

Nebraska's educators know the state's long-term competitiveness depends on continually improving student learning and outcomes for our 300,000+ K–12 students. That's why what they teach in classrooms all over the state is tied closely to content area standards—standards developed by Nebraska educators, approved by the State Board, and reviewed and revised every seven years.

These content area standards define what Nebraska's students need to learn and master in math, science, and English language arts to help prepare them for college, career, and civic life. They also guide Nebraska's approach to assessment, the Nebraska Student-Centered Assessment System (NSCAS).

The Impact of NSCAS

Accelerates learning: Measures what students know and need to learn so teachers can adapt their lesson plans and instruction to improve student performance.

Improves accountability: Ensures Nebraska schools stay on track with state content area standards and remain nationally competitive.

Increases efficiency: Uses multiple measures, in concert with standards-aligned instruction and curriculum, to drive student learning.



NSCAS Fundamentals

NSCAS embodies Nebraska's holistic view of students and helps prepare them for success after high school. Using different kinds of assessments at different times throughout the school year, NSCAS lets teachers monitor their students' academic progress toward rigorous standards and adjust their teaching to help students stay on track and excel.

The Nebraska Department of Education (NDE), in partnership with educators, school districts, and education policy partners across Nebraska, started implementing the first stages of NSCAS in the 2017-2018 school year.

NSCAS builds on the best of Nebraska's history with assessment: adding new, timely assessments teachers and students can use every day, replacing NeSA with an improved end of year assessment, and continuing with the ACT® for every Nebraska high school junior.



Nebraska's Assessment Milestones

NSCAS: Four Core Components

Formative: Formal and informal tools teachers use in the classroom to check their students' understanding and then adapt their teaching in the moment to what students need. NDE is providing technology and training to teachers that help them use formative instructional practice in their classrooms every day.

Interim: Assessments administered at intervals between instruction (typically fall/winter/spring) to help teachers better understand student learning needs and determine growth toward learning targets. NDE is providing MAP® Growth™, an optional interim assessment used by most Nebraska districts, to all districts at no cost. It shows what individual students know and are ready to learn and tracks growth toward proficiency levels.

Summative: Culminating assessments measuring student performance against state content area standards.

The NSCAS Summative is a new, statewide computer-adaptive assessment for math and English language arts in 3rd-8th grades and science in 5th and 8th grades. It assesses whether students have learned what they were expected to learn and gives deeper insights into student learning needs.

The NSCAS ACT college entrance exam is the summative assessment at the high school level. Given to all juniors, it assesses college readiness in English language arts, math, and science.

Professional learning: NDE is providing onsite workshops and supplemental online training to support teachers in understanding the types and purposes of assessment, interpreting the data, and applying it to their teaching.

NDE is also exploring ways to strengthen connections between content area standards and classroom materials. The Department is also getting feedback from educators on additional assessment needs, including those in subjects and grade levels not covered by the annual summative assessment.

See how NSCAS accelerates student and school success by viewing the NSCAS infographic: bit.ly/2H1awSc.

Key Contacts to Learn More About NSCAS

Cory Epler, PhD
Chief Academic Officer
cory.epler@nebraska.gov

Valorie Foy, PhD
Director of Statewide Assessment
valorie.foy@nebraska.gov

Jeremy Heneger
Assistant Director of
Statewide Assessment
jeremy.heneger@nebraska.gov

