

ISEE or SSAT: Which Assessment Should My Student Take?



Daren Worcester
Aug 2, 2026 • 5 minute read



1 School Application Requirements

First and foremost, check each school's application requirements to ensure compliance with their procedures. Many schools accept both assessments, allowing families to choose the test that works best for them, but in some regions, only one test is offered, especially in localized day schools.

School preferences may also vary by school level (lower, middle, upper) and grades, so read the requirements carefully. This is most notable in elementary grades, where the ISEE begins with current first graders applying to second grade, and the earliest SSAT offering is for current third graders applying to fourth grade. We've included a chart at the bottom of this article to show the ISEE and SSAT test equivalents for each student grade.

2 Test Modes

Is your student more comfortable taking a paper or computer test, which includes either handwriting or typing their essay?

Paper tests offer the comfort and security of testing at a school, a testing office (ISEE), or with an educational consultant (SSAT), with most students testing in groups with similar-aged peers. Availability: Both.

Computer tests at a school or testing office provide a similar experience to paper in terms of overall environment. Availability: ISEE.

Home testing on a device provides the convenience and comfort of testing alone in a familiar environment with an online proctor. Please note: When testing at home, parents assume the responsibility for ensuring a distraction-free environment and compatibility between the home device and the testing software. Availability:

- ISEE at-home testing is offered worldwide at times that align with time zones in the Americas
- SSAT at-home testing is available to testers physically located in Canada and the United States

Prometric significantly expands access by providing proctored, computer-based testing in a controlled environment at over 5,000 test centers worldwide. At Prometric centers, students may be seated in testing rooms with adults taking different exams. Availability: Both.

3 Availability and Timeline

When determining your preferred test modes, also factor in proximity to the nearest test center and whether the testing dates align with your schedule.

In general, ISEE paper tests are available on numerous dates throughout the testing seasons, with each school setting the dates. These schools can offer a computer-based version of the test at their preference. The SSAT has 6 designated Standard paper test dates, beginning in October and ending in March; SSAT Flex testing is also available with educational consultants and schools throughout the testing year with each location setting the dates. SSAT at Home testing is available for 1–2 weeks per month, whereas, ISEE at Home is generally daily. Most Prometric test centers offer both assessments daily.

The following links will help you compare the testing schedules and locations.

- [ISEE Test Dates and Locations Search](#) (for all test options)
- [SSAT Paper Test Dates](#)
- [SSAT Paper Test Center Search](#)
- [SSAT at Home Test Dates](#)
- [SSAT Prometric Center Search](#) (Select "SSAT by the Enrollment Management Association" from the drop-down menu)

The overall application timeline could also affect your decision if your student plans to take an assessment more than once. ISEE testers can take it once per testing season for a total of up to 3 times per school year. Testing Seasons are defined as:

- Fall: August – November
- Winter: December – March
- Spring/Summer: April – July

The SSAT's policies align with the test mode instead of the season. For paper, Middle and Upper Level students may take up to 6 Standard tests and 1 Flex test. For computer testing, SSAT at Home allows 1 test per school year, and Prometric allows 2 tests per school year (both are Middle and Upper Level only).

4 Score Reporting Timeline

ISEE paper test scores are typically available within 5–10 days of the test administration, and computer test results are usually ready in 3–5 days.

SSAT paper scores are typically released within two weeks of the test administration. SSAT at Home scores are typically released on the Wednesday following your test administration. For assessments administered at a Prometric center on Monday through Sunday, results are typically made available on Wednesday following that testing week.

For the ISEE, results are available to families and schools on the same day when families have designated score recipients by their test date. For the SSAT, score recipients who are entered at any time before the score release will receive the results immediately upon release. For both assessments, families can begin designating schools to receive results during registration; however, if you want to review the scores before schools receive them, please wait to designate recipients until after the release.

It's also worth noting that most schools are understanding of receiving test results after application deadlines when the test administration occurs close to or soon after their deadline. Always confirm this with the school before registering for either assessment around deadlines.

- [Learn more about ISEE score reports](#)
- [Learn more about SSAT score reports](#)

ISEE and SSAT Equivalencies By Current Grade Level

The following chart displays the ISEE and SSAT tests that students should take based on their current grade. Please note that in the spring, SSAT testers may test up a grade (for example, current 7th graders can take the test for current 8th graders), and those results are eligible for submission with fall applications.

CURRENT GRADE	ISEE TEST	SSAT TEST
1	Prim 2	X
2	Prim 3	X
3	Prim 4	Elem 3
4	Lower 5	Elem 4
5	Lower 6	Middle 5
6	Middle 7	Middle 6
7	Middle 8	Middle 7
8	Upper 9	Upper 8
9	Upper 10	Upper 9
10	Upper 11	Upper 10
11	Upper 12	Upper 11
12	Upper 12	X