



Update: Standards, Assessment, and Accountability (SAA)

Fall 2016-2017

Volume 18

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Purpose of the Standards, Assessment, and Accountability SAA Update 18

This Standards, Assessment, and Accountability Update provides information about:

- I. Standards, Assessment, and Accountability – What’s Ahead – 2016-2017?
- II. The Statewide Writing Assessment – NeSA-Writing
- III. ELA Transition
- IV. Inclusion All Students in Assessment and Accountability
- V. State and Federal Accountability
- VI. The Continuous Improvement Process
- VII. Links

SAA Updates are provided twice a year by the NDE Assessment and Accountability office in cooperation with other departments. The next update will be available in March 2017.

These materials may be downloaded from the [Nebraska Department of Education website](#)

Standards, Assessment, Accountability 2016-2017

Assessment Administrations for 2016-2017

Year	Subject	Grade level
2016-2017	NeSA-English Language Arts	3-8
	NeSA-AA English Language Arts	3-8, HS*
	NeSA-Mathematics	3-8
	NeSA-AA Mathematics	3-8, HS
	NeSA-Science	5, 8
	NeSA-AA Science	5, 8, HS
	English Language Development Assessment (ELPA21)	K-12
	College Entrance Exam**	HS

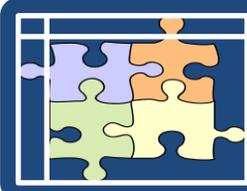
* Grade HS – students in third year of high school. Students are to be tested one year before their expected graduation year.

**An addendum to the update will be released, as soon as details for implementation of the College Entrance Exam are determined.

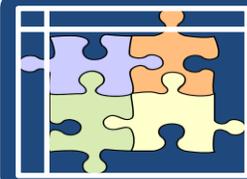
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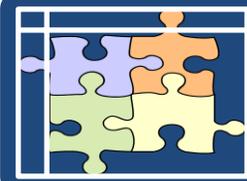
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STANDARDS



ASSESSMENT



ACCOUNTABILITY

I. Standards, Assessment, and Accountability: What's Ahead: 2016-2017?

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A. Curriculum Update

1. The Nebraska Teacher and Principal Performance Framework and Evaluation Models

The Nebraska Teacher and Principal Performance Framework and Evaluation Models

The Nebraska [Teacher and Principal Performance Framework](http://www.education.ne.gov/documents/TeacherPrincipalPerformanceFramework11-11.pdf)

(<http://www.education.ne.gov/documents/TeacherPrincipalPerformanceFramework11-11.pdf>)

identifies a set of effective practices that characterize Nebraska's best teachers and principals.

In 2015, the Nebraska Legislature amended Sections 79-308 and 79-1035 to begin directing income from the Solar and Wind agreements on public school lands to be used as grants supporting implementation of an evaluation model for effective educators.

In April, 2016, the first Solar and Wind income-funded grant opportunities were announced, and Nebraska schools and districts interested in implementing the Nebraska teacher evaluation model were encouraged to apply. Thirty-two districts secured grant funding and utilized a portion of funding to attend a 2-day training offered by the Nebraska Department of Education in cooperation with Regional Educational Service Units. The trainings emphasized alignment of formal staff evaluation processes to the *Nebraska Teacher and Principal Performance Framework*. A second round of grant opportunities is expected in spring, 2017.

On March 4, 2016, the Nebraska State Board of Education Study Committee on Teacher and Principal Evaluation released a [Final Report on Teacher and Principal Evaluation](#). The report outlined the following six recommendations:

- The State Board adopts the *Teacher and Principal Performance Framework* as the minimum requirements for effective practices for teachers and principals.
- The State Board directs NDE to develop effective practices for all other certificated employees.
- The State Board recognizes that the effective practices and models, developed through the pilot process, are aligned with existing NDE Rules.

- The State Board believes that a quality evaluation model includes the following components: evaluation of effective practices, measures of student and school progress, plans for ongoing professional learning, and other locally determined components.
- The State Board directs that the evaluation models and supporting information developed through the pilot schools become open source for all school districts by June 1, 2016.
- The State Board charges NDE to transition to a support and resource system for continued review and revision of the effective practices, evaluation models, and subsequent materials for school districts.

For questions about the material covered in this section please contact:

Dr. Janine Theiler, Specialist for Educator Effectiveness,

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2. College and Career Ready Standards

Nebraska Revised Statute 79-760.01 requires the Nebraska State Board of Education to "adopt measurable academic content standards for at least the grade levels required for statewide assessment." Those standards shall cover the subject areas of reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social studies, and the State Board of Education shall develop a plan to review and update standards for those subject areas every seven years. The revised statute is effective as of August 30, 2015.

In addition to the content standards required by statute, the Nebraska Department of Education has developed content standards for fine arts, physical education, health education, and world languages, as well as course-based content standards for Career and Technical Education. Although not required by law, the standards provide schools a framework for ensuring quality teaching and learning for all content areas offered in schools.

A [Standards Revision Timeline](#) has been developed and includes a tentative timeline for the review and revision of all content area standards. The timeline includes the following assumptions:

The review and revision of content standards will be completed by the end of the seven-year cycle. The review and revision process may take up to 1.5 years to complete.

Most review and revision processes will begin in the spring and are expected to be completed by the following fall.

Pursuant to 79-7601.01, school districts will have one year to adopt the state-approved content standards or adopt standards deemed as equal to or more rigorous than the state-approved content standards in the subject areas of reading and writing (English Language Arts), mathematics, science, and social studies.

School districts are encouraged to adopt the state-approved standards in other content areas (Fine Arts, Physical Education, Health Education, and World Languages) within one year of being adopted by the State Board of Education.

Career and Technical Education standards will be reviewed and revised on a five-year cycle in order to remain current with occupational demands/standards.

The following content areas are currently being revised:

Physical Education (Anticipated approval October 2016)

Communication & Information Systems (Anticipated approval November 2016)

Human Sciences/Family & Consumer Science (Anticipated approval November 2016)

Education & Training (Anticipated approval November 2016)

The newly approved content area standards will be posted on the [Content Area Standards Website](#).

Nebraska Science Standards

Pursuant to 79.760.01, and under the leadership of the Nebraska Department of Education, the [Legacy Nebraska Science Standard](#) were reviewed. The science standards were adopted by the State Board of Education in 2010. The State Board of Education has charged NDE's Teaching and Learning Team with developing "Nebraska's College and Career Ready Standards for Science." These K-12 standards, when mastered, would allow a student to

succeed in entry-level, credit-bearing postsecondary coursework without the need for remediation.

Following the vision of [A Framework for K-12 Science Education](#), NDE released the results of the [Comparison Study: Nebraska Science Standards and the Next Generation Science Standards](#), comparing the 2010 Nebraska Science Standards and the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). This study, completed by McREL, offers a comparison of the content and rigor between Nebraska's Science Standards and NGSS. The findings conclude that the Nebraska Science Standards do not embed Science and Engineering Practices or cross-cutting concepts, and that notable gaps were found in the Nebraska Science Standards related to engineering/technology/ applications of science as well as within earth/space science. Additionally, the study noted that the content within the Nebraska Science Standards was at a lower level of cognitive complexity, when compared to NGSS.

The Nebraska Science Standards revision process began this spring with a public input survey. The survey sought feedback and input related to the content and rigor of the 2010 Nebraska Science Standards. Additionally, representatives from the University of Nebraska system, Nebraska's state colleges, Nebraska's community colleges, and Nebraska's independent colleges and universities have been asked to provide input on the content that should be included within Nebraska's Science Standards. The public input and feedback collected will guide the standards revision process. Writing and editing meetings will be held October 2016-May 2017. A draft of Nebraska's College and Career Ready Standards for Science should be available in August 2017 with an anticipated State Board of Education approval in September 2017.

For more information about content area standards, contact Dr. Cory Epler, Director of Teaching and Learning (cory.epler@nebraska.gov) or visit the [Teaching and Learning Webpage](#).

B. Nebraska State Accountability – NeSA

Nebraska State Accountability - NeSA - includes all state tests; therefore, the scoring rules, accommodations, security policies, and ethics codes apply to the following:

NeSA-ELA (English Language Arts)- Grades 3-8

NeSA-M (Mathematics)- Grade 3-8

NeSA-S (Science)- Grades 5 and 8

NeSA-AA (Alternate Assessments in English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science)-
Grades 3-8 and 11

NeSA Tests	Grades	Tested Standards	Field-Tested Standards
NeSA-ELA (English Language Arts)	3-8	Nebraska College and Career Ready Standards of English Language Arts	Nebraska College and Career Ready Standards of English Language Arts
NeSA-Mathematics	3-8	Nebraska Legacy Mathematics Standards	Nebraska College and Career Ready Standards of Mathematics
NeSA-Science	5 and 8	Nebraska Legacy Science Standards	No field test

Note: In 2016-2017 school year students who are in their third year of cohort at the high school level will participate in the college entrance exam to be administered in each high school in Nebraska and will not participate in NeSA testing.

NeSA Alternate Tests	Grades	Tested Standards	Field-Tested Standards
NeSA-ELA (English Language Arts) Alternate Assessment	3-8 and 11	Nebraska College and Career Ready Extended Standards of English Language Arts	Nebraska College and Career Ready Extended Standards of English Language Arts
NeSA-Mathematics Alternate Assessment	3-8 and 11	Nebraska Legacy Extended Mathematics Standards	Nebraska College and Career Ready Extended Standards of Mathematics
NeSA-Science Alternate Assessment	5, 8, and 11	Nebraska Legacy Extended Science Standards	No field test

Note: Alternate students who are in their third year of cohort at the high school level will take the NeSA-Alternate tests.

All protocols, practices, and procedures for state testing will apply to each test inside the Nebraska State Accountability System, NeSA.

As required in the amended Quality Education Accountability Act, 79-760, the Nebraska Department of Education has built NeSA state tests for the purposes of comparative accountability with the help of its partner, Data Recognition Corporation (DRC), Maple Grove, Minnesota.

Security policies and ethics codes also apply to the English Language Proficiency Assessment for the 21st Century (ELPA21) and are under the purview of the Statewide Assessment Office.

1. District Assessment Contacts

District superintendents and ESU administrators have been asked to designate ONE District Assessment Contact (DAC). In some districts the official assessment contact is the superintendent, and in other districts the superintendent has designated a different person. The DAC will be the contact for **all subject areas** and all assessment-related communication. All official assessment notification, passwords, and required assessment decisions will be sent to that one district contact. The official district contact will receive materials for English language arts, mathematics, science, and all other assessment-related materials.

Once the DAC is assigned the district password in such programs as eDIRECT, he or she may designate as many users inside the district as needed. The Statewide Assessment office will maintain the list with one official contact. It is important that all users inside the district know who has been assigned the responsibility of being the DAC. The DAC has the responsibility for maintaining assessment communication within the district. The superintendent is responsible for communicating to the DAC the way assessment information is to be shared within the district.

The contacts for the 2016-2017 school year will be the same as those used in 2015-2016 unless the superintendent changed the assignment. Superintendents are responsible for updating DAC information. The [contact form](#) for making this change is available on the NDE-Assessment website or the superintendent may send an email directly to

nde.stateassessment@nebraska.gov and request an update of information or a change in DAC designation.

Superintendents have also been asked to designate a NeSA Technology Assessment Contact, who will serve as the contact for information concerning technology used for the Nebraska State Accountability tests. DACs will also receive official information N-TACs receive.

The administrators of Educational Service Units were also asked to designate an official assessment contact. The designated ESU contact receives pertinent mailings except test booklets or materials that can only be sent to districts. If the ESU contact is to change, the administrator is responsible for notifying the assessment office.

Three documents have been developed to clarify and enhance information needed by DACs.

- The [DAC Checklist](#) provides a month-by-month over view of the responsibilities of District Assessment Contacts.
- The [NeSA Document Security](#) provides summary information about NeSA testing documents, security of the documents, and appropriate return or disposal.
- The [Summary Chart – NeSA Testing Materials and Procedures](#) provides detailed information such as requirements of testing, availability of tests in Spanish, and availability of accommodations.

2. The eDIRECT System and Enrollment Verification

The [DRC eDIRECT System](#) was used for implementation in 2016-2017 to obtain enrollment information from districts and information about testing decisions. The first of those submissions was scheduled for October 3-14. Data that collected in the eDIRECT system includes decisions about the number of paper/pencil booklets needed for students with IEP, 504, or ELL accommodations and the number of Braille, large print, or Spanish-translated booklets needed. Access to the eDIRECT system provided to the DAC who will submit the district's decisions to DRC.

Districts had the opportunity to learn about the eDIRECT system and Enrollment Verification through a recorded training. See [NeSA Timeline](#).

3. NeSA-English Language Arts, Math, Science Testing Window

The NeSA Testing Window for operational English language arts, mathematics, and science is March 20 – May 5, 2017. This window includes the alternate tests as well.

4. NeSA Security, Ethics, and Training

In a centralized testing process, it is critical that equity of opportunity, standardization of procedures and fairness to students are maintained. Therefore, the Nebraska Department of Education asks all school districts to review the NeSA [Security Procedures](#). It is critical that all administrators and teachers read the procedures, especially those who are administering the assessment. These procedures apply to all NeSA testing and ELPA21.

Breaches in security are taken very seriously. They must be quickly identified and reported to the Nebraska Department of Education's Statewide Assessment Office. From there the determination is made as to whether or not a professional practices complaint will be filed. Anyone reporting a security breach should complete the form entitled [Report of Security Breach](#).

The [Principal Security Agreement](#) requires each principal to sign for each testing session in his or her building(s). Principals need to understand that signing this security agreement means they will oversee the appropriate testing procedures and training for all teachers administering the tests in the building. A [DAC Confidentiality Agreement](#) is required from each DAC. The DAC has responsibility for the comprehensive oversight of the testing process in the district. Principals and DACs will submit their security agreements directly to the NDE assessment office through Echosign email by November 23, 2016. Each principal and DAC will receive an email and instructions for return of the security/confidentiality agreement.

Districts should maintain a set of district policies that includes a reference to Nebraska's [NeSA Security Procedures](#). The [Sample District Security Policy](#) was drafted by a local legal firm and is available to districts. Whether districts use this sample, the procedures offered by the State School Boards Association, or policies drafted by other law firms, local district policy should address the NeSA Security document. The Department would encourage all

districts with questions to contact their own local school attorneys for customization of such a policy.

Testing Ethics and Appropriate Practice

It is important to note that all principals and teachers need to be familiar with appropriate testing ethics and security practices related to testing. Professionalism, common sense, and practical procedures will provide the right framework for testing ethics. It is also important to note that school districts are bound to hold all certificated staff members in school districts accountable for following the *Regulations and Standards for Professional Practice Criteria* as outlined in Rule 27. The NeSA Testing Security Procedures are intended to outline clear practice for appropriate security.

All school personnel who administer NeSA tests must receive complete training in test administration and are responsible for appropriate test ethics and security practices.

Since 2014-2015, a Nebraska State Accountability Security Manual has been distributed to provide an overview of the facets of test security in place in Nebraska, test security practices required in districts, and links to all forms needed for NeSA test security (also included in this Update).

Training for Test Administration

DACs and principals share the responsibility for assuring that all teachers and school personnel administering NeSA are trained in appropriate procedures, security and ethics. NDE provides information on the assessment website for test administration training. The administration training PowerPoint will be available January 1, 2017.

C. NeSA Implementation Details

1. NeSA- Math & Science Cut Scores

The cut scores for the NeSA-Math and Science and NeSA-Alternate Assessment- Math and Science were set consecutively in 2011 and 2012.

Nebraska State Board of Education considered a range of “cut scores” for each grade level in each content area and made final decisions about the exact scores that determined the percentages of students who score in one of three performance levels on the tests:

- Below the Standards
- Meets the Standards
- Exceeds the Standards

The scale score ranges for NeSA-Math, and Science were set as follows:

Scale Score Ranges	Performance Level
135-200	Exceeds the Standards
85-134	Meets the Standards
0-84	Below the Standards

It should be noted that the scale scores for performance levels do not change unless the tests themselves change. Because the NeSA-Reading assessment has transitioned to a NeSA-English Language Arts assessment, the cut scores for NeSA-English Language Arts will be set in spring/summer of 2017. NeSA English Language Arts scores will be included in the reporting of scores for the 2016-2017 school year.

Details of the processes used to set scale score ranges are included in the Technical Reports, available on the NDE-Assessment website for each subject area

2. Release of NeSA Results in 2016

Through DRC’s eDIRECT system, districts received NeSA-Reading, NeSA-Mathematics, NeSA-Science, NeSA-Alternate Assessment Reading, NeSA-Alternate Assessment Math and NeSA-Alternate Assessment Science results in July 2016.

The Nebraska [State of the Schools Report](#) has been released each year in the fall and is available on the Nebraska Department of Education website. State of the Schools Reports have been provided since 2001. In 2015-2016, the State of the Schools Report will transition to the **Nebraska Education Profile** to be released at the end of October 2016. More information will be provided as available.

3. The State Testing Environment and the Instructional Environment

Differences exist between an equitable, secure, standardized testing environment and the environment where daily instruction takes place. Students in all districts have a right to both environments. All districts have a responsibility to provide both. It is the responsibility of the state to assure appropriate testing and learning.

On a day-to-day basis Nebraska school districts provide their students with multiple opportunities to learn their districts' curriculum in a variety of ways, including access to the skills and content required in the state standards. On testing day, however, the environment must be standardized according to the directions provided, is prescribed for all, and must assure that all students have equitable opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge and skills on the NeSA tests.

The scripted directions, the security policies and procedures, and the "rules" of testing are designed to provide such equity. If districts apply their own adaptations of these procedures, the testing experience across the state is NOT equitable. Such things as the following undermine the equity and standardization of the testing process:

- Providing word definitions, answers, suggestions, or edits in any way to students or to their test answers/responses.
- Compromising the security of any testing materials.
- Playing music during the testing.
- Providing food, candy, or drinks during the tests.
- Requiring pauses and stretch breaks for all students during the tests.
- Placing check lists of testing protocol on students' desks during testing.
- Requiring students to raise their hands at completion of the tests to assure the test is finished. The online test has a summary sheet built in for students to use for that very purpose, and students must be provided the opportunity to practice in the online test engine.
- Not reading the scripted directions verbatim.

Although some may be appropriate in an instructional environment, they are not included as part of the standardized testing process. They are not appropriate. If districts take it upon themselves to "add" such features, they are not applying the scripted, prescribed nature of

the standardized test, and they are disrupting the needed equity of administration across the state.

Each district should consider the necessary steps to differentiating between the state testing environment and the day-to-day instructional environment. Although both have expectations, those expectations are different.

4. Embargoed Data

District personnel have access to NeSA results before the information has been released publicly. Districts are asked to embargo their data until the Nebraska Department of Education releases data publicly.

- Do not share scores publicly through newsletters, school board meetings, award ceremonies, media releases, and other formal publications.
- Individual scores for each student can be shared with the student and with the student's parents. However, classroom, school, district, or any other form of aggregate scores cannot be shared with students or outside the school.
- Aggregate scores can be shared with school/district staff, but do remind recipients that scores are embargoed.
- No public recognition of individuals can be given if doing so reveals NeSA scores, such as awarding students who earn perfect scores (8) on the NeSA-Writing, for example.
- Raw scores are embargoed; students can be told their raw scores, but staff should be careful about sharing information with students and/or parents about performance level until the Conversion Charts are released.

The NDE is very appreciative of districts' efforts to provide data in an appropriate and timely manner to all stakeholders, respecting and honoring the procedures that we must all follow.

5. NeSA Administration Details

In an attempt to continually improve our processes, the assessment team trains NDE staff to visit school districts and observe the testing, in order to learn ways to make the process go

more smoothly for our students and our teachers. The following observations are being identified in an attempt to improve the NeSA process.

NeSA Procedures

Scheduling:

- The NeSA-English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science tests are to be administered in two independent sessions. The NeSA-English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science are not timed tests, and students are to be allowed as much time as necessary to complete. The recommended time scheduled for each session does not generally exceed 90 minutes.
- The two-session administration may be scheduled during the testing window in any of several ways:
 1. Two consecutive days.
 2. Two days within the same week, preferably not Monday.
 3. Two sessions within the same day with a break in between.
 4. Other schedules as specified in a student's IEP or used for English Language Learners.
- Younger students will be more likely to need the two-day schedule than older students.
- Districts should not wait until the end of the testing window. The final week of each test window is a make-up week. No regular sessions should be scheduled in the make-up week.
- Mondays are not the best testing days.
- Districts should review the time taken to complete NeSA tests by students in their districts in the eDIRECT system and base scheduling needs on the information. Students who finish early should have other work or reading to do.
- Students may use more time on session 1 of the NeSA-ELA test due to the inclusion of the text-dependent analysis. Districts may determine an approximate time for their students by having them participate in the NeSA-ELA practice test.

- Make-up sessions for operational testing must be scheduled within the testing window as students will be scored on the items completed and will receive no credit for blank, incomplete, or missing items.
- Scheduling of NeSA testing should NOT wait until the last few days of the window. If that is the case, districts run the risk of not getting everyone scheduled because of illness, weather, breaks, or other disruptions.
- In each testing window, the final week of the window is included for make-up tests. Students who are not tested due to sickness during a regularly scheduled test that takes place in the final week of a test window will not be eligible for an Emergency Medical Waiver.
- The testing window runs through all days of the published timeline. That means the NSSRS system will expect a score for all students enrolled during the testing window. There is NOT a cutoff date prior to the end of the window where students are “exempt.” When receiving students in the last few days of the window, schools may want to consult NDE.
- When students arrive at a new school, the receiving school should contact the previous school to determine what NeSA tests have already been completed. Students are to be enrolled at the time of their arrival. There is no “waiting” for the testing process to be over. It is not ethical or fair to delay or adjust an enrollment based upon the arrival of the student and testing schedule. That is absolutely not fair to the student and family.
- Regardless of the schedule used, the test administration must be consistent, standardized, and the scripted directions must be followed. This is true for both online and paper/pencil testing.
- Student benefit should be considered first with regard to scheduling, not adult convenience or logistical issues.

Districts are asked to review the following scheduling considerations and to read [Suggestions for a Smooth Testing Process](#).

Online Testing:

- Students need to have access to the tutorials, online tools training and practice tests prior to the testing in order to familiarize with the online environment.

- For younger students, districts need to allow more time for log in to the test and need to be sure that students have had an opportunity to practice logging in prior to testing. Students are to log in themselves.
- Test administrators are not to log in for students.
- Parents should be reminded of the school's testing schedule so that personal appointments are not scheduled during the testing time.
- Teachers should provide only ONE ticket at a time to students testing online.
- It is acceptable for students to take sessions in any order. For example, a student may take session # 2 before session # 1.

Administration:

- Standardized testing environments and protocols must always be followed.
- INSIGHT operates in a secure browser, which does not allow students to access the Internet or other software during testing. Requirements are available at [Web-Based Testing Engine System Requirements](#).
- Items on the wall or within classrooms that provide hints or direction to test content need to be removed or covered.
- Cell phones or other electronic devices are to be removed from the testing setting.
- Districts are to follow the approved accommodations and practices on the [Nebraska State Accountability \(NeSA\) Approved Accommodations document](#). Deviations from that document are not appropriate, i.e. Whisper Phones are not listed as an appropriate testing practice administration for all students. i.e. Having students read NeSA-Reading passages to adults is not appropriate.
- Districts must keep the NSSRS updated appropriately so that when the data files are shipped to the vendors, they are correct. Due dates for NSSRS downloads are listed on the [NeSA timeline](#).
- It is important that your request for materials in eDIRECT in October is as accurate as possible. If more materials are needed, districts may order them from DRC, but the DAC should attempt to coordinate the additional requests.
- For districts experiencing technical difficulties that cannot be locally resolved, the district N-TAC should contact DRC.

- Districts who wish to determine their computer capacity will have access to a Capacity/Load Testing Tool through INSIGHT, which was available August 2016

Secure Materials:

- Duplicating any secure test material in any content area is a security violation. Taking pictures of said material constitutes duplication. This expectation is clear in the administrative manuals and in all NDE testing materials. Districts are not to make copies of the tests, the prompts, or the items. All booklets, all student tickets and accompanying materials are to be kept secure.
- Examining the items, discussing the test content, or “taking” the test is a security violation.
- Every test booklet and every answer sheet, each Spanish translation document or CD must be accounted for. A district is held responsible for the return of all secure test materials to DRC. Districts are not to keep secure materials. Lost secure NeSA testing materials that cannot be located may call for a district to complete a District Response to Missing Materials.
- A list of all testing materials and protocol for their security are available as **NeSA Document Security**

NDE, along with DRC, takes the security of testing materials very seriously. DRC uses a sophisticated tracking system for all secure materials.

- DACs return materials to DRC through UPS. Each UPS label has a unique tracking number that provides the status of each shipment from the time it is picked up until it arrives at DRC’s receiving facility.
- Upon receipt, DRC hand-scans the DRC box return label on each box. The box is then opened and security codes are hand-scanned to link each document to the original box.
- The materials are sorted based on processing and sorting rules specific to the Nebraska project.
- The materials are then rescanned to ensure materials match against previously scanned information.

- Any material exceptions are tracked and resolved through a system based Exception Resolution process.
- Scorable materials are sent for further scanning and processing. Non-scorable materials are sent to secure storage.
- All DRC client boxes are processed through a final scan and inspection prior to box recycling to ensure no paper materials were missed in processing.
- Any secure material that is unable to go through the scanning process (no PreID label or District/School label affixed, label affixed incorrectly, scratch paper left inside test booklet or answer sheet, etc.) is sent to a secure area where Nebraska's Education Program Management team resolves and records the issue, and the document is returned for check-in and processing. DRC provides the NDE a Problem Document Summary at the close of check-in.
- Using its Operations Materials Management System (OpsMMS), DRC can track documents internally, and determine the date they arrived at DRC, the box they arrived in, what other documents were included in the same box, and the box in which the materials are stored. In instances where a district indicates, for example, a used answer sheet was returned with the rest of their materials, DRC can locate the test booklets returned from the district, and determine if the answer sheet was left inside a test booklet, and therefore unable to be checked-in and processed. (This is the most common scenario for missing answer sheets.)
- A specialized group meets prior to the release of the Preliminary Missing Material Report to analyze data for anomalies and prescribe further search parameters up to and including scanning secure stored materials a third time.
- Districts are notified of any secure materials not received by DRC, and those materials are included on the preliminary Missing Materials Report provided to the NDE. In many cases materials are located and returned to DRC. A final Missing Materials Report with district comments regarding missing materials is provided to the NDE.

6. Score Invalidation and Waivers

- Throughout the NeSA process, the NDE has written and applies business rules for zero scores, invalidations and waivers. Each situation is weighed individually. The following rules are applied:

- Emergency Medical Waiver (EMW) is granted if the situation is a medical emergency and the emergency situation prevents testing. The EMW needs to be approved by the Statewide Assessment office during the testing window. If special circumstances impede the timely submission of an EMW, please contact the Statewide Assessment office. EMWs are not granted for pregnancy or for situations where the school could have tested the student. Districts applying for EMWs are required to provide a physician's statement. Students with EMWs are exempt from testing. The complete Emergency Medical Waiver form is available on the Statewide Assessment website in NeSA Forms during the testing window. Refer to the Emergency Medical Waiver for additional guidance.
- Invalidations (INV) are applied in situations where the construct of the NeSA test was violated. An example of invalidation occurs when a student receives an accommodation that is not in the student's IEP. Students receiving score invalidations receive zero scores. Participation in NeSA reporting may or may not have been affected, depending upon the circumstances of the invalidation.
- No Longer Enrolled (NLE) is flagged for any student pre-registered for testing who withdraws from a district or school prior to being tested. NLE can be indicated in eDIRECT Test Setup (for students pre-registered to test online) or on the student's answer sheet (for student's pre-registered to test paper/pencil). Please note that this does not update the student's NSSRS information. NLE codes are applied in circumstances where a student only took the first half of the test and then left the district. All NLE codes result in waived scores.
- Other (OTH) designation is used for situations where emergencies or drastic unforeseen circumstances occur and adequate documentation is provided. Districts with students in drastic unforeseen circumstances should contact the Statewide Assessment office. A waived score is applied.
- Parent Refusal (PAR) is used for any student removed from testing due to a formal request from the parent or guardian. These students receive zero scores.
- Recently Arrived LEP (RAL) is used for any student who meets the requirement for recently arrived classification. These students may be exempt from reading testing for 12 months and at the most one test period. Refer to [Guidance for Recently Arrived Limited English Proficient Students](#) for additional information on RAL code.

- Student Absent for Entire Testing Window (SAE) is for any student who was not assessed, because the student was absent from the beginning of testing until the end of testing. All SAE codes result in zero scores.
- Expelled Students provided with education in Rule 17 schools (alternative programs with certified teachers) must be tested. Therefore, if students in Rule 17 schools are not tested, but are enrolled during the testing window, they receive zero scores.

7. 11th Graders must be tested with their cohort

The requirement for students taking high school NeSA tests is the following:

High school students are expected to be tested in their third year of high school. Testing occurs in the year prior to their expected graduation year rather than their assigned grade level. A student's "expected graduation year" or "cohort" is determined by adding four years to the school year in which the student enters grade nine for the first time. For example, a student with a Cohort Year of 2018 will take his/her assessment tests in spring 2017.

In 2016-2017 school year students who are in their third year of cohort at the high school level will participate in the college entrance exam to be administered in each high school in Nebraska and will not participate in NeSA testing.

Alternate students who are in their third year of cohort at the high school level will take the NeSA-Alternate tests.

8. Testing Modes: Paper/Pencil or Online and placing orders

Beginning in 2012-13, NeSA assessments have been delivered in the online mode. This requirement will apply to NeSA-English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science at grades 3-8.

This requirement will not apply to the following groups of students:

- Students taking the alternate tests (NeSA-AAELA, NeSA-AAM or NeSA-AAS).
- Students with disabilities whose Individual Education Plans (IEPs) require paper/pencil testing.
- Students with 504 plans that require paper/pencil testing.
- Students contracted to institutions where online access is not allowed.

Districts were required to submit paper/pencil needs in October of 2016 via the eDIRECT System. It is expected that the District Assessment Contact will gather the building decisions and communicate them to DRC through the eDIRECT System; it should not be individual building principals or contacts who communicate these decisions to DRC.

Districts will be required to designate online accommodations through the eDIRECT system once the test management system opens. Audio and Spanish-translations are available online accommodations.

Districts need to research the needs of individual students to determine their needs.

- School personnel should review the Accommodations Document as soon as it is available.
- Classroom teachers should provide input concerning students' mode of testing.
- As appropriate, school personnel may consult with individual students concerning mode of testing decisions.
- Paper/pencil tests should be ordered for accommodated students according to their individual needs. Do not assume a student who needs accommodations will perform best on a paper/pencil test. Students should be informed whether they will be tested online or paper/pencil before they are administered the tests.
- The individual needs of English Language Learners should inform the district decisions, and students should know whether they will be tested in English or Spanish before they are administered the tests.
- Accommodated students may need paper/pencil in one subject area but not all.
- See Guide for Including and Accommodating English Language Learners in the NeSA Tests 2016-17 to inform decisions for ELL students.
- See [NeSA Accommodations Guidelines](#): How to Select, Administer, and Evaluate Accommodations for Instruction of Students with Disabilities to inform decisions for students with disabilities.
- **Any student who needs NeSA-AAELA, NeSA-AAM or NeSA-AAS must be flagged in the NSSRS system, from which DRC will compile alternate test orders.** Districts should use the [Alternate Assessment Participation Criteria](#) to inform decisions on identification of students who require alternate assessment.

9. Nebraska State Accountability [NeSA] Scoring Rules

These rules apply to NeSA-English Language Arts, NeSA-Writing, NeSA-AA (Alternate), English Language Proficiency Assessment for the 21st Century [ELPA21], NeSA-Mathematics and NeSA-Science.

NeSA is a system of state tests, which are scored by vendors. The scores are inserted by NDE into the NSSRS for statewide calculations.

It is a requirement of NDE that any student in the Nebraska Student and Staff Record System (NSSRS) in tested grades is required to participate in NeSA tests. Test scores will be reported to parents in Individual Student Reports [ISR].

The following scoring rules apply to all students, including those with disabilities or those learning the English language.

- a. All enrolled students in required grade levels are to be included in Nebraska State Accountability in one of three ways:
 - NeSA – General education tests
 - NeSA – General education tests with approved accommodations
 - NeSA – Alternate Assessment
- b. If enrolled students are not tested, the district must account for the reason why each student is not tested.
- c. All students will be tested at grade level. If a student is given an out-of-level test, the student will receive a zero. He/she will not be counted as a participant in AMAOs.
- d. Students will receive scores only on the items that are completed. Incomplete items will count as incorrect items.
- e. Students will be considered a participant for federal and state accountability if they respond to at least one question or prompt.
- f. If teachers modify any NeSA tests, all resulting scores are zeroes.
- g. If a parent refuses (in writing) to allow a student to participate in a test, the student will receive a zero score and non-participant status in federal and state accountability.

- h. Students will be able to receive accommodations as outlined in their IEPs and as allowed by the Nebraska State Accountability Approved Accommodations Document.

10. Tables of Specification

The Tables of Specifications (TOS) provide guidance for classroom instruction on tested Nebraska standards. Tables of Specification are posted on the [NDE Assessment website](#).

Tables of Specifications for NeSA-ELA and ELA-Alternate are posted on NDE site in the NeSA-English Language Arts link and define the test designs to be administered operationally in spring 2017.

11. NeSA Practice Tests

- Online practice and tools training are available in the INSIGHT software, provided by DRC
 - Online Tools Training
 - Practice Tests-NeSA-ELA/M/S
 - Guided Practice Tests-NeSA-ELA/M/S
 - NeSA-W Practice Tests-Grades 8 and 11
 - Please note there is no NeSA-Writing Test in 2016-2017. The NeSA-Writing Practice Test is available to support local curriculum practices, not as part of the Nebraska Statewide Assessment program.

- Video Tutorials are available through the launch page of the INSIGHT software.
- Publicly accessible versions of the DRC INSIGHT test engine and the NeSA Online Tools Training are available. Please copy the following link into Google Chrome to access these practice opportunities
<https://wbte.drccedirect.com/NE/portals/ne>
- Districts who administer the online practice test will have access to the student results and responses via eDIRECT. Please see the 2016-2017 NeSA-Practice Test Online Test Administration Manual for more information.
- Paper/pencil versions of the practice tests can be accessed on Nebraska

Department of Education website.

Additional Practice Tools Available for NeSA-College and Career Ready (CCR) Math will become available during the year.

October 2016	NeSA-CCR Math Grade-Level Item Samplers Available to Districts
November 2016	Revised online tools training and guided practice tests available
December 12, 2016- June 30, 2017	NeSA-CCR Math Practice Test – Administration Available in eDIRECT and INSIGHT, including Test Setup

12. Testing contracted students and students in programs outside of the school district

Districts maintain the responsibility for assessing and reporting student results for students who are in Rule 18 schools or in contracted programs. See [Who Reports What](#) Districts must have a plan for the assessment of and the reporting of those students' results. Students who are enrolled in the Iowa School for the Deaf are included in NeSA testing through coordination with the student's home district.

Options include:

- Paper/pencil tests - districts are responsible for ordering test booklets for students outside their buildings, for the monitoring of the security of the test administration, and for the return of the test booklets to DRC.
- Online test administration - access to online test administration is controlled by the school district. Therefore, if students outside their buildings take the tests online, districts will be responsible for monitoring the downloading of software, for obtaining and distributing the student tickets, and for the security and monitoring of the test taking process.

With either option, a district needs to communicate its plan to the contracting school or agency and work with it and the academic liaison (required in Rule 18 schools) to facilitate a smooth testing process.

13. NeSA Accommodations

All students including those tested with the alternate test (the 1% most significantly cognitively challenged) are included in the Nebraska State Accountability System.

Test scores for all students in grades 3-8 and the third year cohort in high school are expected in the Nebraska Student and Staff Record System, the NSSRS. Because of the inclusionary testing requirements in a state system, any student not tested will receive a zero state score unless granted an allowable exception.

After thorough research with internal and external groups, the NDE team developed and has annually reviewed the Nebraska State Accountability Approved Accommodations Document. It is expected that a student's IEP and/or 504 plan will include the appropriate accommodations for inclusion in NeSA and for regular instruction. Districts need to have all teachers review the allowable accommodations in this document. For future consideration of an accommodation currently not on the list, districts are encouraged to contact Valorie Foy within the Statewide Assessment office at 402.471.2495, or Sharon Heater within the Special Education Office at 402.471.4322.

If the student is unable to respond directly in the standard answer sheet or online, a Test Administrator must transcribe the student responses into the answer sheet, answer booklet or the online system.

Among the features included in the online testing system is a magnifying feature to enlarge the graphics, a feature to enlarge text, and a feature to change background color. Students who need the magnifier or screen color change do not have to have an Individual Education Plan (IEP).

14. NeSA Online Unlocking

The primary responsibility for unlocking assessments for the 2016-17 NeSA administration will shift from NDE to districts. District Assessment Contacts (DAC) will receive permissions to unlock student sessions in the eDIRECT test management system. DACs will be able to grant these permissions to personnel within their district. Each district will need to develop guidelines and processes that will be followed during the testing window. Access to unlocking permission should be limited to only staff that require access.

The reason for this shift in responsibility is the result of a change in allowable accommodations. Students with documented need can have online test sessions unlocked for an additional day of testing. Students needing more than two day per session will require a paper/pencil test. DRC will track all unlocks and compile this data in regular reports for NDE. NDE will provide guidance and recommend processes for unlocks. Districts are encouraged to contact NDE with questions about unlocks during the testing window.

Guidelines for unlocking:

- Once the test session has begun, the session must be completed in the same day. Students with documented need (IEPs, 504, or ELL students) may have a second day per session.
- If the session is interrupted (power outage, unplanned fire drill) or discontinued (pause, inactivity), the student may log back in using the same student test ticket (same day only).
- If a test session was not submitted on the day of the initial login, the student's test session will lock overnight. If a student has ended the test through the End Test screen, it will become locked. If a DAC believes circumstances merit a test session being unlocked, the DAC or a designee may unlock a test session.

Questions about the circumstances of an unlock should be directed to by phone at 402.471.2495 or by e-mail at nde.stateassessment@nebraska.gov. In rare cases, NDE may need to investigate and uses online telemetry to help verify the circumstances that may merit an unlock.

If the student is not finished with the items in a session, the following are appropriate reasons to unlock tickets:

- Documented need for a second day of testing (IEP, 504, or ELL)

- Technical difficulties
- Power failure / loss of connectivity
- Student logged out incorrectly
- Illness
- Emergencies
- Log in using incorrect student ticket type (Spanish, visually impaired, etc.)

Unlocking student tickets would not be appropriate for the following reasons:

- Students rushing through the tests
- Students not answering all of the questions
- Students misbehaving
- Schools not scheduling adequate test time

Additional guidance about unlocks will be provided by NDE prior to the testing window.

15. Spanish Translations

All paper/pencil Spanish-translated testing materials are requested through eDIRECT enrollment system in October and online Spanish is designated in the eDIRECT system in March. All tests, including Spanish, are returned to DRC.

NeSA-English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science: The NeSA-ELA test is available in Spanish; however, only directions are translated. NeSA-ELA is available both paper/pencil and online. NeSA-Mathematics and NeSA-Science tests in their entirety will be available in Spanish – both paper/pencil versions and online.

DRC provides Spanish-translated audio directions and items that may be copied or transferred to I-Pods or audiotapes but not to any networked device. The original DRC-provided Spanish translations must be returned to the DRC after testing. All electronic and paper copies made in districts are to be destroyed.

Note: All electronic and paper translations made in districts in languages other than Spanish for the NeSA-Math, Science, and for NeSA-ELA are to be destroyed.

16. NeSA Software Update

For the 2016-2017 school year, the INSIGHT software is currently available. The download of this software will provide the online interface for all subjects and Check4Learning.

Information about installation, including [System Requirements](#), can be found on NDE's webpage and in DRC eDirect documents. Questions about system requirements and installation of INSIGHT software should be directed to DRC customer service.

Nebraska Customer Service

Toll Free (866) 342-6280

Email: necustomerservice@datarecognitioncorp.com

8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. M-F CST

Questions about any of the information in this section may be directed to:

Dr. Valorie Foy, Director Statewide Assessment

Phone: 402.471.2495

E-mail: valorie.foy@nebraska.gov

D. Check4Learning (C4L)

The NeSA summative tests provide important student performance information for schools, for communities, and for policy makers, but it is important that Nebraska educators gather student performance information throughout the school year in order to determine whether or not daily instruction is preparing students to perform well on the NeSA tests. Educators need to see the curriculum, assessment, and instructional processes linked together – as ongoing, continuous and grounded inside each classroom.

For that reason the Nebraska Department of Education has joined with DRC, with school districts, and with service units to build a state system of assessment to “wrap around” the summative NeSA tests given in the spring. The system, Check4Learning (C4L), is based upon a state-level item bank of locally-developed multiple choice questions in reading, mathematics and science. Participation is

strictly voluntary and left to the district to decide. Districts choosing to participate will be able to select items that match the tested indicators and build interim assessments that may be given at point of instruction at any time in the year. The purpose of the interim assessments will be to determine whether or not students are “on track” with the important skills measured in the summative NeSA tests.

C4L will provide instantaneous results to students and reports to teachers about item analysis, individual classroom, building, or district reports. The intent will be for teachers to have at their fingertips the data to adjust or change instruction. The system is a powerful tool to inform and link the curriculum and instructional process to assessment.

School leaders have many responsibilities, but few among them are more important than the academic performance of their students. One of the measures of student performance in Nebraska is a set of Nebraska State Accountability (NeSA) tests. The Nebraska Department of Education believes that the integration of curriculum, instruction, and assessment must occur if all children are to have the opportunity to succeed on the standards. C4L is a tool intended to provide immediate feedback to students and teachers so that learning throughout the year becomes the focal point, and the summative NeSA tests are used as the verification of that learning.

C4L resources, including instructional videos, can be found on the [NDE-Assessment website](#).

1. C4L – Memorandum of Understanding

Districts that signed a Memorandum of Understanding (fall 2016) are 2016-2017 participants. Districts will have the opportunity to be members of C4L on a year-by-year basis as determined by completion of the Memorandum of Understanding and required test items and/or peer review of items.

2. C4L- Future Plans

The transition of NeSA tests, including new standards and item types, will bring about the need for the C4L system to be updated. NDE continues to work on plans to update C4L and to

align content to new standards. NDE's goal is to keep NeSA and C4L parallel in content and item types.

The C4L system was ready July 20, 2016, and staff accounts were automatically rolled over to this administration. Districts can upload students to the system at any time; DRC will add/update students on November 8.

Dates for Check4Learning ELA Updates

- Technology-Enhanced items will be available on September 30 and will not include the TDAs.
- Text-Dependent Analysis (TDA) functionality along with Teacher Scoring will be available no later than November 18.

Questions about any of the information in this section may be directed to:

Jeremy Heneger, Assistant Director Statewide Assessment
Phone: 402.471.2818 E-mail: Jeremy.heneger@nebraska.gov

E. The Technical Advisory Committee

The NDE has contracted with numerous assessment experts including many from outside the state. These assessment experts have assisted the NDE in advisory roles, in assessment development, in federal documentation, and many other tasks.

A Technical Advisory Committee was appointed by the Governor in 2008 and approved by the Legislature. The role of this committee is to:

“review the statewide assessment plan, state assessment instruments, and the accountability system developed under the Quality Education Accountability Act.”

The committee members include the following:

Brian Gong, PhD, Chair	Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment – Dover, New Hampshire
Chad Buckendahl, PhD	ACS Ventures – Orem, Utah
Pete Goldschmidt, PhD	California State University, Northridge, California
Linda Poole	Teacher, Papillion-LaVista Public Schools

F. National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)

During the 2015-2016 school year, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) sampled student performance in schools identified by the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES).

For 2015-2016, 13 buildings were selected to administer NAEP assessments in reading and mathematics at the 4th and 8th grades. The NAEP testing window ran from January 25th to March 4th.

For the 2016-2017 school year, 285 buildings have been selected to administer NAEP assessments in reading, mathematics, and writing (grades 4 and 8) and civics, geography, and U.S. History (grade 8). The testing window runs from January 30th to March 10th.

Superintendents of selected schools were notified in June 2016 if their schools had been selected. Emails were sent to principals and District Assessment Contacts in selected schools as well as superintendents. The emails identified the date chosen for the assessment, administration information, and specific information about the school's responsibilities.

NAEP is transitioning from paper/pencil format to digitally-based assessments. For the 2016-17 year, most students will participate on NAEP-provided tablets. A small portion of students will take the NAEP assessment in paper/pencil format, however, as part of a mode

comparability study, which will provide information about the impact of different modes on performance.

Thank you to all of the schools and students who take part in NAEP. Without your support, the NAEP process in Nebraska would be unachievable. The national 2015 NAEP reading and math results are posted on the NDE website.

Please visit the [NAEP-website](#) for complete information about NAEP, including previous NAEP results, and other NAEP publications. If you have specific questions about NAEP, please contact the Statewide Assessment Office:

Nathan W. Gross, NAEP Coordinator
Phone: 402.471.2959 E-mail: nathan.gross@nebraska.gov



II. The Statewide Writing Assessment – NeSA-Writing

II. The Statewide Writing Assessment – NeSA-Writing

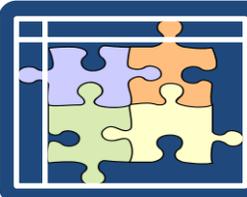
The Statewide Writing Assessment – NeSA-Writing will no longer be administered. Writing skills will be assessed on the NeSA-English Language Arts assessment through the writing task, Text-Dependent Analysis for grades 5-8 and independent writing items for grades 3 and 4.

NDE recognizes the hard work of districts and Educational Service Units in the instruction of six-trait writing. The skills emphasized in six-trait writing are underlying skills needed to successfully address the more rigorous task of writing test-dependent analysis.

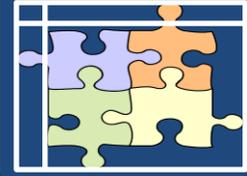
For questions about the information in this section please contact:

Erin Kunkle, Statewide Writing Assessment Director

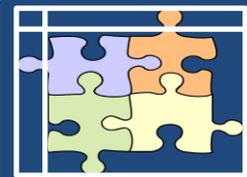
402.471.2947 Email: erin.kunkle@nebraska.gov



STANDARDS



ASSESSMENT



ACCOUNTABILITY

III. NeSA-ELA Transition

III. NeSA-ELA Transition

A. Revised Nebraska College and Career Ready English Language Arts Standards

1. Passage and Endorsements

- a. The revised Nebraska College and Career Ready English Language Arts (ELA) Standards were adopted unanimously by the State Board of Education on September 5, 2014
- b. Representatives from the four systems of higher education in Nebraska verified the standards College and Career Ready
 - i. The University System
 - ii. The State College System
 - iii. The Private Post-Secondary System
 - iv. The Community College System

With the adoption of these standards the NeSA-Reading (NeSA-R) assessment will transition into the NeSA-ELA and becomes operational in the 2016-2017 school year. The NeSA-ELA replaces the former NeSA-Reading assessment and the former NeSA-Writing assessment.

B. NeSA-ELA Background

1. NeSA-ELA Assessment

- a. Administered to public school students to measure school and district accountability
- b. Will be administered in 2016-2017
- c. Provides a grade-level appropriate test for grades 3 – 8
- d. Administered the last week in March through the first week in May
- e. Comprised of all multiple choice items, technology enhanced items and a text-dependent analysis
- f. Contains 35-40 operational items
- g. Items based on reading passages, except the independent writing items.
- h. Includes small number of field-tested items

- i. Field tests do not count toward scores but are items being field-tested for use on future tests. Administered online to approximately 94% of students; 6% participate with a paper/pencil test due to accommodations
- j. Based on design as indicated in the Table of Specifications
https://www.education.ne.gov/Assessment/NeSA_ELA_Transition.html
that indicates:
 - i. The standards covered in the test for each grade
 - ii. The highest depth of knowledge reached

2. NeSA-English Language Arts Alternative Assessment

- a. Administered to public school special education students with a severe cognitive disability (1% of student population)
- b. Provides a grade-level appropriate test for grades 3 – 8 and 11
- c. Administered the last week in March through the first week in May
- d. Comprised of all multiple choice items
- e. Contains approximately 25 operational items per grade
- f. Administered in paper/pencil
- g. Includes a small number of field tested items
 - Field tests do not count toward scores but are items being field-tested for use on future tests
- h. Needed time to test varies widely, depending on student
- i. Based on design as indicated in the Table of Specifications
https://www.education.ne.gov/Assessment/NeSA_ELA_Transition.html
that includes:
 - The standards covered in the test for each grade
 - The highest depth of knowledge reached

C. Advantages of the New ELA Assessment for Nebraskan Students

Students will participate in assessments that include questions more closely tied to instruction in the classroom. Students will be asked questions that test not only what they know, but also how they know.

1. The Role of Nebraska Educators in the Development of the New ELA Assessment

- a. Nebraska will continue to be a leader in engaging our educators to write test questions for the NeSA-ELA
- b. NDE will continue to gather diverse groups of educators from across Nebraska to write test items during NDE-hosted item-writing workshops in Lincoln
- c. Educators will receive item-writer training, develop test items, and conduct peer-review of test items
- d. NDE will continue to encourage Nebraska educator involvement in other related events associated with the transition, including Standard Setting

D. New Item Types for NeSA-ELA included in the ELA Samplers and on the ELA Practice test. Text-Dependent Analysis (TDA)

In 2016-17, students in Grades 5-8 will participate in one (1) Text-Dependent Analysis (TDA) prompt as part of NeSA-English Language Arts (ELA). Districts may anticipate the following for NeSA-ELA Text-Dependent Analysis:

Grades 5-8:

- Will be a part of Session 1 of NeSA-ELA.
- Will be included in the online test administration.
- Will be provided paper/pencil tests only to those students with IEPs and 504 plans that include specific need for paper/pencil testing, or English language learner.
- Will be scored holistically on the [TDA Rubric](#).
- Will include a [Writer's Checklist](#) in the student test. The Writer's Checklist is also available in [Spanish](#). The Writer's Checklist will be available to students in the online engine and in paper/pencil test booklets. Students may also have a paper copy of the Writer's Checklist while responding to the TDA.

a. Pertinent Information

- Students may be provided with blank paper for pre-writing.
- Students may not be provided graphic organizers.
- Students will not be allowed access to a dictionary or thesaurus.
- Spellcheck will not be available in the testing engine.
- Students are not to be provided editing assistance.
- In online testing, students will see a continuous count of the character limit of 6,000 characters (approximately 3 pages) in the lower left corner of the response box.
- In paper/pencil testing, students may only use the pages provided in the test booklet. If additional sheets of paper are added to the booklets, they will not be scored.

b. TDA Security

- All operational TDA passages, prompts, and student responses are secure and **cannot** be printed from the online engine or photocopied from the paper/pencil booklets.
- Operational TDA passages, prompts, and student responses may **not** be photocopied or printed for local scoring.
- Online ELA practice test and Check for Learning (C4L) TDA responses may be printed. Directions for printing TDA practice test and C4L responses will be available through NeSA Practice Test and C4L training.

c. TDA Scoring

- TDA responses will be scored from 1-4 on the [TDA Rubric](#) by one reader.
- TDA scores will be part of the NeSA-English Language Arts test score.
- There will not be a verification/appeals process for TDA.
- Student writing samples can be found in the NeSA-English Language Arts Samplers at: https://www.education.ne.gov/Assessment/NeSA_ELA_Transition.html.

d. Accommodations on TDA

Please review the [2016-17 Approved Accommodations Document](#) for more information about accommodations on the NeSA-ELA Text-Dependent Analysis.

- Paper/pencil and online modes may not be combined on NeSA-ELA. For example, students cannot respond online for ELA selected response items and then respond to the TDA paper/pencil.
- Students may not have a paper/pencil text booklet while responding online.
- Paper/pencil testing must be requested for the NeSA-ELA assessment in eDIRECT during the enrollment window in October.
- Paper/pencil responses must be written in a #2 pencil. Responses written in ink will not be scored and students will not receive points for TDA.
- If a student is provided with a transcription accommodation, the student response to the TDA prompt must be written in the paper/pencil test booklet or entered into the online system by the test administrator. (Please see the [Scribing Protocol and Transcription Protocol](#) document for more information.)
- If a student is word processing a response or using a scribe, the student response must be transcribed into the paper/pencil test booklet or entered into the online system by the test administrator. (Please see the [Scribing Protocol and Transcription Protocol](#) document for more information.)
- Originals of scribed and transcribed papers will be sent to DRC in the red envelope provided with the shipping materials. Each student response included in the envelope must be accompanied by a Transcription Submission form.
- All TDA responses must be written in English.
- Students may not be provided graphic organizers.
- Spellcheck will not be available in the testing engine.

For questions about the information in this section please contact:

Erin Kunkle, Statewide Writing Director

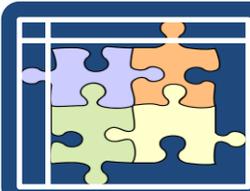
Phone: 402-471-2947

Email: erin.kunkle@nebraska.gov

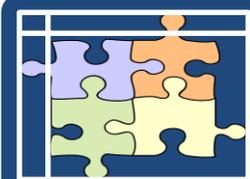
Website: https://www.education.ne.gov/Assessment/Text_Dependent_Analysis.html

E. Transition Timeline – NeSA-Mathematics

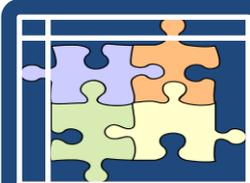
Math Transition Spring 2017				
Grades	Operational Items Types	Standards Tested	Field Tested Item Types	Standards Tested
NeSA General Grades 3-8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple Choice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legacy Mathematics Standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple Choice Evidence-Based Selected Response Auto-scored Constructed Response 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> College and Career Ready Math Standards
NeSA Alternate Grades 3-8 & 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple Choice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legacy Extended Mathematics Standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple Choice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> College and Career Ready Extended Math Standards



STANDARDS



ASSESSMENT



ACCOUNTABILITY

IV. Including All Students in Assessment and Accountability



IV. Including All Students in Assessment and Accountability

A. Students with Disabilities and Scoring Rules

All students with disabilities are expected to participate in the Nebraska State Accountability System, NeSA. No student, including students with disabilities, may be excluded from the state assessment and accountability system. All students are required to have access to grade-level content, instruction, and assessment.

Students who are ELL and also have an IEP are allowed accommodations as appropriate for both designations. These students may benefit from linguistic support accommodations in addition to Special Education accommodations. The IEP team should include members familiar with both the student's cognitive and linguistic needs in order to determine appropriate accommodations.

Students with disabilities may be included in state assessment and accountability in the following ways:

- Students may be tested on the NeSA tests without accommodations.
- Students may be tested on the NeSA tests with accommodations specified in the student's IEP. Accommodations appropriate for the NeSA are found in the [Nebraska State Accountability Approved Accommodations Document](#). Accommodations provided to students must be specified in the student's IEP and used during instruction throughout the year. Accommodations may require paper/pencil testing.
- Use of accommodations that are not approved may invalidate the student's score. Non-approved accommodations used in state testing result in both a zero score and no participation credit.

For example, if a student's IEP indicates that reading passages may be read to the student on NeSA-ELA, and that accommodation is administered, the district is obligated to report to the Assessment Office the student's name and ID number before the testing window is over. The student's score will be a "zero" and the student will not be considered a participant. Violations of this procedure are considered a breach in ethics.

Please note:

Districts must be aware of the differences between accommodations and modifications.

Accommodations provide adjustments and adaptations to the testing process that do not change the expectation, the grade level, the construct, or content being measured. Accommodations should only be used if appropriate for the student, indicated in the student’s current IEP, and used during instruction throughout the year.

Modifications are adjustments or changes in the test that change test expectations, the grade level, or the construct of content being measured. **Modifications are not acceptable in the state testing process.** Examples: Students cannot be tested out of grade level, nor can certain sections of the test be eliminated or shortened.

Students who qualify may be tested using an alternate assessment, the NeSA-AA. The NeSA-AA has been designed for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities or multi-handicapping conditions (generally less than 1% of the overall student population.) This is a separate, paper/pencil test that appropriately measures skills tied to the academic content standards as required by ESEA. Further discussion of the NeSA-AA is found later in this section.

If the IEP team determines that a student is to take an alternate assessment, the NeSA-AA, a statement of why the student cannot participate in the regular NeSA and the rationale for selecting the NeSA alternate shall be included in the IEP (Rule 51 007.07A6).

1. Guidelines for Participation in the Nebraska State Accountability [NeSA] Alternate Assessments

The [Alternate Assessment Participation Criteria](#) for determining which students are to take the alternate assessment must be followed by the IEP team.

The U.S. Department of Education and the State of Nebraska do not currently define “most significantly cognitively disabled students.” This determination will continue to be made at the local level. It is expected that the local IEP team will carefully consider each of the following guidelines before determining participation in an alternate assessment: The student...

- Accesses curriculum and instruction aligned to Nebraska standards with extended indicators.
- Possesses significant limitations, both in intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior, expressed in conceptual, social, and practical adaptive skills.
- Requires extensive, pervasive, and frequent supports in order to acquire, maintain, and demonstrate performance of knowledge and skills.
- Demonstrates cognitive ability and adaptive behavior that prevents completion of general academic curriculum, even with extensive modifications and accommodations.
- May have an accompanying communication, motor, sensory, or other disability.

2. **Nebraska Rule 51: Title 92, Nebraska Administrative Code, Chapter 51**

Nebraska Rule 51 regulations state: 007.07A – “The IEP shall include:”

007.07A3 – For children with disabilities who take alternate assessments aligned to alternate achievement standards, a description of benchmarks or short-term objectives;

007.07A7 – A statement of any individual appropriate accommodations that are necessary to measure the academic achievement and functional performance of the child on state and district-wide assessments; and if the IEP team determines that the child must take an alternate assessment instead of a particular regular state or district-wide assessment of student achievement, a statement of why:

007.07A7a – the child cannot participate in the regular assessment; and

007.07A7b – the particular alternate assessment selected is appropriate for the child

3. **1% Rule on the NeSA-Alternate Assessment (AA)**

If a district’s percentage of students who are proficient on the NeSA-AA tests exceeds 1% of the total number of students enrolled in the tested grades 3-8 and HS of the district population, the district will be contacted by letter and given instructions for applying for an “exception.” The “exception” application provides the opportunity for districts to explain their circumstances. The USDE’s intent of the 1% cap is to assure that students are

appropriately assessed with the alternate assessment and that students who should be taking the general education test have that opportunity.

Further information on the 1% rule for alternate assessments may be found at [School Age NeSA Tests for Students with Disabilities](#) or by contacting Sharon Heater at 402.595.1140 or by email at sharon.heater@nebraska.gov

4. Instructional Guides for Alternate Assessments

Instructional examples and clarifications for math and science extended standards are available for teachers working with students taking the NeSA alternate assessments. “Math Standards with Extended Indicators and Instructional Clarifications” and the “Science Standards with Extended Indicators and Instructional Clarifications” are available on the [NDE-Sped website](#).

B. The Alternate Assessments:

Nebraska State Accountability Alternate for English Language Arts, Mathematics and Science (NeSA-AAELA, NeSA-AAM, and NeSA-AAS)

In order to be consistent with the NeSA-ELA, NeSA-M, and NeSA-S tests for general education students and to meet federal requirements, alternate assessments for English language arts, mathematics, and science (NeSA-AAELA, NeSA-AAM, and NeSA-AAS) were developed in conjunction with the tests for general education. These tests have been designed for students with severe cognitive disabilities or multi-handicapping conditions, generally less than 1% of the overall student population.

The NeSA-AAELA, NeSA-AAM and NeSA-AAS are tests of appropriate tasks, summative in nature, that provide a single snapshot of a student’s performance. The tests have gone through the same processes as the NeSA tests for general education. Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities or multi-handicapping conditions are required to participate in statewide testing. The alternate assessment can be administered as specified in a student’s IEP.

Districts may access the NeSA-AA practice tests, Tables of Specification, Performance Level Descriptors, and Extended Indicators on the [NDE-Assessment website](#).

Like the NeSA tests, the alternate assessment will be administered between **March 20 - May 5, 2017**. This is a six-week administration window. Various trainings on the alternate assessment will be provided in the 2016-2017 school year.

2017 NeSA-AA Testing

- The NeSA-AAELA, the NeSA-AAM, and the NeSA-AAS are required in 2017 for all students whose IEPs specify the need for an alternate assessment.
- All three tests (English language arts, mathematics, and science) are in one booklet.
- Students may be administered the alternate assessment in one subject but not in another. If that is the case, districts will need to contact the Statewide Assessment Office. This is a rare situation, but is appropriate occasionally.
- In 2017, the alternate assessment results will be entered by the teacher on the DRC answer sheet following the specific directions.
- All secure test materials, including answer sheets, student test booklets, and administration manuals for the NeSA-AA, will be returned according to the directions in the administration manual to DRC.
- All security procedures outlined in this Update also apply to the NeSA-AA testing process.
- All students who have been flagged in the NSSRS as students eligible for the alternate testing will receive NeSA-AAELA, NeSA-AAM, and NeSA-AAS test booklets and administration manuals.

For questions about these processes, you may contact the DRC Help Desk at 866.342.6280 or email them at necustomerservice@datarecognitioncorp.com

C. Students Learning the English Language

1. Who are English Language Learners?

According to ESEA, English Language Learners (ELL) are those students who have a native language other than English, **OR** who come from an environment where a language other than English has had a significant impact on their level of English proficiency, **AND** whose difficulties in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language may be sufficient to deny the individual (i) the ability to meet the state's proficient level of

achievement on state assessments, (ii) the ability to successfully achieve in classrooms where the language of instruction is English, or, (iii) the opportunity to participate fully in society.

Each district with ELL students should have a plan for identifying and serving these students that meets the requirements of the Office for Civil Rights, Title III, and Rule 15. The requirements can be found in the [The Nebraska ELL Program Guide, Guide for Administrators](#).

Note: Foreign exchange students are NOT considered as ELL students and should be included in the state assessment process.

2. Including ELL Students in the Nebraska State Accountability [NeSA] Process

Both state and federal laws require the inclusion of all students in the state testing process. ELL students must be tested in NeSA. Districts should review the following guidelines:

- ESEA requirements allow appropriate testing accommodations for all ELL Students.
- In determining appropriate accommodations for students in the NeSA system, districts should use the newly revised Nebraska State Accountability [Approved Accommodations Document](#).

Districts must be aware of the difference between accommodations and modifications.

For students learning the English language, accommodations are changes to testing procedures, testing materials, or the testing situation that allow the student meaningful participation in the assessment. Effective accommodations for ELLs address the unique linguistic and socio-cultural needs of the student. Accommodations for ELL students may be determined appropriate without prior use during instruction throughout the year. For a detailed discussion of accommodations for ELL students on state content assessments, please refer to "[Guide for Including and Accommodating English Language Learners \(ELLs\) in the Nebraska State Accountability \(NeSA\) Tests](#)."

Modifications are adjustments or changes in the test or testing process that change the test expectation, the grade level, or the construct or content being measured. Modifications are not allowable in NeSA.

3. Spanish Translations

NeSA- ELA– The translations of directions are available in written and audio format and are sent from DRC. Reading passages and items remain in English, and should not be translated. Translating reading passages and items will invalidate the student score.

Students have the option of using the audio and/or written translation of the directions in place of or alongside the NeSA-ELA paper/pencil test. Student responses are entered on a regular student answer document.

The translated audio CD directions may be copied to iPods or audio tapes but not to any networked device. The original Spanish CD will need to be returned to DRC after testing and all other copies destroyed. Only one copy of the written and audio modes will be provided to each district per grade level.

NeSA-Mathematics and NeSA Science – The NeSA-Mathematics and NeSA-Science tests in their entirety will be available in Spanish – both paper/pencil versions and online. If a student requires side-by-side tests, the NeSA paper/pencil tests may be used. Student responses are entered on a student answer document.

Translations for NeSA in languages other than Spanish will need to be provided by local districts. Reading passages and test items on the NeSA–ELA cannot be translated.

4. Guidance for Recently Arrived Limited English Proficient Students

Recently Arrived Limited English Proficient Students are defined by the U.S. Department of Education as a student with limited English proficiency who has attended schools in the United States for less than twelve months. The phrase “schools in the United States” includes only schools in the 50 states and the District of Columbia. The term “schools in the United States” does NOT include Puerto Rico.

The district may exempt a recently arrived limited English proficient student from the **NeSA-ELA test** (only) for **12 months or one reporting period**. A district **must** assess the mathematics and science achievement (NeSA-M, and NeSA-S) of a recently arrived limited English proficient student using appropriate accommodations.

Recently arrived limited English proficient students are counted as having participated in the state's assessments for purposes of meeting the participation requirement if they take either the English Language Proficiency Assessment for the 21st Century (ELPA21) OR the ELA test (NeSA-ELA) AND both the mathematics and science assessment (NeSA-M and NeSA-S).

5. ELLs with Disabilities

Students who are ELL and also have an IEP are allowed accommodations as appropriate for both designations. These students may benefit from linguistic support accommodations in addition to Special Education accommodations. The IEP team should include members familiar with both the student's cognitive and linguistic needs in order to determine appropriate accommodations.

6. Language Acquisition Testing

As required by ESEA and Rule 15, districts must annually assess the English language proficiency of all limited-English proficient students. The test provided by the Nebraska Department of Education to test English language proficiency will be the English Language Proficiency Assessment for the 21st Century (ELPA21.)

All students designated as Limited English Proficient (LEP) on NSSRS, must participate in ELPA21 testing. All students designated as Limited English Proficient (LEP) on NSSRS, must participate in ELPA21 testing. The ELPA21 2016 testing window is **February 6- March 17, 2017.**

It is important to note that the purpose of this test is to determine English language proficiency, not proficiency on ELA standards.

Students eligible for alternate assessments for NeSA (NeSA-AAELA, AAM, AAS) should attempt to take the sections of ELPA21 that are deemed appropriate.

Questions about any of the information in this section may be directed to:

Terri Schuster

402.471.4694 E-mail: terri.schuster@nebraska.gov

Brooke David

402.471.2451 E-mail: brooke.david@nebraska.gov

D. Early Childhood Assessment: Results Matter B-5

Results Matter in Nebraska is a child and family outcomes and program improvement system designed and implemented to improve programs and supports for all young children birth to age five, served through school districts, Educational Service Units (ESUs), the Early Development Network, and community partners. The system grew out of earlier efforts to monitor and evaluate grant funded early childhood education programs. Its broader application came as a result of federal Office of Special Education Program (OSEP) requirements for reporting outcomes for children with disabilities and requirements for monitoring programs funded through a range of state funds. The system employs both child outcomes assessment and program quality assessment to accomplish these purposes:

- improve experiences, learning, development, and lives of young children (birth to age five) and their families,
- inform program practices,
- demonstrate program effectiveness,
- guide the development of local and state policies and procedures,
- provide data to demonstrate results.

The system is administered by the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) Offices of Early Childhood and Special Education. Partners include the Department of Health and Human Services and the Munroe-Meyer Institute-University of Nebraska Medical Center. A state Results Matter Child and Program Measurement Task Force comprised of state and local stakeholder representatives serves in an advisory role to the system.

The child and program assessment tools implemented for *Results Matter* are congruent with:

- Nebraska Early Learning Guidelines (Birth to Three and Three to Five)
www.education.ne.gov/OEC/elg.html;
- NDE Rule 11, Regulations for the Approval of Prekindergarten Programs Established by School Boards or Educational Service Units and for the Issuance of Early Childhood Grants.
https://www.education.ne.gov/Legal/webrulespdf/CLEANRule11_2015.pdf

- NDE Rule 51, Regulations and Standards for Special Education Programs. http://www.education.ne.gov/LEGAL/webrulespdf/CLEAN51_2014.pdf Rule 51 applies to all children with disabilities birth - 21.
- NDE Rule 52, Regulations and Standards for the Provision of Early Intervention Services. http://www.education.ne.gov/Legal/webrulespdf/CLEAN52_2014.pdf Rule 52 applies to all infants and toddlers with disabilities (birth to age 3)
- The federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part B and Part C.

1. Measuring Child Outcomes

Results Matter in Nebraska calls for measuring child outcomes through an assessment system that:

- is based on ongoing observation of children engaged in real activities, with people they know, in natural settings.
- reflects evidence-based practices.
- engages families and primary care providers as active participants.
- integrates information gathered across settings.
- is individualized to address each child's unique ways of learning.
- informs decisions about day-to-day learning opportunities for children.
- reflects the belief that development and learning are rooted in culture supported by the family.

NDE requires that all school districts use a single, statewide child assessment system, Teaching Strategies GOLD. This comprehensive system measures individual child progress across six domains of development and learning for all children birth to age 5 who are served by school districts and ESUs. Districts enter ongoing observational data in the GOLD online system to document progress towards narrowing the gap in meeting research-based widely-held expectations for young children birth to age five. District outcomes are compared to state targets related to three outcomes most highly associated with success in school and in life:

- Positive social-emotional skills, including social relationships
- Acquisition and use of knowledge and skills, including early language, communication and early literacy; and
- Use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs.

Annual reporting of *Results Matter* child progress data is required by OSEP, the State Board of Education and the Nebraska Legislature. The use of a single online assessment system provides the state with unprecedented opportunities to compile needed data, not only for the required state and local reporting functions, but most importantly for ongoing curriculum planning, differentiated instruction, program improvement, and improved child outcomes.

2. Program Quality Assessment

Results Matter also includes evaluation of program quality to assure that early childhood classrooms achieve and maintain overall high quality, employ qualified staff, and operate in compliance with federal and state guidelines. Each district and ESU is required to participate in the Results Matter program outcomes system for all children birth to kindergarten entrance age using one or more of the following environment rating scales:

- Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Third Edition (ECERS-3)
- Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ITERS-R)
- Classroom Assessment Scoring System-PreK (CLASS PreK)
- Classroom Assessment scoring System-Toddler (CLASS Toddler)
- Classroom Assessment Scoring System - Infant (CLASS infant)
- Home Visiting Rating Scales (HoVRS) (for Sixpence programs only)

All school districts and Educational Service Units are required to submit the NDE annual Early Childhood Program Report to be in compliance with the Rule 11 approval processes. In addition, programs are highly encouraged to participate in the NAEYC Accreditation process or Step Up to Quality. NDE provides technical assistance for each process and financial assistance for NAEYC accreditation.

3. Professional Development

School districts and programs receive continuous support to ensure that their participation in *Results Matter* provides the highest quality data and knowledge about how to use data to improve program quality and child and family outcomes. The state's [Early Childhood Training Center](#), and statewide network of early childhood professional development (Early Learning Connection), in collaboration with the organizations which provide the program

and child assessment tools, regularly offer training in their use. NDE maintains a cadre of professionals who have achieved reliability in the use of the Environment Rating Scales and the CLASS assessment tools.

4. Results Matter Fidelity

Results Matter Fidelity is designed to assure the reliability and validity of GOLD assessment data.

Gold Inter-Rater Reliability (IRR) Certification. This certification is required to be completed online by each teacher/practitioner responsible for scoring child observations and documentation for children birth to age five. Individual Inter-Rater Reliability (IRR) must be completed online by teachers who have complete one year in GOLD. IRR certification must be renewed every three years. In Nebraska, most teachers/practitioners work with children birth to kindergarten entrance age. For certification, these individuals must achieve and maintain inter-rater reliability for the following two groups of children:

- a. Birth through age 2, including children with disabilities
- b. Preschool (3-5), including children with disabilities.

If one age group of children is served by a teacher, only that certification is required.

For information, resources, and updates related to *Results Matter*, see the Results Matter Technical Assistance Document (July 2016) https://www.education.ne.gov/OEC/rm/RMTA_Doc.pdf

Questions about any of the information in this section may be directed to:

Melody Hobson, Administrator, Early Childhood

Phone: 402.471.0263 E-mail: melody.hobson@nebraska.gov

Teresa Berube, Coordinator, Early Childhood Special Education

Phone: 402.471.4319

Email: Teresa.berube@nebraska.gov



STANDARDS



ASSESSMENT



ACCOUNTABILITY

V. State and Federal Accountability

V. State and Federal Accountability

A. NeSA Data – Release and Use

1. NeSA Reports and Use of NeSA Data

NeSA reports are available to districts through the DRC eDIRECT System. Reports include building, district, and state level information about the NeSA-Reading, Mathematics, Science, and Writing. Districts have opportunity to review the data before reports are made public. Sample reports and full explanations of all reports are available in the current NeSA Reports Interpretive Guide. NeSA-English Language Arts will replace NeSA-Reading in spring 2017 in the NeSA Reports Interpretive Guide the guides include explanations of testing terms that may be unfamiliar to educators and parents. These reports can be accessed in eDIRECT.

DRC provides copies of the Individual Student Reports (ISR) to the districts. NDE provides a letter directing districts to send each ISR home to parents and to retain a copy of the ISR in the student's file. It is the district's responsibility to send the score reports to parents in a timely manner. The individual student reports are also available electronically through eDIRECT.

2. NeSA proficiency levels

Important Note: The NeSA scale score proficiency levels will not change in math & science.

Math – Science

135 and above	Exceeds the Standards
85-134	Meets the Standards
84 and below	Below the Standards

NeSA-ELA cut scores to be set in summer 2017

The Raw Score/Scale Conversion tables for math and science will change from year to year because while test forms are comparable, the items are different. The Raw Score/Scale Conversion tables for English language arts will be available for the first time in summer 2017. The 2017 conversion tables for English language arts, mathematics, and science that convert raw scores to scale scores will be posted on the NDE website as soon as they are finalized. DACs will be notified.

3. Differences and Similarities Between Norm-Referenced Tests and NeSA

There are several important differences and similarities between a norm-referenced test e.g., Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS), Terra Nova, NWEA, and a criterion-referenced test (NeSA):

Differences

- Norm-Referenced tests are built to compare student performance across the country. NeSA tests compare student performance within Nebraska.
- Criterion-Referenced tests like NeSA are built to measure state standards; norm-referenced tests do not measure the state's standards.
- Norm-Referenced tests usually result in bell curve distribution. NeSA is built to measure student proficiency on standards and results in skewed distribution.

Similarities

- Technical processes used are the same: standard setting, alignment, reliability analyses.
- Both tests are administered under standardized conditions.
- Terminology in both score reports is similar.

B. The Nebraska Student and Staff Record System (NSSRS)

The Nebraska Student and Staff Record System, the NSSRS, is the record keeping system of NDE. Districts have done well in accomplishing successful data submission.

As the new year unfolds, districts should remember several important reporting considerations.

- The Consolidated Data Collection (CDC) will continue to collect non-student level data as it did last year.

- In 2016 NeSA test results will be used for reporting reading, mathematics, science, and writing.
- [Guidance for Assessment Calculations](#) provides guidance on how the student assessment data collected through the NeSA are compiled for state reporting.
- Districts need to access the verification and validation reports from the NSSRS website to determine the accuracy of the NeSA data.
- National assessment data may be submitted throughout the year beginning in January, but data can NOT be accepted after June 30, 2016. Districts needing to submit data after June 30, 2016 will need to complete a “Request to Submit Data Late or Make Data Changes” form located in the Consolidated Data Collection (CDC) on the portal.
- National assessment (NRT) data are not collected for non-public students.

1. Checking assessment labels

Districts must check assessment labels before January 18, 2017 for ELPA21 and NeSA-ELA, NeSA-M and NeSA-S. This report reflects the student demographic data submitted to DRC for the test administrations. Additional help with NSSRS data submission may be obtained from the NDE Help Desk at 1.888.285.0556.

To Check the NeSA Assessment Labels:

- ✓ Go to the [NDE Website](#)
- ✓ Click on “NDE Portal” on the left side
- ✓ Enter your User Name and Password
- ✓ Click on “Student and Staff” (NSSRS) tab at the top
- ✓ Click on “NSSRS Validation”
- ✓ Click on “Verification Reports”
- ✓ Click on “Student” to display the verification reports
- ✓ Click on “Assessment”
- ✓ Select appropriate **Labels** report to view student information uploaded to the assessment vendor. Alternate flags are displayed on these reports.
 - Report – NeSA ELA and Math Labels
 - Report – NeSA Science Labels

2. Validating NeSA data in the NSSRS

Districts need to ensure data quality by accessing the Accountability Count Verification reports from the NSSRS website to determine the accuracy of the assessment data for state reporting. As NDE makes changes to assessment results based on district submissions, these changes can be validated in the Accountability Count Verification reports.

To audit school and student results in NSSRS for NeSA groups:

- ✓ Go to the [NDE Website](#)
- ✓ Click on “NDE Portal” on the left side
- ✓ Enter your User Name and Password
- ✓ Click on “Student and Staff” (NSSRS) tab at the top
- ✓ Click on “NSSRS Validation”
- ✓ Click on “System Lookups”
- ✓ Click on “Accountability Count Verification” to display the assessment reports
- ✓ Select reading, math, science, or writing as the subject
- ✓ Select NeSA Assessment Details
- ✓ Select school and grade, then click on “Submit”
- ✓ Select the audit link on the right side to review individual student results by performance level and scale score. There are audit links for all students and various subgroups: gender, racial/ethnicity, SPED, ELL, and FRL are available.

3. Verifying demographic indicators for tested students

Districts must check NeSA Roster Review Reports to verify student demographic indicators for students with NeSA results.

To check the NeSA Assessment Rosters:

- ✓ Go to the [NDE Website](#)
- ✓ Click on “NDE Portal” on the left side
- ✓ Enter your User Name and Password
- ✓ Click on “Student and Staff” (NSSRS) tab at the top
- ✓ Click on “NSSRS Validation”
- ✓ Click on “Verification Reports”

- ✓ Click on “Student” to display the verification reports
- ✓ Click on “Assessment”
- ✓ Select appropriate **Roster** reports to view student information uploaded to the assessment vendor
 - Report – NeSA ELA Roster Review
 - Report – NeSA Math Roster Review
 - Report – NeSA Science Review

Questions about assessment data in NSSRS may be directed to:

Dr. John Moon, NeSA Project Manager

Phone: 402.471.2495

E-mail: john.moon@nebraska.gov

4. Assessing Contracted Students and Students Who Move

The Nebraska Student and Staff Record System require districts to clarify who owns the assessments of contracted public school student. Most students will be assessed in the district and reported in the district where they are enrolled. This is true whether students move between or within a district.

There are three categories for the ownership of assessment results for contracted public school students.

Category One: Any student contracted from one public district to another public district becomes the assessment responsibility of the receiving district.

In these situations, the receiving district needs to do the following:

- Enroll the student, verify the NDE Student ID number and add it to the district.
- Report attendance, demographics, and all NSSRS requirements.
- Assume assessment responsibilities.

Category Two: Any student contracted from a public district to any education agency that is not a public district remains the responsibility of the public district. Some examples of education agencies that are not considered to be public districts include, but

are not limited to, the following: interim programs-schools (Rule 18), approved special education service providers, court-appointed placements, ESU programs, and temporary out-of-school placements.

In these situations, the public district needs to do the following:

- Keep the student enrolled.
- Continue to report attendance, demographics, and all NSSRS requirements.
- Make arrangements with the other education agency to administer the assessment.
- Include the assessment results obtained from the education agency with the district assessment results.

Category Three: Any student attending a non-public school is not required to take the NeSA assessments unless the non-public school student is enrolled in the public school for .51 FTE or more. If a non-public school is also an approved service provider for special education, Category Two (above) applies.

5. Home-Schooled Students

Home schooled students enrolled in the district are not required to take the NeSA assessments unless the home schooled student is enrolled .51 FTE or more.

6. Ward of the Court

If a student is a ward of the court, or a ward of the state, the student remains a resident of the district where he or she became a ward, and that district is responsible for assessment and reporting (Section 79-215) (9).

However, based on a change in state legislation in 2010, if the ward is placed in a foster home, the ward will be deemed a resident of the district in which the ward resided at the time that the ward became a foster child.

There may be circumstances where an official or the court responsible for the ward may make a different decision to assign the ward to a district. If the official or court makes a decision about where the ward will attend school, it would then be the assigned district who would assume the responsibility for the assessment and reporting.

7. Reporting Individual Scores on National Assessment Instruments

As required by the Quality Education Act, districts will need to submit individual student scores and subscores on national tests for one grade at elementary, middle and high school levels. If available a composite/total score along with subscores for reading and math are submitted for each student tested.

The State Board of Education, as required by state statute 79-760, **recommended** national tests to be used. Districts should note that these are **recommendations** only and are **not** requirements. If a district chooses to administer different tests, they may do so. The following are State Board **recommendations** of national assessment tests for districts to consider (April 3, 2015):

ACT Aspire

ACT

California Achievement Test (CAT)

Compass

Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS)

Iowa Test of Educational Development (ITED)

Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) (Northwest Evaluation Assessment)

Terra Nova

Districts must collect and report total individual scores and subscores for math and reading. Each test provides results differently, and therefore, each test state average will be calculated and displayed separately on the State of the Schools Report. The following pages outline the reporting requirements for some of the recommended tests.

See the Assessment Fact pages in the Student Templates Instruction Manual for specific information about submitting national test results

(https://www.education.ne.gov/nssrs/docs/STUDENT_MANUAL_11.3.pdf).

For assistance contact the Nebraska Department of Education help desk

402-471-3151 or 888-285-0556

Email: nde.helpdesk@nebraska.gov

National assessment data may be submitted throughout the year beginning in January 2017, but data can NOT be accepted after June 30, 2017. If data is not available by June 30, the district needs to submit a “Request to Submit Data Late or Make Data Changes” form located in the Consolidated Data Collection (CDC) on the portal. National assessment (NAI/NRT) data are not required for non-public students.

After the district has entered its NAI/NRT results into the NSSRS system, districts can review the results by using the NSSRS Validation in the portal. On the NSSRS Validation page, the default School Year is to 2017-06-30. To view other school years, use the “change years” function. To review NAI/NRT results in NSSRS:

- ✓ Go to the NDE Website: <http://www.education.ne.gov>
- ✓ Click on “NDE Portal” on the left side
- ✓ Enter your User Name and Password
- ✓ Click on “Student and Staff” (NSSRS) tab at the top
- ✓ Click on “NSSRS Validation”
- ✓ Click on “Verification Reports”
- ✓ Click on “Student” to display the verification reports
- ✓ Click on “Assessment “
- ✓ Select National Assessment Instrument Reports to display NAI/NRT results.

Questions about any of the NRT/NAI information in this section may be directed to:

Dr. John Moon, NeSA Project Manager

Phone: 402.471.2495

E-mail: john.moon@nebraska.gov

C. Federal Accountability

NDE will NOT be calculating AYP based on data from the 2015-16 school year. Ratings for 2015-16, based on 2014-15 data, will be frozen for the 2016-17 school year. NDE is working on a transition plan for the 2016-17 school year that will exclude the requirements of providing new Public School Choice, Supplemental Educational Services, and parent notification for Districts having schools identified as needing improvement. Details will be made available when finalized.

D. ESEA Flexibility

Nebraska's request had been aligned to the current work of AQuESTT (Accountability for a Quality Education System Today and Tomorrow) and its six tenets, classification process, and focus on support for continuous improvement. Although the waiver is no longer applicable (even if it had been accepted) developing a Request for ESEA Flexibility provided Nebraska an opportunity to highlight its current work and outline a vision for the State's education system moving forward. A copy of Nebraska's Request for ESEA Flexibility is available on the Nebraska Department of Education website.

If you have questions about the goals or calculations, please call the Director of Federal Programs:

Diane Stuehmer

Phone: 402.471.1740

Email: diane.stuehmer@nebraska.gov

Randy McIntyre

Phone: 402.471.1749

Email: randy.mcintyre@nebraska.gov

E. Public Reporting Fall 2016

The State of the Schools Report [SOSR] has been replaced by the Nebraska Education Profile, which will be released in late November and includes a summary of statewide information, individual district and building profiles, and disaggregated data. The [State of the Schools Report](#) 2014-2015 is available on the Nebraska Department of Education website.

F. Nebraska Accountability System- AQuESTT

AQuESTT is Accountability for a Quality Education System Today and Tomorrow, a next generation accountability system for Nebraska public schools and districts. AQuESTT is designed to integrate statutory requirements for accountability (79-760.06-.07 R.S.S), accreditation (Rule 10), the effective use of data, and support for professional learning for educators into a system focused on continuous school improvement

Statutory requirements of AQuESTT include:

- Performance classification of public schools and districts
- Designation of three priority schools
- Intervention teams for priority schools
- Progress plans for priority schools

Performance Classification of Public Schools and Districts

Raw Classification

The classification of public schools and districts into four performance levels (i.e., Excellent, Great, Good, Needs Improvement) will be based on multiple indicators, including:

- NeSA (Reading, Mathematics, Science, and Writing)
 - Status
 - Improvement
 - Growth
 - Participation
 - Non-Proficient Students
- Graduation Rate

These indicators provide the Raw Classification ratings for schools and districts.

The Raw Classification was developed by the AQuESTT Performance Classification Task Force. The full [AQuESTT Performance Classification Task Force Report](#) provides the details of the work completed by the group.

Final Classification

In addition to the Raw Classification indicators, responses provided by schools and districts to the AQuESTT Evidence-based Analysis (EBA) were included in the Final Classification rating. Final Classification results were released to schools, districts, and the public in December 2015.

Evidence-based Analysis (EBA)

The AQuESTT EBA is an electronic survey designed to collect information from all public schools and districts regarding policies, procedures, and practices related to the six tenets of AQuESTT: College and Career Ready, Assessment, Educator Effectiveness, Positive Partnerships, Relationships & Student Success, Transitions, Student Success & Access.

Purposes of the EBA were to obtain information to:

- Inform the classification of schools and districts
- Acknowledge school and district activities linked to positive student outcomes
- Support Priority School designation process
- Support the development and prioritization of AQuESTT systems of support

The State Board of Education will determine the date and process for future administration of the EBA.

The School Profile

Data from the Final Classification (i.e., NeSA status, improvement, growth, participation, non-proficient students, graduation rate, and the EBA results) and demographic characteristics was used to create a Profile for each public school and district.

Designation of Three Priority Schools

Three schools from the Needs Improvement classification level were designated as Priority Schools, those most in need of assistance to improve. The process for designating the Priority Schools included a comprehensive analysis of the following:

- Raw Classification Data
- Evidence-based Analysis Responses
- Demographic Characteristics
- School Improvement Plans
- Existing Systems of Support

Announcement of the Priority Schools occurred in December 2016.

Intervention Teams for Priority Schools

For each Priority School a Support and Intervention Team was identified to guide improvement efforts focused on key areas of school effectiveness, including:

- School Leadership
- Educator Effectiveness
- Improvement of Instruction
- School Culture
- Family and Community Engagement
- Use of Data for Continuous Improvement

The roles and responsibilities of the Support and Intervention Teams include:

- Diagnose Key Areas of School Effectiveness
- Develop a Progress Plan for Improvement
- Monitor and Support the Progress Plan Implementation

Progress Plans for Priority Schools

Each Priority School developed and submitted a Progress Plan for Improvement to the State Board of Education. Plans were approved in August 2016.

The content of the Progress Plan for Improvement includes:

- Required actions for improvement

- Measureable indicators of progress
- Strategies for improvement
- Timelines for improvement

The State Board of Education will review the Progress Plans and determine when a Priority School may exit priority status.

AQuESTT Information and Resources

Additional AQuESTT information and resources may be found at www.AQuESTT.com

If you have questions about AQuESTT, please contact:
School Improvement and Accreditation
402-471-2444
nde.accreditation@nebraska.gov



STANDARDS



ASSESSMENT



ACCOUNTABILITY

VI. The Continuous Improvement Process



VI. The Continuous Improvement Process

The Continuous Improvement Process, focused on student learning, is an important framework for every Nebraska school district. “School Improvement” is not limited to a data collection and an external visitation every five years. Continuous Improvement is ongoing, systematic, systemic and sustainable, and should involve everyone in the district.

Standards and assessment are essential to continuous improvement. Student performance data generated from assessment that is aligned with content standards informs the continuous improvement process. As data is analyzed, it should inform the school improvement committees where priorities and target goals must be established. The resulting CIP plan establishes both building and district goals that are focused on student learning.

Continuous improvement means that adults need to be learners, data consumers and have opportunities to collaborate on Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment. Many of the professional development opportunities offered by NDE are focused on these topics.



A. School Improvement Workshops

In 2016 the School Improvement Workshops have been collaboratively developed and sponsored by NCSA, AdvancED, the Nebraska Educational Service Units, Learning Forward, and NDE accreditation and data research and evaluation teams.

Date	Event	Location
September 19 - 20, 2016	School Improvement Workshop York	Holthus Center 3130 Hoken Avenue York, NE 68467
September 29-30, 2016	School Improvement Workshop Norfolk	Lifelong Learning Center Northeast Community college 801 East Benjamin Norfolk, NE 68702
October 3-4, 2016	School Improvement Workshop Omaha	ESU #3 6949 South 110 th Street Omaha, NE 68848
October 10-11, 2016	School Improvement Workshop Kearney	ESU #10 76 Plaza Blvd Kearney, NE 68845
October 20-21, 2016	School Improvement Workshop North Platte	Sandhills Conference Center 2102 So. Jeffers St. North Platte, NE 69101

External Review Training Will be available for:

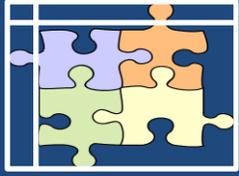
- AdvancED schools who have reviews in 2016-17
- People interested in becoming External Review Team Chairs
- Those interested in AdvancED/North Central Accreditation

For additional information regarding External Review Training or Continuous School Improvement, contact:

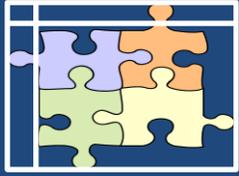
Freida Lange, Administrator

Nebraska Department of Education, Accreditation and School Improvement

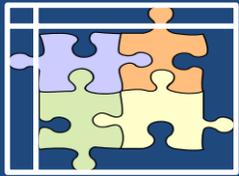
Phone: 402.471.2444 E-mail: freida.lange@nebraska.gov



STANDARDS



ASSESSMENT



ACCOUNTABILITY

VII. Links to Statewide Assessment Documents

- A. [Nebraska State Accountability Official District Assessment Contact Form](#)
- B. [Suggestions for a Smooth Testing Process](#)
- C. [NeSA Security Procedures](#)
- D. [Report of Security Breach](#)
- E. [NeSA Building Principals Security Agreement](#)
- F. [NeSA Confidentiality Agreement - DAC](#)
- G. [Sample District Security Policy](#)
- H. [District Response to Missing NeSA Materials](#)
- I. [Nebraska State Accountability Approved Testing Accommodations](#)
- J. [Transcription Submission](#)
- K. [Analytic Scoring Model – NeSA-Writing](#)
- L. [Sources of NeSA Assessment Data](#)
- M. [NeSA Document Information and Responsibilities](#)