



Utah students have been required to take year-end tests for many years. In 2008, Utah began to pilot a new computer adaptive testing system. Its success led the Utah Legislature to establish a statewide computer-adaptive system in 2013-14. This system is known as SAGE and was developed with help from AIR, the American Institutes for Research.

SAGE tests are not part of the Common Core, but they do – in part – measure whether students know and understand the Core standards. In Utah, Core standards include the Common Core-based math and language arts and Core standards as well as in other academic subjects that are unique to Utah. The adoption of the Common Core did not legally or technically necessitate a new testing system. Whenever new educational standards are created or amended, a new assessment aligned to the new standards must be created to measure students' understanding.

SAGE tests assess students in only the following grades and subjects: English languages arts grades 3-11 (writing, reading, language and listening); mathematics grades 3-8, and Math I-III; science grades 4-8, and biology, Earth science, chemistry, and physics.

Utah's SAGE tests are unique to Utah. Early on in Common Core standards development, two assessment consortia formed – PARCC (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers) and SBAC (Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium). Utah originally joined SBAC and was, in fact, one of the governing states. In 2012, however, Utah withdrew from SBAC and has developed SAGE with funding from the Utah State Legislature.

SAGE tests students' knowledge and skills, not what they believe. The tests collect data measuring academic achievement of students based on standards in English language arts, mathematics, and science. SAGE tests do not collect private, "psychometric" data on students. Neither SAGE nor AIR collect any of the following information from students: political affiliation of parents, beliefs, sexual behavior or orientation, DNA, student addresses or emails, family incomes, or psychological or behavioral testing results.

The Utah State Office of Education, through SAGE, does collect some student data. This list includes: name of student, date of birth, race/ethnicity, gender, special education status, performance on state assessments, status related to English language proficiency, students who qualify for free/reduced-priced meals, grades, credits, enrollment dates, school, and district.

AIR's K-12 achievement tests have successfully assessed students' academic skills for 37 years. AIR, a Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit organization, was selected by the Utah State Office of Education to administer SAGE in a competitive bidding process. During its long history in academic assessment, AIR's



educational experts have designed and delivered achievement tests for states that include Ohio, Hawaii, Oregon, Delaware, Minnesota, South Carolina, and New Mexico.

Writing passages included on the SAGE assessments have been reviewed by teachers and bias panels.

These groups, which include between five and eight people per grade level, review passages to ensure they are socially appropriate, on grade level, and effective for use in a summative state test. Once passages are approved, test questions are written and aligned to those passages. Those items are then reviewed by a different set of Utah educators.

SAGE tests are adaptive and a step up from “fill-in-the-bubble” assessments. This means students can see different questions based upon previous questions and answers, e.g., students who are struggling will get easier questions to help keep them moving forward and students breezing through the exam will get harder questions to help keep them involved. Unlike CRT tests, which have been offered in Utah for years, SAGE tests provide more than just multiple-choice answers and are designed to measure all levels of critical thinking. Students have the opportunity to answer a variety of test items through different methods. These include multiple choice, open answer, “hot-text,” drag-and-drop, and long response, among others.

Utah parents have reviewed and will continue to review every single SAGE test question. A 15-member panel of Utah parents read and critiqued all SAGE questions in November 2013, prior to offering the SAGE test in any Utah school. The group, mandated by state law and chosen in part by legislators, reviewed 9,962 test items in mathematics, English language arts, and science. Of those, 573 items were flagged for various reasons that included technology functionality, content, scoring/distractors, and graphic visibility. After further review, 29 items were permanently removed, and 133 items were changed. This panel will continue to meet and review every additional test item added to the SAGE assessment bank each year.