

Iowa Testing FAQs (2024)

What is the Iowa test? The Iowa Test of Basic Skills is another type of standardized test, similar to the traditional Stanford Achievement Test. The student experience is nearly the same, except Iowa is shorter. *All parts of the Iowa test are strictly timed.* The score reports are a little different, and SMICA may offer a small meeting next summer on interpreting the score reports for interested parents.

Why do we have to test? Section 3.5 of SMICA Policy Manual: If a diploma from SMIC Academy is to be a meaningful document, we must ensure that our graduates have at least mastered the rudiments of education. Standardized testing is an imperfect measure of a student's ability, but it is the best means we now have for tracking progress.

Do I have to test with SMICA? What are my options? SMICA offers group testing for many reasons, including socializing with SMICA classmates and receiving percentile scores (norms) within AACCS (Christian schools), as well as the nation.

Lately, there have been no other group options, unless you create a group. You may also test at home or online. However, these tests will only have national norms. *See section 5.5 of the SMICA Policy Manual: At Home Testing (doc attached).*

Do I have to test every year? May I test every year? We offer tests for 3rd-10th grades. SMICA requires achievement testing of your students beginning in 4th grade and up, every other year through 9th or 10th grade. Some families test in grades 3,5,7,9 or 4,6,8,10. You may test every year. You may test all or some of your children, assuming you are meeting the "every other year" requirement for each child. *These rules apply to first-year families as well.*

When will I get scores back? Usually, scores are ready to distribute to families within 4 weeks of finishing the test.

Does my high schooler have to test? The college-readiness tests, such as the ACT, SAT, PSAT, PSAT 8/9, and Pre-ACT, do *not* satisfy the SMICA testing requirement, and they are not achievement tests. However, if you would like to opt-out of achievement testing for your 9th or 10th grader, please ask for the *High School Testing Waiver*.

Do I need a practice test? If this is the first time your child has tested, or if your child has never used a bubble-in answer document, you should practice. I have several resources you may use. I also have official practice tests and directions, which familiarize the student with the typical test directions.

What is the CogAT? The Cognitive Abilities Test “measures learned reasoning abilities that are most directly related to academic success in school.” It is not an IQ test. SMICA administers the CogAT only to our 4th and 5th graders. *Practice is strongly recommended* for this test, and it can be found at <https://www.tests.com/practice/COGAT-Practice-Test>

What if we cannot be there one day? Local co-op teachers have been understanding about missing class for achievement testing. If your student is required to test this year, the administration expects your child to strive to complete the full test you have chosen to take (see *At Home Testing*). Make-up days are intended to accommodate only those with providential circumstances.

Do I have to proctor? We need proctors, and the Lord has been faithful every year. Please indicate on the form if you are willing to proctor, even one day or as a stand-by. Proctors are paid \$20 per day by the Academy. Non-proctoring parents usually bless the proctors with donations for snacks.

What if my child usually performs way above or way below grade level? The test level is helpful if the child scores between 15th and 97th percentile. You may test your child at any level, but SMICA recommends that you test with his age and grade mates for his first group test, unless you have already decided to withhold the child at a lower grade because of a late birthday or your observations of their abilities in your curriculum. Please let me (Emily) know if you want to do this. The function of the test is to compare your child against the normed peers of his same age and grade.

If you believe your child may qualify for special testing accommodations, SMICA may require you to submit a professional evaluation by a psychometrist, a trained special educational consultant, an ophthalmologist, an ENT, etc.

Testing above level in 8th-9th grade may appear to affect your qualifications for Honor Society so let me know to make a note of that.

Can my friend from XYZ homeschool group test with us? Yes! The cost will be \$50 for students outside our academy. There is a limited amount of space, so priority will be given to those who have taken the Iowa before.