



**NEBRASKA**  
*DEPARTMENT OF*  
**EDUCATION**

# **Update: Standards, Assessment, and Accountability (SAA-13)**

**Wrapping Up the 2013-2014 School Year –  
March 2014**

Volume 13

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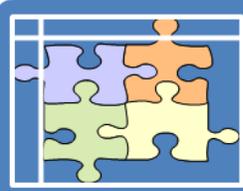


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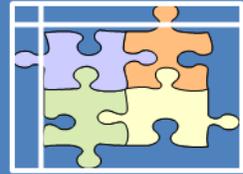
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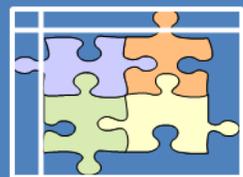




**STANDARDS**



**ASSESSMENT**



**ACCOUNTABILITY**

## **I. Standards, Assessment, and Accountability: Wrapping Up the 2013-2014 School Year**

The Overall NeSA Timeline - 2014

Academic Standards

Graduation Requirements

NeSA Scoring and Reporting

Check 4 Learning (C4L)





# **I. Standards, Assessment, and Accountability: Wrapping Up the 2013-2014 School Year**

## **A. Key Dates**

### **1. The NeSA [Timeline](#)**

### **2. 2014-2015 Testing Dates**

**NeSA-Writing: January 19 – February 6, 2015**

**ELDA: February 9-March 20**

**NeSA-RMS: March 23 – May 1, 2015**

## **B. Academic Standards**

### **1. College and Career Ready Language Arts Standards Nearing Completion**

The Nebraska Language Arts Standards passed in 2009, have been undergoing a rigorous review for the past several months. The State Board of Education's goal is to have academic standards in place that prepare Nebraska students to graduate from high school ready for success in college and/or career. For postsecondary education this means students will be able to complete credit bearing first year courses without need for remediation.

The review process began by asking Nebraska institutions of higher education to weigh in on the 2009 standards and identify areas for improvement. Once that information was gathered as well as all Nebraska standards development, a writing group comprised of Nebraska K-16 educators, administrators and specialists went to work. The authors represented all regions of Nebraska, all levels of education, all sizes of school districts as well as the diverse populations of our state. The existing standards were reviewed against exemplary standards from other states, along with information from ACT, SAT, the NAEP Framework, and information from nationally known researchers. The results of the alignment study between the Common Core State Standards and the Nebraska Standards commissioned in March of 2013 were also used.

The 2014 standards look very similar to the 2009 set. They have been strengthened where necessary; however the format of the standards has remained essentially the



same with one small change. The curricular indicators will be considered a required part of each standard and will no longer be considered to only be examples. They are still organized with three “levels of specificity”:

- K-12 Comprehensive Standards – These broad, general statements cover key areas in each content area.
- Grade Level Standards – These statements are organized by key concepts and identify what students should know and be able to do by the end of a specified grade level. They are not course specific.
- Curricular Indicators – These statements provide more specific information to distinguish expectations between grade levels or grade bands.

Within the next few months the standards will be released for public comment and follow the same process that Nebraska uses for all standards areas. All schools will have an opportunity to weigh in on the drafts. A web-based survey will be available to everyone including the general population and a public hearing will be held. Representatives from business and industry will be asked to review them for career readiness. Designated higher education representatives will be brought back to certify that the standards are college and career ready before the final draft is approved by the State Board. The final approval is scheduled for this fall. Once the standards are adopted, a process will be initiated to look at how and when the NeSA assessments may be revised to incorporate any changes. Work on the Nebraska mathematics standards is scheduled to begin this summer and will continue well into 2015.

## **2. New Fine Arts Standards**

The Nebraska State Board of Education adopted the first ever set of K-12 Nebraska Fine Art Standards on March 4, 2014. In part, this was made possible by a Nebraska Arts Council grant awarded to the Department of Education in the fall of 2012. The goal was to develop a new set of standards that are reflective of Fine Arts Education in the 21st century. NDE brought together groups of educators and other experts to develop the new standards in the areas of Visual Arts, Media Arts, Music, Theatre, and Dance. NDE followed the same process used to develop the academic content standards in Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. Over the past several months, writing and editing groups with representation from across the state met several times to work on the drafts. The standards were written in grade bands of K-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12 using



same format as all Nebraska standards; K-12 broad comprehensive standards, grade level standards and curricular indicators. They were written with the idea that cross curricular or integrated lessons could be used to teach the standards outside of a designated dance class, media arts class, etc. The new fine arts standards may be viewed at [www.education.ne.gov](http://www.education.ne.gov).

For the first time in ten years the Department also has a fine arts director. Her name is Debbie DeFrain and comes to NDE with vast experience at all levels of education. She is available to assist schools with implementation ideas for the new standards. She may be reached at [Debbie.DeFrain@nebraska.gov](mailto:Debbie.DeFrain@nebraska.gov) or 402-471-3142.

### **C. Graduation Requirements**

Requirements were approved by the Attorney General and signed by the Governor in January of 2010. They are now in effect for the students who will graduate in 2015, the students who were 9<sup>th</sup> graders in the 2011-12 year. Districts will note that although specific courses are not named, the intent of the new requirements is that each district's courses include content reflecting the highest level of rigor of the newly revised state standards.

#### **Revisions to Rule 10 Graduations Requirements**

003.05 Graduation Requirements. Each high school shall require from grades nine through twelve at least 200 credit hours for graduation, for which at least 80 percent shall be from the core curriculum. The number of credit hours given for a course may be less than the number of instructional units and may be increased up to 25 percent above the number of instructional units.

003.05A By the 2014-15 school year, districts will adopt and implement graduation requirements that meet the highest level of rigor of the standards as specified in the state standards set forth in the appendices of this Chapter, including, but not limited to the following:

003.05A1 Language Arts. Forty credit hours of Language Arts with course content that includes composition, verbal communication, literature, research skills, and technical reading and writing.

003.05A2 Mathematics. Thirty credit hours of mathematics with course content that includes algebraic, geometric, data analysis, and probability concepts.

003.5A3 Science. Thirty credit hours of science with course content that includes biological, earth/space, and physical science concepts with corresponding science inquiry skills and laboratory experience.



003.05A4 Social Studies/History. Thirty credit hours of social studies/history with course content that includes civics/government, geography, United States and world history, and economic concepts.

003.05A B School systems may adopt a policy allowing high school credit to be awarded to students enrolled in a middle grades course if the course content and requirements are equivalent to a course offered in the high school.

003.05B C As required in 92 NAC 18, school systems accept the academic credit earned at Interim Program Schools and issue diplomas to students transferring from Interim Program Schools who have met the requirements for graduation from their own accredited high school.

One of the federal Title I regulations is the assignment of a four-year graduation rate. Each cohort of students, beginning with the 9<sup>th</sup> graders of 2007-08 were assigned a graduation year. For purposes of AYP calculations, students will be expected to graduate in that assigned year. Because the assigned graduation year expects that students will graduate within four years, students falling behind in earning credits may impact a district's graduation rate. Districts will want to be sure to follow the graduation year assigned to each cohort of students. Districts will also want to be sure to keep documentation for students who have moved out. If documentation is not available for students who move, they are considered non-graduates in the four year rate.

## **1. Graduation Lookup Tool**

The NDE has built tools to assist school districts in verifying the graduation dates for students. The four-year graduation cohort rate begins with the student's first day of 9<sup>th</sup> grade in a Nebraska school district based upon the information in the student template.

Students will be expected to be assessed in their third year of high school, one year before the assigned graduation date. To verify the testing year, districts can use the Graduation Year Lookup Tool and subtract one year from the graduation date. The expected year of assessment will be the graduation year minus one.

Example: If the graduation year is 2014, the expected year of assessment will be in 2013. To access the graduation year lookup tool, you may take the following steps:

Graduation Year Lookup Tool - Directions

Go to the [NDE Portal](#)

Enter the Username and Password



Go to the NSSRS Tab

Select to the NSSRS Validation Link

Click on Lookups by ID

Select Expected Graduation Year

Enter the NDE Student ID

The year listed is the expected cohort graduation rate, so to determine the expected assessment year, subtract one year.

## **2. Graduation Cohort Analysis Tool G-Cat**

The Graduation Cohort Analysis Tool helps school districts review their Graduation Cohort data. Available through the portal, the data are displayed by Graduation Cohort Year.

Graduation Year Lookup Tool - Directions

Go to the [NDE Portal](#)

Enter the Username and Password

Go to the NSSRS Tab

Select to the NSSRS Validation Link

Click on System Lookups

Select Graduation Cohort Analysis Tool

Enter the Graduation Cohort Year

To ensure the data are correct, districts need to verify students in the current graduation cohort to ascertain whether transfer in and transfer out students are counted correctly. If corrections are necessary, please contact the NDE Helpdesk (888.285.0556).



## D. NeSA Scoring and Reporting

### 1. NeSA Scoring

The [scoring rules](#) that are applied to all tests in the Nebraska State Accountability System are available on the assessment website. The scoring rules were applied first in 2009-2010 and will continue throughout subsequent years.

### 2. State of the Schools Report - Business Rules and Not Tested Codes

Complete sets of business rules are found on the NDE Website. Districts will find [calculation rules for NeSA, NePAS and AYP](#) that will provide guidance for the State of the Schools Report (SOSR). Districts are responsible for testing all students enrolled at the beginning of the testing window. Assessment participation is satisfied when the student attempts one item or prompt. Districts are able to add new students through the online system or by completing a new answer sheet during the assessment window. The receiving district is responsible to determine whether the new student has been tested in the preceding district. Districts provide a not tested code for any student not assessed either on the student answer sheet or in the online system. The not tested codes are explained in the table below.

Code	Description	Explanation of Use
EMW	Emergency Medical Waiver	Student was not tested because of an Emergency Medical Waiver. (excluded from reporting)
NLE	No Longer Enrolled	Student was not tested because of relocation from district/school after data submission but prior to NeSA testing. (excluded from reporting)
PAR	Parent Refusal	Student was not tested because of a formal request from parent or guardian. (included in reporting as scale score zero and performance level of 1)
RAL	Recently Arrived LEP	Student was not tested because student met the requirements for recently arrived classification. (excluded from reporting for reading only)
SAE	Student Absent for the Entire Testing Window	Student was not tested because student was absent from school from the beginning of testing till the end of testing. (included in reporting as scale score zero and performance level of 1)



## Score Invalidation and Waivers

In general, the following rules were applied:

Emergency Medical Waivers (EMW) are granted if the situation was an emergency medical waiver and a student's medical situation prevented testing. The EMW needs to be approved by the Statewide Assessment Office. During the testing window, Emergency Medical Waivers are not granted for pregnancy or for situations where the school could have tested the student. A physician's statement is required before approval is granted. Scores for students approved under EMW are waived.

Score Invalidations are applied in situations where the construct of the NeSA test has been violated. An example of invalidation occurred when the reading test was read to a student or where cheating was documented. Students receiving score invalidations received zero scores. Participation in AYP may or may not have been affected, depending upon circumstances of the invalidation.

Expelled Students provided with education in Rule 17 schools (alternative programs with certified teachers) are required to be tested. Therefore, if students in Rule 17 schools were not tested, but were enrolled during the testing window, they received zero scores.

No Longer Enrolled (NLE) Students who were no longer enrolled in their school districts were coded NLE. Districts needed to "de-enroll" students when they left. If students left before February 1, the NSSRS should have been updated. If students left after February 1, they were to be coded NLE in the online system or on the student answer sheets. NLE Codes are applied in circumstances where a student only took the first half of the test and then left the district. NLE codes resulted in waived scores.

Other – Student was not assessed for reasons not covered by other descriptions. . Students receiving a designation of 'other' are excluded from reporting.

### 3. Conversion Tables

NeSA-RMS Conversion Tables will be posted each year after testing is completed and post equating is conducted. Conversion tables for NeSA-W do not change. All conversion tables are available on the [NDE Assessment website](#).

#### 4. Testing High School Students – 2014

The administration of NeSA assessments is required for students in their third year of high school. Testing will occur in the year prior to their expected graduation year rather than their assigned grade level. A student’s expected graduation year or cohort graduation year is determined by adding four years to the school year in which the student enters grade nine for the first time. The assessment year is one year less than the cohort graduation year. For example, a student with a Cohort Year of 2015 will take his/her assessment tests in 2014.

There is a graduation lookup tool found behind the portal in the NSSRS validation reports. If districts need help with this tool, they may call the NDE Help desk at 888.285.0556.

#### 5. NeSA Reports

Information regarding score releases and Reports can be found on the [assessment website](#).

NeSA preliminary reports are available to districts through the eDirect System for writing and for reading, mathematics, and science. The District Assessment Contacts (DAC) will receive email notification when the results are ready, and can access the reports for distribution to district personnel. The reports include building, district, and state level information about the NeSA results. Districts will have time to review the data before it is made public. **Sample reports can be found on the [NeSA reporting page of the assessment website](#).** Included in the various reports are the following:

- Raw scores
- Scale scores
- Proficiency levels (“Below the Standards,” “Meets the Standards,” and “Exceeds the Standards”)
- Indicators with the highest performance
- Indicators with the lowest performance
- Disaggregated student results

Additionally, DRC sends two hard copies of the Individual Student Reports to the District Assessment Contacts. The districts should retain a copy of the ISR in the student’s file. **It is the district’s responsibility to send the ISR report to parents in a**



timely manner. The individual student reports will also be available electronically through eDirect.

### NeSA Reports Interpretive Guide

The NeSA reports include terms and vocabulary that may be unfamiliar to educators and parents. It is critical that district personnel use a resource, “NeSA Reports Interpretive Guide” available on the A-Z list on the [NeSA Reporting](#) page. The Guide provides an explanation of the terms on the report and should help prepare district personnel for explaining reports to parents and the community. The Interpretive Guide will be available in Spanish for reading, mathematics and science.

The Interpretive Guide includes information on following terms:

**Raw Score:** The number of correct items on the NeSA tests out of the total possible.

**Scale Score:** The conversion of a raw score into an easily recognizable scale score allows year to year comparison in the same subject area. The raw scores for NeSA tests in reading, mathematics, and science are converted to a scale score between 0 and 200. Scores for the NeSA writing test are converted to a scale score between 0 and 70.

**Percentile Rank:** The position of a student’s score in comparison with other students in the state who took the same test. A percentile rank of 84 means the student scored better than 84% of the other students who took the test.

The NeSA scale score proficiency levels will not change in reading, mathematics, and science from year to year.

Exceeds the Standards	135-200
Meets the Standards	85-134
Below the Standards	84 and Below

The Conversion Table for Raw Score/Scale Score will be different each year because although the test items are comparable in the various test forms, they are different. The conversion table for each new test is based on an annual equating process to the baseline year test. Each subject’s conversion tables that convert raw scores to scale scores will be posted for the tested grades as soon as they are available.



Similarly, the NeSA score proficiency levels will not change in writing.

	4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	11 <sup>th</sup> Grade
Exceeds the Standards	57-70	55-70	53-70
Meets the Standards	40-56	40-54	40-52
Below the Standards	39 and Below	39 and Below	39 and Below

The Raw Score/Scale Conversion tables remain consistent in writing because the rubric does not change. Conversion tables can be found on the assessment [writing web page](#).

## 6. Sources for Accessing NeSA Data

There are multiple locations where NeSA data can be accessed. Some of the locations are password protected and available only to school districts. Others are public locations and available to all users. A [chart](#) has been placed on the assessment website and identifies where NeSA data can be accessed

## E. Check for Learning

### 1. 2014-15 Check4Learning Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

NDE acknowledges that participating districts had limited access to C4L during 2013-14 school year. Due to these limitations, current participating C4L districts will have no additional item writing/reviewing responsibilities in math and science to continue their participation in C4L for the 2014-15 school year. If additional ELA items are needed due to changes in ELA standards, NDE will provide information to districts in the upcoming MOU. This decision will be revisited for future MOUs because it is important to maintain the item bank with new content. New C4L districts will still be required to write and review items. These requirements will be outlined in the 2014-15 MOU. When completed, the [2014-2015 MOU](#) will be emailed to DACs and will be accessible online.

In order to prepare for the 2014-15 administration, the C4L system will not be available June 30 to July 14. The intention is for the system to be available for the entire 2014-2015 school year. Districts will be able to add students to C4L any time after July 14<sup>th</sup>.



District, school, and teacher users with 2013-14 administration access will have their accounts automatically rolled over to the 2014-15 administration.

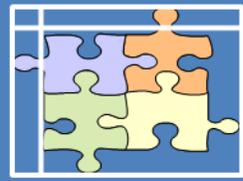
## **F. Information for State of the Schools Report**

### **1. 2013-14 STATE OF THE SCHOOLS REPORT - Consolidated Data Collection - CDC**

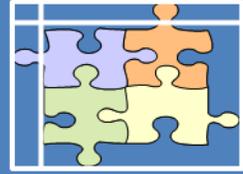
The CDC site located on the NDE Portal > Data Collections > Consolidated Data Collections > State Of The Schools Report, will open April 1, 2014 and close on June 30, 2014. Information from this site is used to populate the district and school descriptions and the graduation requirements on the State of the Schools Report. Descriptions and graduation requirements on the CDC are pre-populated from the previous year, but you will need to open the site and “Save” each of the descriptions for the current year. If needed, you may edit the descriptions or graduation requirements at this time. When complete, you must click the Submit and Approve buttons on the main page of the SOSR. Access information and instructions are available on the [assessment website](#) as well as the CDC site.



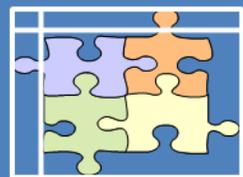




**STANDARDS**



**ASSESSMENT**



**ACCOUNTABILITY**

## **II. State and Federal Reporting and Accountability**

NePAS

State of the Schools Report





## **II. State and Federal Reporting and Accountability**

### **A. State and Federal Accountability**

#### **1. NePAS – Nebraska Performance Accountability System**

In 2012, the Nebraska State Board of Education adopted NePAS (Nebraska Performance Accountability System), Nebraska school district's first state accountability system. The results of accountability have been included in the NePAS section of the State of the school Reports since.

Due to many changes involving accountability, the current NePAS system is being revised. In January 2014, the State Board of Education approved *Nebraska Performance Accountability System [NePAS] 1.1: Background and Proposal of Framework*.

Currently underway is a NePAS 1.1 Task Force, which is comprised of 40-60 Nebraska Department of Education and Nebraska school personnel, along with representatives from community organizations. The NePAS 1.1 Task Force will make recommendations to the Nebraska State Board of Education about the many factors to be included in the accountability system.

#### **2. State of the Schools Report Functions**

In recent years, functions were added to the State of the Schools Report. Current data are extensive but combining multiple data sources is time consuming and labor intensive. The following features are accessible from the menu.

District Profiles – will feature each district and will be accessible from the district menu. The profile will be a summary and condensed version of data sources: district statistics, student performance results on Standards, Statewide Writing Assessment, results from national assessment instruments and AYP.

Building Profiles – will be similar to the district profile. The building profile will feature building statistics and student performance information specific to that building.

A State Profile – will be available including the same features as those in the District Page.

**These profiles may be used as a state, district, or building report card.**



The Comparison Tool – allows users of the website to select up to seven school districts or buildings for comparison on multiple data sources. Users may select the districts and the data sources they wish to compare, i.e. student enrollment, student performance, attendance, etc.

Data Downloads-are available on the SOSR under the LINKS tab.





#### IV. Links

[NeSA Scoring Rules](#)

[Sources of NeSA Data](#)

