by narrowing down student performance results by subgroup, teachers and schools can determine which strategies may best improve student learning, particularly for students from disadvantaged subgroups. For example, teachers can examine student assessment results by LEP status and observe that LEP students need help in a particular area, such as reading literary responses and analysis. Teachers can then provide additional focused instruction for these students to enhance their achievement in any specific target or claim with which they are struggling.

In addition, assessment results can be used to compare performance among different students and groups. Teachers can evaluate how their students perform compared with other students in their school and district by overall scores and by claims. Although all students are administered different sets of items in each CAT, scale scores are comparable across students. Furthermore, scale scores can be used to measure the growth of individual students over time when data are available. In the South Dakota assessments, the scale scores across grades are on the same scale because the scores are vertically linked across grades. Therefore, scale scores from one grade can be compared with the next grade to measure the growth. However, caution is advised, particularly when comparing scores across non-adjacent grade levels.

While assessment results provide valuable information to understand students' performance, these scores and reports should be used with caution. It is important to note that scale scores reported are estimates of true scores and hence do not represent the precise measure for student performance. A student's scale score is associated with measurement error, and thus users need to consider measurement error when using student scores to make decisions about student achievement. Moreover, although student scores may be used to make important decisions about students' placement and retention or teachers' instructional planning and implementation, the assessment results should not be used as the only source of information. Given that assessment results measured by a test provide limited information, other sources of student achievement such as classroom assessment and teacher evaluation should be considered when making decisions on student learning. Finally, when student performance is compared across groups, users need to consider the group size. The smaller the group size, the larger the measurement error related to these aggregate data, thus requiring interpretation with more caution.

8 QUALITY CONTROL PROCEDURE

Quality assurance (QA) procedures are enforced throughout all stages of the South Dakota assessment development, administration, and scoring and reporting. Cambium Assessment, Inc. (CAI) implements a series of quality control steps to ensure the error-free production of score reports. The quality of the information produced in the Test Delivery System (TDS) is tested thoroughly before, during, and after the testing window.

8.1 ADAPTIVE TEST CONFIGURATION

For the CAT component, a test configuration file is the key file that contains all specifications for the item selection algorithm and the scoring algorithm, such as the test blueprint, cut scores, the item information (e.g., answer keys, item attributes, item parameters, and passage information), and slopes and intercepts for theta-to-scale score transformation. The accuracy of the information in the configuration file is independently checked and confirmed before the testing window opens.

With the test configuration file, CAI uses simulated test administrations to configure the adaptive algorithm to optimize item selection to meet blueprint specifications while targeting test information to student ability, as well as checking the score accuracy. First, the simulator generates a sample of students with an ability distribution that matches that of the population in previous year’s data. The ability of each simulated student is used to generate a sequence of item response scores while matching the blueprint and minimizing measurement error. These simulations provide a rigorous test of the adaptive algorithm. The results of these simulations are used to configure and evaluate the adequacy of the item selection algorithm used to administer the Smarter Balanced summative assessments.

After the adaptive testing simulations, another set of simulations for the combined tests (CAT and PT components) are performed for scoring engine verification. The simulated data are generated such that verification of the scoring engine is based on a wide range of student response patterns. CAI rigorously checks whether the scoring rules specified in the scoring specifications were applied accurately. The scores in the simulated data file are checked independently.

8.1.1 Platform Review

CAI’s Test Delivery System (TDS) supports a variety of item layouts. Each item goes through an extensive platform review on different operating systems like Windows, Linux, and iOS to ensure that the item looks consistent in all of them. Some of the layouts have the stimulus and item response options/response area displayed side by side. In each of these layouts, both stimulus and response options have independent scroll bars.

Platform review is a process in which each item is checked to ensure that it is displayed appropriately on each tested platform. A platform is a combination of a hardware device and an operating system. In recent years, the number of platforms has proliferated, and platform review now takes place on various platforms that are significantly different from one another.

Platform review is conducted by a team. The team leader projects the item as it was web-approved in the Item Tracking System (ITS), and team members, each using a different platform, look at the same item to ensure that it is rendered as expected.

8.1.2 User Acceptance Testing and Final Review

Before deployment, the testing system and content are deployed to a staging server, where they undergo user acceptance testing (UAT). UAT of the TDS serves as both a software evaluation and content approval role. The UAT period provides the SDDOE with an opportunity to interact with the exact test that the students will use.

8.2 QUALITY ASSURANCE IN DOCUMENT PROCESSING

South Dakota summative assessments are administered primarily online; however, a few students took paper-pencil assessments. When test documents are scanned, a quality control sample of documents consisting of 10 test cases per document type (normally between 500 and 600 documents) is created to verify all possible responses and demographic grids, including typical errors that require editing via MI's Data Inspection, Correction, and Entry (DICE) application program. This structured testing method provided exact test parameters and a methodical way of determining whether the output received from the scanners was correct. MI staff carefully compared the documents and the data file created from them to further ensure that results from the scanner, editing process (validation and data correction), and transfer to the CAI database are correct.

8.3 QUALITY ASSURANCE IN DATA PREPARATION

CAI's TDS has a real-time quality-monitoring component built-in. After a test is administered to a student, the TDS passes the resulting data to CAI's Quality Assurance (QA) system. QA conducts a series of data integrity checks, ensuring, for example, that the record for each test contains information for each item, keys for multiple-choice items, score points in each item, and the total number of field-test items and operational items. The QA system also ensures that the test record does not contain data from items that have been invalidated.

Data pass directly from the Quality Monitoring System (QMS) to the Database of Record (DOR), which serves as the repository for all test information and from which all test information for reporting is pulled. The Data Extract Generator is the tool that pulls data from the DOR for delivery to the Department. CAI staff ensure that data in the extract files match the DOR before it is delivered.

8.4 QUALITY ASSURANCE IN ONLINE TEST DELIVERY SYSTEM

To monitor the performance of the TDS during the test administration window, CAI statisticians examine the delivery demands, including the number of tests to be delivered, the length of the test administration window, and the historic state-specific behaviors to model the likely peak loads. Using the data from the load tests, CAI can calculate the number of each type of server necessary to provide continuous, responsive service, and contracts for service exceeding this amount. Once deployed, the servers are monitored at the hardware, operating system, and software platform levels with software that alerts CAI engineers at the first signs that trouble may be ahead. The applications log errors, exceptions, and item response time information for crucial database calls. This information enables CAI to know instantly whether the system is performing as designed, starting to slow down, or experiencing a problem. In addition, item response time data are captured for each assessed student, such as data about how long it takes to load, view, or respond to an item. All this information is logged, enabling CAI to automatically identify schools or districts experiencing unusual slowdowns, often before they even notice.

A series of quality assurance reports can also be generated at any time during the online assessment window, such as blueprint match rate, item exposure rate, and item statistics, for early detection of any unexpected issues. Any deviations from the expected outcome are flagged, investigated, and resolved. In addition to these statistics, a cheating analysis report is produced to flag any unlikely behavior patterns in a testing session as discussed in Section 2.8, Data Forensic Program.

For example, an item statistics analysis report allows psychometricians to ensure that items are performing as intended and serves as an empirical key check throughout the operational testing window. The item statistics analysis report monitors the performance of test items throughout the testing window and serves as a key check for the early detection of potential problems with item scoring. These types of problems include incorrect designation of a keyed response or other scoring errors, and potential breaches of test security that may be indicated by changes in the difficulty of test items. This report generates classical item analysis indicators including the item p-value and item discrimination index, and IRT item fit statistics. The report is configurable and can be produced so that only items with statistics falling outside a specified range are flagged for reporting or generating reports based on all items in the pool.

For the CAT component, other reports such as blueprint match and item exposure reports allow psychometricians to verify that test administrations conform to the simulation results. The QA reports can be generated on any desired schedule. Item analysis and blueprint match reports are evaluated frequently at the opening of the testing window to ensure that test administrations conform to the blueprint and items are performing as anticipated. Table 77 presents an overview of the QA reports.

Table 77. Overview of Quality Assurance Reports

QA Reports	Purpose	Rationale
Item Statistics	To confirm whether items work as expected	Early detection of errors (key errors for selected-response items and scoring errors for constructed-response, performance, or technology-enhanced items)
Blueprint Match Rates	To monitor unexpectedly low blueprint match rates	Early detection of unexpected blueprint match issue
Item Exposure Rates	To monitor unlikely high exposure rates of items or passages or unusually low item pool usage (highly unused items/passages)	Early detection of any oversight in the blueprint specification
Cheating Analysis	To monitor testing irregularities	Early detection of testing irregularities

8.4.1 Score Report Quality Check

In the Smarter Balanced summative assessments, online score reports are generated. The systems automatically assign scores on the online assessments in real time. Every test undergoes a series of validation checks. Once the QA system signs off, data are passed to the DOR, which serves as the centralized location for all student scores and responses, ensuring that there is only one place where the official record is stored. Only after scores have passed the QA checks and are uploaded to the DOR are they passed to the Reporting System, which is responsible for presenting individual-level results and calculating and presenting aggregate results. Absolutely no score is reported in the Reporting System until it passes all the QA system’s validation checks. All of the previously mentioned processes take milliseconds to complete so that within less than one second after CAI receives handscores and they pass QA validation checks, the composite score will be available in the Reporting System.

REFERENCES

- American Educational Research Association [AERA], American Psychological Association [APA], & National Council on Measurement in Education [NCME]. (2014). *Standards for educational and psychological testing*. Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association.
- Billingsley, P. (1995). *Probability and measure* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Drasgow, F., Levine, M. V., & Williams, E. A. (1985). Appropriateness measurement with polychotomous item response models and standardized indices. *British Journal of Mathematical and Statistical Psychology*, *38*(1), 67–86.
- Guo, F. (2006). Expected classification accuracy using the latent distribution. *Practical Assessment, Research & Evaluation*, *11*(6).
- Huynh, H. (1976). On the reliability of decisions in domain-referenced testing. *Journal of Educational Measurement*, *13*(4), 253–264.
- Livingston, S. A., & Lewis, C. (1995). Estimating the consistency and accuracy of classifications based on test scores. *Journal of Educational Measurement*, *32*(2), 179–197.
- Livingston, S. A., & Wingersky, M. S. (1979). Assessing the reliability of tests used to make pass/fail decisions. *Journal of Educational Measurement*, *16*(4), 247–260.
- Raczynski, K. R., Cohen, A. S., Engelhard, G., Jr., & Lu, Z. (2015). Comparing the effectiveness of self-paced and collaborative frame-of-reference training on rater accuracy in a large-scale writing assessment. *Journal of Educational Measurement*, *52*(3), 301–318.
- Snijders, T. A. B. (2001). Asymptotic null distribution of person fit statistics with estimated person parameter. *Psychometrika*, *66*(3), 331–342.
- Sotaridona, L. S., Pornel, J. B., & Vallejo, A. (2003). Some applications of item response theory to testing. *The Philippine Statistician*, *52*(1–4), 81–92.
- Subkoviak, M. J. (1976). Estimating reliability from a single administration of a criterion-referenced test. *Journal of Educational Measurement*, *13*(4), 265–276.
- U.S. Department of Education. (2015). *Peer Review of State Assessment Systems: Non-Regulatory Guidance for States*. Washington, DC. Retrieved from <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/assessguid15.pdf>
- Williamson, D. M., Xi, X., & Breyer, F. J. (2012). A framework for the evaluation and use of automated scoring. *Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice*, *31*(1), 2–13.