

# Frequently Asked Questions about Student Assessment Data

## **What data are collected when a student takes a state assessment?**

Basic student information and student assessment scores are reported to the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development (DEED). “Basic student information” includes the student’s name, Alaska student ID number, and demographic information, such as gender and race/ethnicity. **DEED does not collect sensitive information such as a student’s religion, political affiliation, or Social Security number.**

## **How are assessment results used?**

Individual student assessment data are shared with the student’s school district to provide information about how the student performed on the assessment. Only authorized school district staff that have a legitimate educational interest (such as the student’s teacher or principal) may see a student’s data.

**No individual student data are reported publicly.** DEED aggregates data for public reporting by providing counts and percentages of students scoring at each of the assessment’s achievement levels. When a group of students, such as a subgroup or grade level, is so small that individual students could potentially be identified, DEED suppresses the data and either reports a percentage range (e.g., 60% or more, 40% or fewer) or does not report any results at all in order to protect student privacy. These aggregated data are used when reporting the performance of groups of students in the annual Report Card. They also fulfill DEED’s reporting requirements under state and federal law without identifying individual students.

## **How the data will not be used!**

DEED does not report individual student data to the federal government or to private parties. **DEED never sells individual student data.** Individual student information is not provided to third-party vendors to solicit goods and services.

## **What does DEED do to protect student data?**

**All student data is stored and transmitted securely.** Within DEED, only the Assessments and Information Technology staff have direct access to individual student data for the purpose of calculating and reporting accountability measures. These staff sign agreements to keep data confidential and are well versed in the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the federal law that governs individual student data in much the same way as HIPAA does with medical records. Data received from the testing vendor and school districts are transmitted using secure connections and stored within DEED’s firewalled data servers. Likewise, any individual student data that need to be transmitted from DEED are sent via encrypted e-mail or through a secure data connection.

