

Goals and national tests in the third year in school

- Information for parents



Before the autumn term of 2008, national goals were implemented for the third year in school in Swedish, Swedish as a second language and Mathematics. During the spring of 2009 national tests will be carried out for the first time for these subjects. The student learns either Swedish or Swedish as a second language. The subject that a student is supposed to study depends, among other things, on whether the student has a native language other than Swedish.

Why are goals and national tests implemented in the third year in school?

National goals and tests are implemented in the third year in school so that they can contribute to making instruction more equivalent to that of the instruction given throughout the whole country. In this context, equivalent means that all students should have the right to reach a minimum guaranteed standard of abilities. If a student has difficulties reaching the ability objectives, it is important that this issue is identified as early as possible and that the school together with the child's legal guardian reviews any special support efforts that may be necessary.

Goals and national tests are part of the schools' administration system

Currently there are two types of goals: *goals to aim for* and *goals to attain*. *Goals to aim for* are those that guide the planning of teaching and are relevant for all grades. *Goals to attain* are the level of knowledge that schools should ensure all students

have the opportunity to reach. The goals that have been implemented for the third year in school are the goals to attain, and they have been set for the fifth and ninth year in school as well. Even if most students can and should move further in their knowledge development, these goals describe the minimum knowledge requirements after the first three years in school.

The national tests to be implemented for the third year in school in Swedish, Swedish as a second language and Mathematics provide support for the teacher's assessment of the extent to which the student has reached the goals.

The purpose of the national tests is:

- to contribute to more students attaining the goals,
- to show the students' strengths and weaknesses in a certain subject, and
- to support an equivalent and fair assessment.

What do the goals and tests mean for my child?

The goals to be attained in the third year in school constitute the foundation for following up on the students' proficiency, which is done on a continuous basis from the first year in school. Continuous follow-up from the time the child starts going to school acts as a safeguard so that the child does not have difficulties in attaining the goals. If the follow-up shows that the student is going to have problems reaching the goals, he/she is entitled to special support.

During the spring term of the third year in school the student's knowledge will be tested in a national test. The school decides the time at which the various components of the test should be implemented during the period March – May 2009. The national tests are designed so that they may be integrated into the educational process in a natural fashion.

The test represents a means of support in the assessment of the extent to which the student has attained the minimum level of knowledge that all students must have attained at the end of the third year in school.

How do the goals and tests affect me as a parent/guardian?

National goals implemented at an early stage of school can make it easier for parents to monitor the child's knowledge development. Correspondingly, it will also be easier for parents to exert their right to special support if it is feared that the student will not be able to reach the goals in the third year in school.

With the help of the results of the national test, the teacher makes a collected assessment of the student's knowledge in relation to the goals. This assessment is documented in a written knowledge profile. The knowledge profile is a good starting point in conversations between the parent/legal guardian and the school.