Alabama State Board of Education Standardized Tests Including ARMT and AHSGE

Understanding the Alabama State Board of Education Standardized Tests

As with all states, Alabama participates in statewide testing of students. The assessments serve as a measure of student performance, teacher performance and school performance. Results from these assessments can show areas of strength and weakness for each child, possible needs for remedial instruction, areas where teachers need to focus more efforts and school’s progress towards helping all children attain proficiency in their academic subjects. An objective of the No Child Left Behind Act is for all schools to have 100% of students performing proficiently by 2014. These tests being closely tied to the established curriculum allows for the progress toward this goal to be monitored.

The assessments given in Alabama are connected to the material taught as designed by the Common Core Standards which were adopted for use by the Alabama State Board of Education. These standards provide a framework for learning in English Language Arts and Mathematics across the grade-spans. The Alabama State Board of Education Standardized Tests measures that students are learning up to the expectations set forth in the curricular guidelines.

The Common Core Standards were developed through the work of educators, school administrators, teacher preparatory programs and other professional development opportunities. The Common Core in English Language Arts and Mathematics represents a means to instill depth into the subjects while allowing classroom teachers to provide the broadening experience of each subject. The use of these standards will help prepare all students in Alabama for their college and career pursuits.

Format of the Alabama State Board of Education Standardized Tests

For students starting grade 3, assessments are used to determine academic proficiency in Reading and Mathematics. Alabama schools use the Stanford 10 and related Otis-Lennon School Ability Test to assess students in grades 3-8. The Reading assessment covers vocabulary and comprehension, the Language portion covers grammar and mechanics, and the Mathematics assessment covers mathematical procedures and problem solving.

Students in grades 5 and 7 are given the Science assessment which covers the nature of science and life, physical, earth and space science. In grade 6 students are also assessed in Social Studies in topics such as history, geography, civics/government and economics.

Each spring, the Alabama Reading and Mathematics Tests (ARMT) are given across the state to students in grades 4, 6 and 8. These tests are criterion-based tests aligned to the learning objectives (the criteria) developed by the Common Core Standards in English Language Arts and Mathematics.

In high school, students must take and pass the Alabama High School Graduation Exam (AHSGE). This is first given to students in grade 10 as a checkpoint into students’ abilities and weaknesses. If a student passes the examination at this point, they will receive credit for having passed. These assessments are given in a five day testing period at various points throughout the school year. The subjects covered are Mathematics, Science, Social Studies and Reading. In each assessment students receive a result of either pass/mastery or fail/non-mastery.

For those who do not pass, determinations are made about the need for instructional support and the student will have the opportunity to retake the test in grade 11. Beyond that, further retake opportunities are made available to students.

For all assessments, students with disabilities who require accommodations or alternatives will receive their necessary accommodations.
Preparing for the Alabama State Board of Education Standardized Tests

The curriculum used in Alabama’s schools lays a framework for learning in the subjects of English Language Arts and Mathematics. The framework suggests the topical areas that are required to gain proficiency in the subject matter. Teachers use these frameworks as a map to plan instruction by and all students are taught to the same expectations of comprehensive learning.

The Common Core Standards provides that in English Language Arts, students need to have proficiency in reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language (grammar, conventions). In Mathematics, students need to understand problem solving, reasoning, modeling and the use of analytic tools. In earlier grades, this knowledge is taught through foundational skills; in the later grades a more conceptual approach can be taken.

For students who will be taking these assessments, understanding strengths and weaknesses within subject areas can benefit the student significantly. Targeted instruction in areas where a student is not achieving at proficient levels is a result of a well-planned assessment. Developing skills and knowledge in all areas that are specified in the Common Core Standards will be necessary for achieving proficiency in the subjects.

Get Your Child Ready for Alabama State Testing

SchoolTutoring’s Alabama State Test Prep programs start with a free academic assessment with an Academic Director. Our flagship tutoring program is available for $179.99/month which includes regular one-on-one tutoring, academic mentorship, bi-monthly progress reports, learning profiles, and parental conference calls. To learn more visit SchoolTutoring.com.