Interpreting the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT)
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The Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) assesses Illinois Learning Standards when students are in 3rd through 8th grade. Math and reading are tested every year and writing is tested in 3rd, 5th, 6th, and 8th grades. Science is assessed in 4th and 7th grades. The results are shared with parents, teachers, and schools and are used to determine individual achievement and if a school and district are making adequate yearly progress.

Parents are provided a yearly Individual Student Report. In that report, the results of the student’s performance in the subject area tests are reported in scale scores, performance levels, and national percentile ranks. Also, in reading a Lexile score is provided. Those scores, levels and ranks are explained here because it is important for parents to understand the results, and most people do not know what these different numbers mean.

**Scaled Score:** The scaled scores in math, reading, and science range from 120 to 300 and above. These scores are reported as comparisons with from previous years. Your child’s score should increase yearly. Writing scores range from 6 to 33. Writing scores are not comparison scores to the previous year.

**Performance Levels:** The four performance levels are: *exceed standards* - advanced knowledge level; *meets standards* - proficient knowledge level; *below standards* - basic knowledge with gaps; *academic warning* - limited knowledge with major gaps. A below standards performance level indicates that you should talk with your child’s teacher in that subject area. An academic warning performance level indicates your child’s skill level is significantly limited and a discussion with his teacher is needed to understand and address his instructional needs.

**National Percentile Rank:** the student’s performance is compared to other students in the nation in the same grade level in the subject area. These are provided for math, reading, and science. A 50th percentile is considered average – half of the students performed better and half performed worse on the test. As another example, if a student is in the 80th percentile, he performed better than 80% of the students and below 20% of the students in the nation.

**Lexile Score:** In reading, the Lexile score indicates the student’s reading level. Lexile scores range from below 200 to over 1700. Parents can visit [www.lexile.com/findabook](http://www.lexile.com/findabook) to input their child’s Lexile score and get appropriate book titles, or to learn more about Lexile scores.

Further information can be accessed at [http://www.isbe.state.il.us/assessment/isat.htm](http://www.isbe.state.il.us/assessment/isat.htm). At that website, click on “Guides to the Illinois Assessment” to see interpretive guides from 1999 to the current year. The interpretive guides provide more extensive information on the particular tests given each year.

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