



MEMORANDUM

TO: Corporation Test Coordinators and Special Education Directors

FROM: Dr. Michele Walker, Director of Student Assessment
Dr. Pamela Wright, Director of Special Education

DATE: August 16, 2016

SUBJECT: Update: ISTAR Alternate Assessment 2016-17 and Spring 2016 ISTAR Reports

For the 2015–2016 school year ISTAR, Indiana’s alternate assessment program for students with significant cognitive disabilities, was administered in three parts:

- Part 1 consisted of a placement test, or screener, administered in October 2015, which determined one of three tiers in which the student was placed.
- Part 2 occurred in January 2016 and assessed the first half of the curriculum for students.
- Part 3 occurred in April and May 2016 and assessed the second half of the curriculum.

The Part 1 placement test was designed to help route students to assessment items in later test administrations at an appropriate level of challenge or tier. The purpose of the tiers was to allow the students’ knowledge of the academic standards to be assessed using content that is accessible for those students. Generally, Tier 1 items are less complex and require less interaction with the content than Tier 2 items, and Tier 2 items are less complex and have less interaction than Tier 3 items. The items developed for Tiers 1, 2, and 3 measure the Content Connectors based on the Indiana Academic Standards and are structurally appropriate for that tiered form.

In Part 1, all students took the same test form with a range of items for all three tiers. Items assessed content from a section of the blueprint aligned with fall instruction.

The Part 2 and Part 3 assessments were designed to reduce the time testing in any particular session and to align the tested content with the curriculum taught in a specific part of the school year.

The 2016 design presented some challenges. Scaling was an issue because of the need to link items across tiers and over time, and because Part 1 was used for placement only, those items had no value in the overall score.

The IDOE and Questar have consulted the Indiana State Board of Education-appointed Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to discuss the Spring 2016 ISTAR assessment. The outcome of

meetings with the TAC resulted in design changes to enhance the technical quality of the ISTAR assessment.

ISTAR Alternate Assessment 2016-17

Based on feedback from the TAC, the ISTAR assessment has been redesigned for 2016-17. In Part 1, all students will take the same 20 items, which represent a range in terms of difficulty, complexity, and structural level (Tier 1, 2, and 3 items). Items assess content from a section of the blueprint aligned with fall instruction. Part 1 will be administered in a testing window from January 9 – February 3, 2017. The Part 1 test is designed to help route students to assessment items in Part 2 that are at an appropriate level of challenge/tier.

The Part 2 test will be administered in a testing window from April 10 – May 19, 2017. This portion of the assessment contains 12 operational items and 2 field-test items. Items assess content from a section of the blueprint aligned with spring instruction. The operational items will be primarily drawn from one of three tiers based on the student’s performance in Part 1.

Performance on items from both Part 1 and Part 2 will be combined for the summative score.

ISTAR 2016-17 Test Windows

Part 1	Part 2
January 9 – February 3, 2017	April 10 – May 19, 2017

ISTAR Reports for Spring 2016

For the 2015-16 School Year, the ISTAR report will not include scale scores or performance level descriptors (*Pass+*, *Pass*, *Did Not Pass*). Rather, information about Tier Placement, raw scores and percent correct, along with Tier descriptors are included.

Date	Action
September 6	Reports available to Corps/Schools via the Questar Admin Site, including Corporation Summary Data and School Roster Reports
September 13	Delivery of <i>Individual Student Report</i> (ISR) paper copies and labels for students’ cumulative files

You are welcome to contact the Office of Student Assessment with any questions or concerns by calling 317-232-9050 or via email istar@doe.in.gov.