

# ACT ASPIRE INTERIM ASSESSMENTS

**UNDERSTANDING THE PURPOSE:** For years, we have understood the ACT test as one of the many indicators of college readiness for our juniors and seniors, but we have not always had clear predictors for their on-track readiness in their earlier years of high school. In 2014, the high schools of the Bismarck Public School District adopted ACT Aspire’s interim assessments in order to better identify and address areas of academic strengths and weaknesses within our freshmen and sophomore students.

The interims, short-duration assessments that usually take less than an hour per subject area, are given twice a year before the summative Aspire test in the spring (April). The results “produce snapshots of each learner’s achievement” while showing a strong correlation to ACT performance.

## OVERVIEW OF SUBJECTS and SCORES

**Summary of Subject Assessments:** The ACT Aspire Interim student score report contains information about academic readiness in four subject areas: English, math, reading, and science.

**English:** assesses ability to revise and edit texts. A typical English test contains several passages and a series of questions. Texts cover topics including English language arts, the humanities, and social and natural sciences.

**Skill Strands:**

- **Conventions of standard English** – highlights grammar, usage, and mechanics as well as questions about sentence structure and formation.
- **Knowledge of language\***—asks students to employ knowledge of language to ensure that writing is precise, concise, and stylistically consistent.
- **Production of writing** – requires students to apply an understanding of rhetorical purpose and focus; to use various strategies to achieve logical organization, topical unity, and general cohesion.

**Science:** assesses science practices by using real scientific scenarios that include investigations, formal research, formal scientific data from references, and explanation of scientific phenomena.

**Skill Strands:**

- **Interpretation of data** – Students apply science knowledge, skills, and practices to locate, translate, infer and extend from, and evaluate data and information in scientific graphs, tables, and diagrams of varying complexity
- **Scientific investigation** – apply science knowledge, skills, and practices to understand the tools, procedures, and design of scientific experiments and to compare, extend, and modify those experiments.
- **Evaluation of models, inferences, and experimental results** – Students apply science knowledge, skills, and practices to evaluate the validity of scientific information and formulate conclusions and predictions based on that information.

**Math:** assesses what students can do with mathematical formulas and computations, including past and current grade-level learning.

**Skills Strand:**

- **Foundation** – Integrate and continue to grow with topics from prior grades.
- **Modeling** – Producing, interpreting, understanding, evaluating, and improving mathematical models
- **Number and quantity** – Focus is on rational exponents and developing a richer understanding of quantity including derived units
- **Functions** – Includes linear, quadratic, and exponential functions, comparing their properties and using them to solve problems.
- **Algebra** – Understanding structure of expressions and equations. Students use operations strategically to transform expressions and solve problems, connecting algebraic and graphical solutions.
- **Geometry** – Looks at geometric relationships, including relationships in the coordinate plane, distance, and transformations. Students are asked to reveal understanding of volume formulas for geometric objects.
- **Statistics and probability** – Focus is on distributions, association, and sampling. Students pay attention to the context of the data and use various statistical displays to interpret data.
- **Grade Level Progress** – represents a student’s achievement related to mathematical topics new to students at this grade level.

**Reading:** assesses abilities to recognize meaning and to reason logically about texts and to make connections between texts. The test contains several text passages that range in level of complexity, including narrative and informational texts.

**Skill Strands:**

- **Key ideas and details** -- understand what the text explicitly says and what can be inferred; cite textual evidence when drawing conclusions. Summarize, determine central ideas or themes, analyze development of individuals, events, and ideas.
- **Craft and structure** -- Interpret words and phrases, analyze how word choices shape meaning or tone. Analyze the structure of texts (how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text relate to each other and the whole). Assess how point of view or purpose shapes content and style .
- **Integration of knowledge and ideas\*** -- Integrate and evaluate content. Delineate and evaluate an argument and claims. Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes/topics.

*\*Only assessed on summative Aspire in spring. For more exemplar questions, visit ACT Aspire website: <http://actaspire.pearson.com/exemplars.html>*

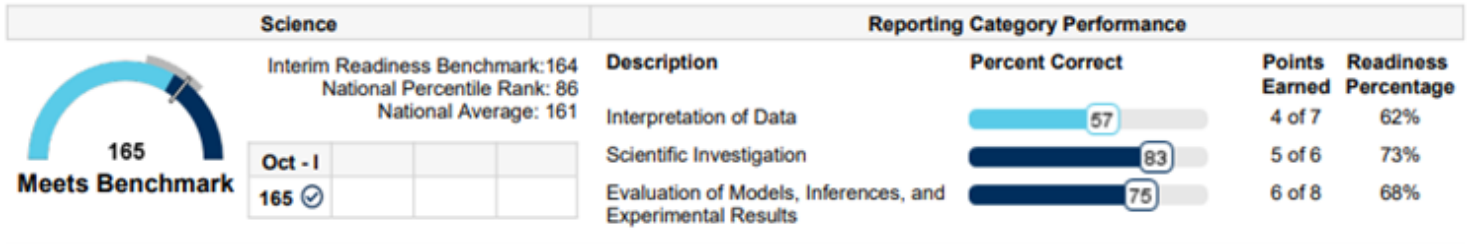
## What the scores mean

For each subject you took, you will receive a scale score. The lowest obtainable scale score (LOSS) is 150 and the highest obtainable scale score (HOSS) varies by subject and grade level. For each subject, the scale scores have the same meaning across different forms of the test, so they may be used to monitor your progress throughout the year. The example in figure 1 shows a sample subject score on the English test where the student scored a 171 when he took the first interim in October and a 176 for the second interim in February.

You also receive a **skills score** (Figure 2), which provides more specific information regarding the subject score, breaking each subject into strands of skills so you can better understand areas of strengths and weaknesses.

Subject Score/Figure 1

Skills Score/Figure 2



Grade	English			Mathematics			Reading			Science		
	LOSS	Benchmark for Interim Summative/ACT	HOSS	LOSS	Benchmark for interim Summative/ACT	HOSS	LOSS	Benchmark for Interim Summative/ACT	HOSS	LOSS	Benchmark for Interim Summative/ACT	HOSS
9	150	<b>169</b> 426/18	186	150	<b>159</b> 428/22	180	150	<b>159</b> 425/22	165	150	<b>164</b> 430/23	171
10	150	<b>171</b> 428/18	186	150	<b>162</b> 432/22	180	150	<b>160</b> 428/22	165	150	<b>164</b> 432/23	171

### What the ACT Readiness Benchmarks Mean

The ACT Aspire scale gauges student progress toward college readiness. Students who are at and above the benchmark are on track to have a high probability of future success in first-year college courses. For more information, visit the ACT Aspire website: <https://www.discoveractaspire.org/assessments/>

Table 1. Lowest Obtainable Scale Score (LOSS), Benchmark, and Highest Obtainable Scale Score (HOSS), for ACT Aspire Interim Assessment by Subject and Grade

## What to do with the results

Look at how your scores for each subject compare to the ACT Readiness Benchmark scores on your score report. Are your scores at or *above* the ACT Readiness Benchmarks? If so, you are doing well, but keep working hard. Think about improvement ideas given for your lowest-performing skill in each subject and take challenging classes.

Are your subject scores *below* the ACT Readiness Benchmarks or your skills scores below the ACT Readiness Ranges? Don't panic, but do set aside time to discuss any improvement ideas with your counselors, teachers, and parents so you can work together to get the most from your courses and reach the goals of being ready for college and workplace training. It is important to start taking action now and to take these tests seriously.

As always, with any assessment, keep perspective: this is a quick snapshot of one day's performance in a four-year high school career. You may want to consider areas of strength when signing up for advanced classes; access the Patriot Hub, take advantage of teacher tutorial, and take class work seriously as the strands of ACT align with BPS standards.

## ACT Aspire Summative in late April

- The summative test more closely resembles the ACT in length and rigor; it is longer than the interim assessments (40-75 minutes per subject area) and the format goes beyond multiple choice, asking you to construct responses. The summative test includes reading, English, math, science, **AND** writing.
- The results of the summative are not immediately available like the interim scores; typically, scores are not available for at least 45 days. The results, however, are more detailed and will offer improvement ideas as well as predicted ACT scores and growth indicators. These results are also more heavily considered when it comes to class placement, whether for remedial courses or advanced courses.