

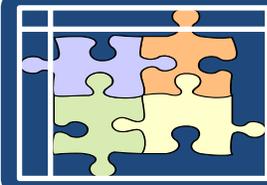


Update: Standards, Assessment, and Accountability (SAA)

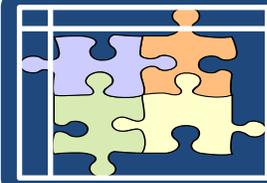
Winter 2018

Volume 20

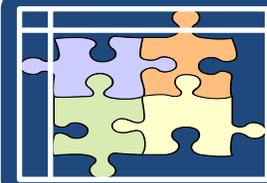
January 2018 - Updated



STANDARDS



ASSESSMENT



ACCOUNTABILITY

Purpose of the Standards, Assessment, and Accountability SAA Update 20

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

- I. Standards, Assessment, and Accountability – Nebraska State Standards
- II. NSCAS Statewide Summative Assessment- Information for ALL Statewide Assessments
- III. NSCAS- ACT
- IV. NSCAS General and Alternate Statewide Summative Assessment for General Grades 3-8 and Alternate Grades 3-8 and 11
- V. National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP)
- VI. Inclusion All Students in Assessment and Accountability
- VII. State and Federal Accountability
- VIII. Early Childhood Assessment
- IX. The Continuous Improvement Process

SAA Updates are provided twice a year by the NDE Assessment office in cooperation with other departments. The next update will be available in spring 2018 and will include information on summative assessment reporting.

Standards, Assessment, Accountability 2017-2018
Summative Assessment Administrations for 2017-2018
All security measures apply to the following assessments:

Year	Subject	Grade Level
2017-2018	NSCAS- General Summative Assessments	3-8
	NSCAS-English Language Arts	
	NSCAS-Mathematics	
	NSCAS- Science	5 and 8
	NSCAS- Alternate Summative Assessments	3-8 & High School*
	NSCAS-AA- English Language Arts	
	NSCAS-AA- Mathematics	
	NSCAS-AA- Science	5, 8, and High School*
	ACT	High School*
	ELPA21	K-12 English Learners

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



I. Standards, Assessment, and Accountability: Standards

1. Teaching and Learning

Content Area Standards

The State Board of Education approved [Nebraska’s College and Career Ready Standards for Science](#) on September 8, 2017. The K-12 standards provide a framework for quality science education in Nebraska schools, and, when mastered, would allow a student to succeed in entry-level, credit-bearing postsecondary coursework without the need for remediation. As required by law, school districts have one year to adopt the state approved standards or standards deemed equal to or more rigorous than the state approved standards. The [suggested implementation plan](#) outlines steps districts can take to implement the revised standards. The schedule for statewide summative is as follows:

2017-2018 Adoption and exploration

Assess legacy standards in Spring 2018 (2010 Science Standards)

2018-2019 Implementation Year 1— (Suggested Grades K, 3, 6, 9)

Assess legacy standards in Spring 2019

Field test new science items for NE-CCR-S

2019-2020 Implementation Year 2—(Suggested Grades 1, 4, 7, 10)

Assess legacy standards in Spring 2020

Field test new science items for NE-CCR-S

2020-2021 Implementation Year 3—(Suggested Grades 2, 5, 8, 11)

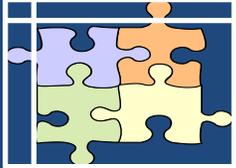
Assess NE-CCR-S in Spring 2021

For more information about Nebraska’s College and Career Ready Standards for Science, contact Sara Cooper (sara.cooper@nebraska.gov), Science Education Specialist.

Additionally, the State Board of Education approved content area standards for two Career & Technical Education Career Fields on November 9, 2017. The career fields with revised content area standards and Programs of Study include:

- Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources
- Skilled and Technical Sciences

For more information about content area standards, please visit the Teaching and Learning Team website ([Teaching and Learning Team Webpage](#)) as well as links on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#). The most current version of all content area standards and standards revision timeline are located on the [Content Area Standards Website](#).



STANDARDS



ASSESSMENT



ACCOUNTABILITY

II. Standards, Assessment, and Accountability: Nebraska Student-Centered Assessment System (NSCAS)- Information Applicable to ALL NSCAS summative Assessments

Nebraska Department of Education has renamed the statewide assessment system as the **Nebraska Student-Centered Assessment System (NSCAS)**.

The vision of the “system” is to support school districts at multiple levels of assessment- formative, interim, and summative. Several aspects of the work at the state level move toward this goal: Providing MAP Growth testing through the state contract, working on a plan for interim assessments to support instruction of College and Career Ready (CCR) standards, providing professional development for 65 certified facilitators in assessment, and connecting MAP Growth results to state summative results through use of the MAP Learning Continuum to inform instruction throughout the year.

The Nebraska Student-Centered Assessment System (NSCAS) Summative Testing includes all state tests; therefore, the scoring rules, accommodations, security policies, and ethics codes apply to the following:

**NSCAS Summative Assessment Administrations for
2017-2018**

Year	Subject	Grade Level
2017-2018	NSCAS- General Summative Assessments	3-8
	NSCAS-English Language Arts	
	NSCAS-Mathematics	
	NSCAS- Science	5 and 8
	NSCAS- Alternate Summative Assessments	3-8 & High School*
	NSCAS-AA- English Language Arts	
	NSCAS-AA- Mathematics	
	NSCAS-AA- Science	
	ACT	High School*
	ELPA21	K-12 English Learners

***Note: In 2017-2018 school year students who are in their third year of cohort at the high school level will participate in the college entrance exam-the ACT, or in the NSCAS- Alternate Assessments.**

1. Table One of Key NSCAS Summative Information

Test	Grades	Tested Standards	Year of Transition to assessment of CCR Standards	Timed Testing	Online or Paper/Pencil Mode
NSCAS -ELA (English Language Arts) General Assessment	3-8	Nebraska CCR Standards of English Language Arts	Spring 2017	Untimed	Online unless approved for accommodation of paper/pencil
NSCAS – Mathematics General Assessment	3-8	Nebraska CCR Standards of Mathematics Standards	Spring 2018	Untimed	Online unless approved for accommodation of paper/pencil
NSCAS –Science General Assessment	5 and 8	Nebraska Legacy Science Standards	Spring 2021	Untimed	Online unless approved for accommodation of paper/pencil
NSCAS -ELA (English Language Arts) Alternate Assessment	3-8 and third-year cohort	Nebraska CCR Extended Standards of English Language Arts	Spring 2017	Untimed	Mode that is best for student. Teacher enters student responses online regardless of mode of testing.
NSCAS - Mathematics Alternate Assessment	3-8 and third-year cohort	CCR Standards of Mathematics	Spring 2018	Untimed	Mode that is best for student. Teacher enters student responses online regardless of mode of testing.
NSCAS -Science Alternate Assessment	5, 8 and third-year cohort	Nebraska Legacy Extended Science Standards	Spring 2021	Untimed	Mode that is best for student. Teacher enters student responses online regardless of mode of testing.
ACT	Third-year cohort	ACT College and Career Readiness Standards	Spring 2016	Timed (Unless approved for accommodation of extended time) See NDE-ACT website	District and/or student choice Make-up test can be administered online if district approved for online administration by February 16, 2018

2. Table Two of Key NSCAS Summative Information

Test	Test Dates	Make-Up Test Dates	Test Management	Test Engine Information	Website
NSCAS – General Summative ELA, M and S	3-19-18 to 4-27-18	4-30-18 to 5-4-18	Comprehensive Assessment Platform (CAP)	NWEA Technology Coordinators Click on link for Technology Coordinators ○	https://community.nwea.org/community/nebraska
NSCAS –ELA. M, and S Alternate Assessment	3-19-18 to 4-27-18	4-30-18 to 5-4-18	eDIRECT	NDE/NWEA Assessment Portal. Click on the tab labeled “Technology Coordinators.	https://www.education.ne.gov/Assessment/
ACT	4-3-18 (Paper) 4-3-18 to 4-12-18 (Online) (Tues, Wed, Thurs only)	4-24-18 (Paper) 4-3-18 to 4-12-18 (Online) (Tues, Wed, Thurs only)	PA Next	TestNav- See Technical Requirements for the ACT Test Taken Online	http://www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/state-and-district-solutions/nebraska.html
ACT Accommodations	4-3-18 to 4-17-18	4-24-18 to 4-30-18	N/A	N/A	http://www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/state-and-district-solutions/nebraska.html

- Note: Alternate students who are in their third year of cohort at the high school level will take the NSCAS -Alternate tests.
- All protocols, practices, and procedures for state testing will apply to each test inside the Nebraska Student-Centered Assessment System (NSCAS) Summative Program.

5. As required in the amended Quality Education Accountability Act, 79-760, the Nebraska Department of Education has built NSCAS state tests for the purposes of comparative accountability with the help of its partners, Data Recognition Corporation (DRC), Maple Grove, Minnesota and Northwest Evaluation Association. The ACT will be the standard off-the-shelf ACT test. The ACT will NOT be augmented with Nebraska items.
6. 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.
7. **District Assessment Contacts**
 - a. 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 within NSCAS. 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.
 - b. DACs will be assigned passwords in all the NSCAS test management systems, and 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.
 - c. The contacts for the 2017-2018 school year are the same as those used in 2016-2017 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.
8. Superintendents have also been asked to designate an NSCAS Technology Assessment Contact (N-TAC), 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.

9. 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.

10. NSCAS- Security, Ethics, and Training

- a. 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 required security information available at [NSCAS- Admin & Security](#). It is critical that all administrators and teachers read the procedures, especially those who are administering the assessment. These procedures apply to all **NSCAS-** testing, which includes **NSCAS-ELA, Mathematics, and Science; Alternate ELA, Mathematics, and Science; ELPA 21 and ACT**
- b. 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](#).
- c. The [Principal Security Agreement](#) requires each principal to sign for each NSCAS summative test 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.
- d. 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 submitted their security agreements directly to the NDE assessment office through Echosign email by November 22, 2017. Each principal and DAC received an email and instructions for return of the security/confidentiality agreement.
- e. Districts should maintain a set of district policies that includes a reference to Nebraska’s NSCAS 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 **NSCAS** Security document. The

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

f. 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 **NSCAS** Testing Security Procedures are intended to outline clear practice for appropriate security.
- All school personnel who administer **NSCAS** tests must receive complete training in test administration and are responsible for appropriate test ethics and security practices.
- A Nebraska State Accountability Security Manual is provided to give 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 **NSCAS** test security (Forms are also included in this Update).

g. Training for Test Administration

DACs and principals share the responsibility for assuring that all teachers and school personnel administering NSCAS tests are trained in appropriate procedures, security and ethics. NDE provides information on the assessment website for test administration training. The administration training PowerPoint was available January 5, 2018. Available at [NSCAS- Admin & Security](#)

h. 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 NSCAS tests.

- The scripted directions in test assessment manuals, 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.
 - Requiring pauses and stretch breaks for all students during the tests.
 - Placing check lists of testing protocol on students’ desks during testing.
 - Having students read NSCAS-ELA reading passages or any test items to adults.
 - Playing music during the testing.
 - Providing food, candy, or drinks during the tests.
 - Leaving items on the wall or within classrooms that provide hints or direction to test content.
 - Not reading the scripted directions verbatim.
 - Not controlling access to cell phones or other electronic devices in the testing setting.
 - Not following approved accommodations and practices given in the **Nebraska Student-Centered Assessment System Summative & Alternate Accessibility Manual. (Note: ACT and ELPA21 have additional requirements for accommodations.)**
 - Although some accommodations may be appropriate in an instructional environment, they are not included as part of the standardized testing process and 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 differentiate between the state testing environment and the day-to-day instructional environment. Although both have expectations, those expectations are different. Note: Eligibility requirements for paper and pencil administration were revised for the Spring 2018 test administration. See the **Nebraska Student-Centered Assessment System Summative & Alternate Accessibility Manual**

i. 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 NSCAS testing materials. Districts are not to make copies of the tests—items, passages, or graphics. 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 translation document or CD must be accounted for. A district is held responsible for the return of all secure test materials to DRC, NWEA, or ACT. Districts are not to keep secure materials.
- A list of all testing materials and protocol for their security are available in each NSCAS testing manual.
- NDE, along with DRC, NWEA, and ACT, takes the security of testing materials very seriously. The vendors use sophisticated tracking systems for all secure materials.

11. DRC INSIGHT, NWEA Comprehensive Assessment Platform, and ACT TestNav operate in secure browsers, which do not allow students to access the Internet or other software during testing. See Technology Requirements.

- a. NSCAS Alternate- [Web-Based Testing Engine System Requirements](#),
- b. NSCAS General- [NWEA Technology Coordinators](#), and
- c. ACT-[Technical Requirements for the ACT Test Taken Online](#)

12. For districts experiencing technical difficulties that cannot be locally resolved, the district DAC or N-TAC should contact DRC, NWEA, or ACT Help Desk Lines
 - a. **NWEA Help Desk 855-225-9926**
 - b. **ACT Help Desk 800-553-6244 Ext 2800**
 - c. **DRC Help Desk 866.342.6280**

13. NSCAS Administration Security Visits

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.

14. Score Invalidation and Waivers

- a. Throughout the NSCAS process, the NDE has written and applies business rules for zero scores, invalidations and waivers. Each situation is weighed individually. For NSCAS General and Alternate summative, and for ACT, the following rules are applied:
- b. 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 the link-NSCAS Forms during the testing window. Refer to the Emergency Medical Waiver for additional guidance.
- c. Invalidations (INV) are applied in situations where the construct of the NSCAS test was violated or a security issue occurs. For example, an invalidation occurs when a student receives an accommodation that is not in the student's IEP for NSCAS General and Alternate. For ACT if an accommodation not approved by ACT in the TAA system is administered, the score becomes non-college reportable. Students receiving score invalidations may receive zero scores, depending on the situation that occurs. Participation in NSCAS reporting may or may not have been affected, depending upon the circumstances of the invalidation.
- d. 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 the test management systems 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 also applied in circumstances where a student only took part of the test and then left the district. All NLE codes result in waived scores.

- e. 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. Examples are a death in the family or extended emergency weather such as prolonged flooding. While it is best to contact the Director of Assessment by email before the end of the window, emails are also acceptable after the end of the window before assessment reports are finalized. Email should be titled "Unforeseen Testing Circumstance." OTH-approved codes result in waived scores.
 - f. 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.
 - g. 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.
 - h. 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.
 - i. District Unable to Test Student (UTT) is used for any additional circumstances that cause a student who is enrolled in a district to have a zero score. For example, the student may have not been absent entire window, but the district was unable to test because of excessive absence. UTT codes may result in zero scores.
- 15.** It is a requirement of NDE that any student in the Nebraska Student and Staff Record System (NSSRS) in tested grades participate in NSCAS tests. Test scores will be reported to parents in Individual Student Reports [ISR].
- a. All enrolled students in required grade levels are to be included in Nebraska Student-Centered Assessment System summative tests in one of three ways:
 - NSCAS – General education tests, including ACT
 - NSCAS – General education tests with approved accommodations, including ACT
 - NSCAS – Alternate Assessment

- b. The following scoring rules apply to all students, including those with disabilities or those learning the English language.
- If enrolled students are not tested, the district must account for the reason why each student is not tested.
 - All students will be tested at grade level.
 - Students will receive scores only on the items that are completed.
- c. **Nebraska Student-Centered Assessment System Scoring Rules: These rules apply to NSCAS- Summative, NSCAS- Alternate, English Language Proficiency Assessment for the 21st Century [ELPA21], and ACT.**
- NSCAS is a system of state tests, which are scored by vendors. The scores are inserted by NDE into the NSSRS for statewide calculations. Students will be considered participants for federal and state accountability if they respond to at least one question or prompt.
 - If teachers modify any NSCAS tests, all resulting scores are zeroes.
 - 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.

16. 11th Graders must be tested with their cohort.

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

- a. 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 2019 will take his/her tests in spring 2018.
- b. **In 2017-2018 school year students who are in their third year of cohort at the high school level will participate in the college entrance exam, the ACT, to be administered in each high school in Nebraska.**
- c. **Alternate students who are in their third year of cohort at the high school level will take the NSCAS -Alternate statewide summative tests.**

17. 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 NSCAS testing through coordination with the student's home district. DACs should be tracking their students and contacting program or Rule 18 schools to assure their students' participation.

18. Embargoed Data

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

- a. Do not share scores publicly through newsletters, school board meetings, award ceremonies, media releases, and other formal publications.
- b. 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.
- c. Aggregate scores can be shared with school/district staff, but do remind recipients that scores are embargoed.
- d. No public recognition of individuals can be given if doing so reveals summative test scores, such as awarding students who earn perfect scores on an NSCAS test.
- e. 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. Raw scores MAY become available when student ends testing after cut scores are set on the NSCAS General Summative for grades 3-8 in subsequent years. It is a goal of NDE to provide faster meaningful results to students and school personnel.

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.

19. The Governor's Nebraska Technical Advisory Committee

The NDE has consulted 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:

Committee Member	Member’s Organization	Member’s Role
Brian Gong, PhD, Chair	Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment – Dover, New Hampshire	National Expert
Chad Buckendahl, PhD	ACS Ventures – Orem, Utah	National Expert
Pete Goldschmidt, PhD	California State University, Northridge, California	National Expert
Linda Poole	Papillion-LaVista Public Schools	Nebraska Teacher
Cindy Gray, PhD	Associate Superintendent Elkhorn Public Schools	Nebraska School District Leadership



III. Standards, Assessment, and Accountability: Nebraska Student-Centered Assessment System (NSCAS)- Information Applicable to ACT

ACT Update

The Nebraska State Statute 79-760 was updated by passage of LB 930 in spring 2016 to require that state accountability testing at the high school level be completed through the administration of a college entrance exam. ACT has been selected as the exam to be administered in spring 2017 to all public school third-year cohort students, except those identified as needing alternate assessment.

Students will participate in ACT Reading, English, Math, Science and Writing in spring 2018. Although ACT writing is optional for National administrations, the ACT writing test is required for state testing for all students.

All students, including special education students and English Language Learners who are in their third-year cohort of high school must participate in the ACT.

Spring 2018 ACT Test Dates

Test Administration	Initial Test Window	Make-up Test Window
ACT Paper/Pencil Test	April 3, 2018	April 24, 2018
ACT Online Test	April 3-April 12, 2018 (Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday only)	Online students can be changed to paper/pencil if absent during the online window P/P April 24, 2018
ACT Accommodations Test	April 3-April 17, 2018	April 24-April 30, 2018

ACT Test Information

Section	# of Questions & Time Limit	Content/Skills Covered	Question Types
English	75 questions in 45 min.	grammar & usage, punctuation, sentence structure, strategy, organization, and style	four-choice, multiple-choice usage/mechanics and rhetorical skills questions
Math	60 questions in 60 min.	pre-algebra, elementary algebra, intermediate algebra, coordinate geometry, plane geometry, and trigonometry	five-choice, multiple-choice questions
Reading	40 questions in 35 min.	reading comprehension of what is directly stated or implied	four-choice, multiple-choice referring and reasoning questions
Science	40 questions in 35 min.	interpretation, analysis, evaluation, reasoning, and problem solving	four-choice, multiple-choice data representation, research summaries, and conflicting viewpoints questions
Writing	1 essay in 40 min.	writing skills	essay prompt

Help Contacts

Nebraska ACT Coordinator

Iris Owens

iris.owens@nebraska.gov

402-471-4316

Assessment at Nebraska Department of Education

Nebraska Department of Education

Statewide Assessment and Accountability

Phone: 402-471-2495

Fax: 402-742-2319

Email: NDE.stateassessment@nebraska.gov

ACT Contacts

Customer service hours (excluding ACT holidays):

Monday – Friday: 7:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Central Time

General Inquiries

Phone: 800.553.6244, ext. 2800

ACT hosted webpage: www.act.org/stateanddistrict/nebraska

Accommodations Questions

Phone: 800.553.6244, ext. 1788

Email: ACTStateAccoms@act.org

ACT Online Prep

Phone: 319-337-1429

Email: actonlineprep@act.org

1. ACT Participation for English Language Learners

In spring 2018 new accommodations have been added for English Learners. The accommodations must be approved in the TAA system.

ACT English learner supports include:

- Extended time testing-Timing Code 6 (50% time extension, self-paced, single session)
- Use of an approved word to word bilingual dictionary (ACT-Approved Bilingual Word-to-Word Dictionaries)
- Use of test directions in 12 native languages
- German
- Vietnamese
- Korean
- Haitian Creole
- Tagalog
- Somali
- Spanish
- Mandarin
- Cantonese
- Arabic
- Russian
- French
- Testing in a familiar environment or small group

Use of these accommodations results in non-college reportable scores unless the accommodations are approved through the ACT Test Accessibility and Accommodation system. Parents and students should be involved in the decision of taking the ACT without accommodations and receiving college reportable scores or having accommodations that result in non-college reportable scores.

2. .ACT participation for students with IEPs and/or 504 Plans, who are not identified as needing alternate assessment.

Students may have accommodations for college-reportable scores only through an ACT approval process through the ACT Test Accessibility and Accommodations site (TAA). Parents, students, staff, and the IEPs and/or 504 Plans should guide decisions for students.

3. Rule 18 and Special Program Schools

Students enrolled in Special Program or Rule 18 schools must participate in the ACT at those sites. The special program and Rule 18 schools have designated ACT test coordinators for each site. Students should be added by the test coordinators in Rule 18 and special programs in Pearson Access Next so tests will arrive for those students. Rule 18 and special program schools are required to follow all the same testing procedures and security procedures as the Nebraska public high schools.

The student's school of enrollment should be communicating with Rule 18 or program schools which its student is attending.

4. ACT Test Coordinators

Each public high school building, program school, and Rule 18 school is an ACT test site for the state administration of the ACT. Each test site has a test coordinator as the main source of contact with ACT. District Assessment Contacts receive ACT DAC Updates throughout the year and should share that information with building test coordinators.

5. ACT and NeSA Alternate Assessment Administration

In spring 2018, the ACT will be administered as the Statewide Summative Assessment at the high school level. All third-year cohort students are required to participate unless identified as Alternate Assessment students. Students identified as having the most severe cognitive disabilities will participate in the NSCAS Alternate Assessments. All students in third year cohort must participate in the ACT or the NSCAS Alternate Assessment. Regardless of how many credits a student has earned, students must participate in state testing in their third year of high school.

6. ACT Testing mode

Each school site determines the mode of ACT administration, either paper/pencil or online for the current year. All students do not have to be tested in the same mode. Some may be paper/pencil and some online at district discretion with input from students/parents involved. The majority of students will be assessed paper/pencil in spring 2018. However, many school sites have elected to complete make-up tests online as more days are available for testing.

7. ACT Make-Up

Paper/Pencil Make-up tests

Students (who are not receiving accommodations) who need to make up their ACT tests due to absence can do so paper/pencil on April 24, 2018. Tests need to be ordered for these students by April 20, 2018. Students can be added to PA Next until April 24th, 2018. After that date, students who move in cannot be administered the ACT.

Online Make-Up tests

Schools may administer make-up tests online April 3-April 12, 2018 (Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday only) if the school site has been approved for online testing by February 16, 2018. Make-up testing online will require setting up a testing session for the student in PANext.

8. [Technical Readiness for the ACT® Test Taken Online](#) (Video)

(This video series includes information on downloading Installable TestNav, running system and app checks, installing and setting up ProctorCache, and precaching test content.

9. The student will also need to be changed to online from paper/pencil in PANext and put in a test session.

Instructions on changing the test format from paper/pencil to online for individual students:

Step 1: Log into PANext

Step 2: Under Testing select Student Test

Step 3: You will find a list of your students, select the student you want to change the test format.

Step 4: Click the drop down arrow for select task

Step 5: Select Edit Student Test

Step 6: Select start

This is where the list of students will show up and you will be able to select a student

Step 7: Under Delivery Format you are able to change from paper to online

Step 8: Select Save

10. Requirements of ACT Administration and Security Procedures

District Assessment Contacts and School Site principals signed security agreements for all NSCAS summative assessments, including the ACT. The requirements of the agreement must be strictly followed. In addition, all ACT requirements must be followed.

Test sites must follow all requirements for the security and administration of the ACT. Test site coordinators are also responsible for the security of the ACT materials. A test site coordinator may not be a direct relation to a student participating in Nebraska school day testing for spring 2018 in any school. ACT room test administrators or proctors cannot be direct relatives of student(s) being tested in their rooms.

The test manuals shipped by ACT to school sites contain specific details about procedures for test administration. Training for test administration is located on the ACT website at: [Test Administration Training](#) (Videos)

11. Test Manuals

Test Coordinator Manuals, Test Manuals, and any requested paper/pencil ACT tests are shipped to the test sites on date indicated in PA Next by site test coordinator

March 5-9, 2018 or

March 12-16, 2018

Included are:

- a. Test Coordinator Information
- b. Online Testing Manual
- c. Standard Time Paper Testing Manual
- d. Paper Testing with Accommodations Manual-includes separate sections for the various timing codes allowed with accommodations
- e. Non-college Reportable Accommodation Testing Manual

12. ACT Non-cognitive Survey

- a. Prior to participating in the ACT, students will be asked to complete the non-test information and non-cognitive survey.
- b. All questions in the non-cognitive section are in the *Taking the ACT Test* booklet which is provided to each student.
- c. It is required that parents and students have access to the survey to preview it if they want. Students are not required to complete the survey.
- d. If a student who is scheduled to participate in the ACT paper/pencil is absent and is changed to online mode, the student's non-cognitive paper/pencil survey must be transferred to an online form of the survey. Changing the student to online in PANext and setting the student up in a test session will give the school access to a ticket for

the student to complete the survey online. Students who completed the survey paper/pencil but are changed to online administration have four days after their administration of the ACT to transfer their answers from the paper/pencil survey into the online survey.

- Students who complete the survey have these advantages:
 - It is through the non-cognitive portion of the assessment that students can request up to four free score reports sent to colleges of student’s choice. If not completed during the pretest session, there is a cost of \$13. for each report for to a college.
 - The information provided also helps to inform the student level report detailing college and career planning and interest major fit. If students don’t complete this portion, that information will be left blank on their reports from ACT.
 - If the student elects to be a part of Educational Opportunities Service, then ACT will also provide their information to approved colleges/financial aid opportunities for which they would fit the criteria.
 - Some of the data collected will also be used to inform the Profile reports, so with missing data, all reports will not be as complete.

13. Not Tested Codes for ACT

Districts provide a not tested code for any student not assessed either in the online system or on the student answer sheet. The not tested codes are explained in the table below.

Code	Description	Explanation of Use
EMW	Emergency Medical Waiver	Student was not tested because of an approved Emergency Medical Waiver. (excluded from reporting)
NLE	No Longer Enrolled	Student was not tested because of relocation from district/school after data submission but prior to ACT testing. (excluded from reporting)
PAR	Parent Refusal	Student was not tested because of a written request from parent or guardian. (included in reporting as scale score zero and performance level of 3)

SAE	Student Absent for the Entire Testing Window	Student was not tested because student was absent from school from the beginning of testing till the end of testing. (included in reporting as scale score zero and performance level of 3)
UTT	District Unable to Test Student	Student was not tested due to any additional circumstances that cause a student who is enrolled in a district to have a zero score. For example, the student may have not been absent entire window, but the district was unable to test because of excessive absence. UTT

The state use questions in PANext are to be used to explain why a student has not tested. See last item in screen shot below- *State Use Questions*

DETAILS

New Student

Organization*

Student Code*

First Name*

Gender

State Student ID*

Middle Initial

Date of Birth*

Local Student ID

Last Name*

Actual Grade of Student*

Reporting High School Code - Online Only

Complete this field only if the examinee's score report should be sent to a school other than your own (see administration manual for instructions).

High School Code

State Use Questions

If this student did not test, please select the reason below:

Note: Creating student does not register student.

* Required

14. ACT Online Prep (AOP)

AOP is available to every student in the third-year cohort. Two complete practice tests are available in AOP with two ACT writing opportunities. The ACT Writing tests are computer scored through the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI). (The ACT Writing operational administration is, however, scored by human readers.) AOP is not only available to students

during the school day, but they may access it at any time with their User Name and Password. AOP will remain available to each third-year cohort student who accesses it before the ACT spring 2018 test administration for 365 days from the day the individual student signs in for the first time in the 2017-2018 school year. Students may individually choose to use AOP if they want to prepare to retake the ACT in their senior year.

Information on ACT Online Prep is available on the [NDE ACT website](#)

15. ACT Reporting

- a. The User Handbook for Educators contains information about ACT score reports, as well as samples of the reports. This can be found online at: [The ACT Test: User Handbook for Educators](#)
- b. Score reporting starts on page 39.
- c. Schools will begin receiving reports from ACT for their students three-eight weeks after testing
- d. Sample reports can be found here:
 - [Student Report Sample](#)
 - [High School Report Sample](#)
- e. Schools that emphasize to students the format and meaning of the report and the information included may advantage their students as they make college choices, consider majors, and decide whether to retake the ACT as seniors.

16. Standard Setting

- a. Nebraska Department of Education must report statewide summative scores in at least three levels for state accountability and on the Nebraska Education Profile (NEP). In the past NeSA scores have been reported at Below, Meets, and Exceeds. Meets and Exceeds combined to provide a percentage of students who were proficient.
- b. With the transition to ACT as the state summative test at the high school level, Nebraska educators and NDE engaged in a standard setting process to determine the three levels of performance used for state accountability. The Nebraska State Board of Education set the following performance levels for state accountability only.
- c. ACT Cut Scores for ACT-English Language Arts, ACT- Mathematics, and ACT-Science
- d. The English Language Arts score includes ACT-Reading, ACT- English, and ACT-Writing

Performance Level	Math	ELA	Science
ACT Benchmark	22-36	20-36	23-36
On Track	18-21	18-19	19-22
Developing	1-17	1-17	1-18

e. The NSCAS-ACT processes for standard setting are described in detail in the standard setting reports available at

- [ACT Nebraska Standard Setting](#)
- [ACT Standard Setting Post Committee NDE Work](#)

Looking ahead to spring 2019

ACT Test Dates spring 2019 are in chart below.

Paper Test Date	Online Test Dates	Accommodation Test Dates for Paper	Accommodation Test Dates for Online	Paper Make-Up Date	Accommodation Test Dates Paper Make-Up
April 2, 2019	April 2-4, April 9-11, 2019	April 2-5, 8-12, 15-16, 2019	April 2-4, 9-11, 2019	April 24, 2019	April 24-26, 29-30, 2019



IV. Standards, Assessment, and Accountability: Nebraska Student-Centered Assessment System (NSCAS)- Information Applicable to NSCAS General and Alternate Summative Assessments

1. NSCAS-English Language Arts, Math, Science Summative General and Alternate Testing Window –

The **NSCAS**-Testing Window for Summative general and alternate English language arts, mathematics, and science is March 19 – April 27, 2018. The make-up window for general and alternate is April 30-May 4, 2018. Make-up test may also be administered throughout the window. However, no regular sessions that are not make-up tests should be scheduled in the make-up window.

2. NSCAS Cut Scores

a. English Language Arts Cut Scores

The cut scores for NSCAS-ELA and ELA Alternate were set in summer 2017.

The cut scores are:

Grade	NeSA-ELA General Level 2 Cut	NeSA-ELA General Level 1 Cut (Highest Level)
Grade 3	200	239
Grade 4	200	241
Grade 5	200	236
Grade 6	200	232
Grade 7	200	235
Grade 8	200	240

Grade	NeSA-ELA Alternate Level 2 Cut	NeSA-ELA Alternate Level 1 Cut (Highest Level)
Grade 3	200	246
Grade 4	200	244
Grade 5	200	238
Grade 6	200	238
Grade 7	200	249
Grade 8	200	238
Grade 11	200	232

Standard setting reports available:

- [NSCAS \(Formerly NeSA\)-ELA Standard Setting Report](#)
- [NSCAS \(Formerly NeSA\) ELA Standard Setting Post-Committee NDE Work](#)

b. NSCAS-Math Cut Scores

The cut scores for the **NSCAS-Math** and **NSCAS-Alternate Assessment- Math** will be set in summer 2018.

c. NSCAS (formerly NSCAS) Science Cut Scores

The 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:

In 2011-2012 the scale score ranges for 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

Because the NSCAS-Science assessment will transition in 2020-2021 to measure the Nebraska College and Career Ready Standards of Science, cut scores will be set in summer 2021.

3. The Role of Nebraska Educators in the Development of the English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science Assessments

- a. Nebraska will continue to be a leader in engaging our educators to write test questions for the summative assessments.
- 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 as they are written.
- d. Additional educators will meet to review items that were created at item-writing workshops to determine whether the items are eligible for field testing.
- e. NDE will continue to encourage Nebraska educator involvement in other related events associated with the transition to the College and Career Ready Standards, including Standard Setting.

4. NSCAS ELA, Math, and Science Spring 2018 Test Specifics

NSCAS-ELA

ELA Spring 2018				
Grades	Operational Items Types	Standards Tested	Field Tested Item Types	Standards Tested
General Grades 3-8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple Choice Technology-enhanced items Composite items (multi-part and machine-scored) No open-ended text-dependent analysis will be included; items that test the skills for text-dependent analysis will be included. They will be MC, TE, or composite items. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> College and Career Ready ELA Standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple Choice Technology-enhanced items Composite items 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> College and Career Ready ELA Standards
NSCAS Alternate Grades 3-8 & 11	Multiple Choice	College and Career Ready Extended ELA Standards	Multiple Choice	

NSCAS-Mathematics

Math Spring 2018				
Grades	Operational Items Types	Standards Tested	Field Tested Item Types	Standards Tested
General Grades 3-8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple Choice Technology-enhanced items Composite items (multi-part and machine-scored) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> College and Career Ready Math Standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple Choice Technology-enhanced items Composite items 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> College and Career Ready Math Standards

NSCAS Science

Items will remain all multiple choice for the operational NSCAS Science Summative General and Alternate in spring 2018, 2019, and 2020.. In 2021 NSCAS will transition to assess the Nebraska College and Career Ready Math Standards of Science.

5. Scheduling

a. Online Assessment

The NSCAS spring online summative assessments for grades 3-8 and alternate 3-8 and 11 are untimed and designed to provide students with as much time as needed to complete each content area. In the spring of 2018, the ELA and math tests will be minimally adaptive, which means students will see different items based on whether they answer the previous questions correctly or incorrectly. The question bank in the spring of 2018 will not be as robust as it will be in future years. As the question pool increases in size in subsequent years, the assessments will become fully adaptive. Science will not be an adaptive test until it transitions to college and career ready items in spring 2021.

The table below lists the approximate number of test questions per content area and the estimated time to complete each content area. Some students may require more time than others. When scheduling test sessions, these variances should be considered.

Grade Level	Content Area	Approximate number of test questions	Estimated test-taking time
3 – 8	Mathematics	48	90 minutes
3 – 8	English Language Arts	48	90 minutes
5 and 8	Science	50 – 60	60 minutes

Due to the adaptive nature of the assessment, students will be required to answer each test question before a new question will be presented. At any point during the test session, proctors can end the test session, which will pause the student’s assessment. Later the same day or on a different day, the proctor can start a subsequent test session, and students can resume testing. This functionality provides schools with flexibility in scheduling test sessions. For example, given the 90-minute estimated test-taking time, a school may decide to schedule one 90-minute session, two 45-minute sessions or three 30-minute sessions. It is recommended that schools schedule one to four test sessions per content area with additional make-up sessions for students that may need additional time. Incomplete items will count as incorrect items.

b. When scheduling test sessions, please consider the following:

- The estimated test-taking time does not include test-ticket distribution, starting the test session, launching the secure browsers, and student log-in.
- Within a test session, tests for individual students can be paused at any time.
- After 10 minutes of inactivity, the student will be automatically logged out of the test. The student can resume testing only after the proctor allows the student to rejoin the session.
- Test sessions can be scheduled at any time during the school day but be cautious of starting late in the afternoon.
- There may be scheduled downtime for maintenance and product updates on Friday evenings and Saturday mornings. These will be communicated to all partners in advance of the summative test window.
- 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.
- 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 NSCAS 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 only 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. However, students who are newly enrolled after April 24, 2018 will not be expected to participate in the NSCAS summative test.

- When students arrive at a new school, the receiving school should contact the previous school to determine what NSCAS 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](#).

6. Consideration for Online Testing:

- Students will not be able to move to the next item on the NSCAS General assessments for grades 3-8 without answering the current item. There is no item review screen at the end of testing.**
- Students need to have access to the student tutorial, 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.
- Proctors should provide students with their test ticket prior to testing. Test tickets must be collected at the end of the test session.
- Student tickets are considered secure. They do need to be printed. However, proctors are provided with a session name and password that they will write on the board for students to access the particular session being conducted. Essentially the student ticket is the same for every single NSCAS summative test, so tickets could be shared EXCEPT for any student who has different accommodations for different content areas. For example, if a student has text-to-speech being provided online for math and science, but not for ELA, the ticket for ELA will be different than the one that will work for math and science. With the previous exception noted, otherwise tickets could even be

reused across content areas by different teachers/proctors of test sessions. However, logistically, it may prove easier to print tickets for each session. This is a school/district choice.

- g.** Within the proctor station, test administrator will be required to confirm all students for testing. This requires proctors to confirm each student's test and accessibility features (if applicable) prior to testing.
- h.** Proctors must prominently display the Session ID and Session Password for students in the testing session.
- i.** Parents should be reminded of the school's testing schedule so that personal appointments are not scheduled during the testing time.

7. Administration:

- a.** Standardized testing environments and protocols must always be followed. Test content must be protected and the integrity of students' answers must be assured by districts following all security protocols and standardized testing procedures as required.
- b.** Districts are notified of any secure materials not returned to NWEA or 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 NWEA or DRC. Once received, they will be processed and a final Missing Materials Report is provided to the NDE. Districts are responsible for protecting any secure testing materials.

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

Beginning in 2012-13, spring summative assessments have been delivered in the online mode. This requirement will apply to NSCAS-English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science.

- a.** 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 a medical condition that does not allow the use of computer screens
 - English Learners requiring written translations of languages other than Spanish
 - Cultural considerations for English Learners
 - English Learners who need side-by-side English and Spanish tests for M/S only
 - Students taking the Braille or large print assessments
 - Students contracted to institutions where online access is not allowed.

- b.** The NSCAS General Summative paper/pencil assessments are fixed form assessments. The online version for grades 3-8 will be adaptive. When making decisions about individual students, consider the following:
- The adaptive nature of the online assessment should be considered when making decisions about students testing modalities.
 - Adaptive tests allow students to see different items based on whether they answer the previous questions correctly or incorrectly.
 - The online assessment allows for flexible test sessions. At any point during the test session, proctors can end the test session, which will pause the students' assessment. Later or on another day, the proctor can start a subsequent test session, and students can resume testing.
- c.** Districts were required to submit paper/pencil needs between November 27 and December 8, 2017 via the NWEA Comprehensive Assessment Platform. Additional paper/pencil can be ordered March 5, 2018- April 24, 2018.
- d.** Districts will be required to designate online accommodations through the NWEA Comprehensive Assessment Platform system once the test management system opens. Text to Speech and Spanish-translations are available online accommodations. Districts will have access to NWEA's CAP (test management system) January 24-31, 2018 to identify paper/pencil students so pre-ID labels can be printed by NWEA.

Test	Student Rostering Changes	Date Shipment Arrives	Test Management	Test cut-off date for new students
NSCAS Summative	Begins February 2	By March 2	Opens February 26	Students that arrive after April 24, 2018

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

All students including those tested with the alternate test (the 1% most significantly cognitively challenged) are included in the Nebraska Student-Centered Assessment 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 (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 Student-Centered Assessment System Accessibility Manual. It is expected that a student's IEP and/or 504 plan will include the appropriate accommodations for inclusion in NSCAS 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 included in the manual, 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 online, a Test Administrator must transcribe the student responses into the online system or if using a paper/pencil form onto the answer sheet.

Students will be able to receive accommodations as outlined in their IEPs and as allowed by the *Nebraska Student-Centered Assessment System Summative & Alternate Accessibility Manual*.

- a. School personnel should review the *Nebraska Student-Centered Assessment System Accessibility Manual: How to Select, Administer, and Evaluate Use of Accessibility Supports for Instruction and Assessment of All Students*.
- b. Classroom teachers should provide input concerning students' mode of testing.
- c. As appropriate, school personnel may consult with individual students concerning mode of testing decisions.
- d. Paper/pencil tests should be ordered for accommodated students according to their individual needs and the eligibility information listed above. 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.
- e. 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.
- f. Accommodated students may need paper/pencil in one subject area but not all.
- g. See Guide for Including and Accommodating English Language Learners in the NSCAS Tests 2017-2018 to inform decisions for ELL students.
- h. See **Nebraska Student-Centered Assessment System Summative & Alternate Accessibility Manual** to inform decisions for students with disabilities.

9. Alternate Assessment: Any student who needs NSCAS-AAELA, AAMath, and AAScience must be flagged in the NSSRS system. Districts should use the [Alternate Assessment Participation Criteria](#) to inform decisions on identification of students who require alternate assessment.

10. Tables of Specification

Tables of Specifications for NSCAS-ELA, Math, and Science and NSCAS-ELA-AA, Math-AA, and Science-AA are posted on the [NDE Assessment website](#).

11. NSCAS General Practice Tests for grades 3-8

The following Online practice tests and tutorials will be available publicly on the Nebraska Assessment Portal, provided by NWEA on **February 19, 2018:**

- Online Practice Tests-NSCAS-ELA/M/S
- Online Spanish Practice Tests-NSCAS-ELA/M/S
- Student Tutorial Training

The following Practice tests can be downloaded from the [NDE/NWEA Assessment Portal](#):

Paper/Pencil Practice Tests-NSCAS-ELA/M/S

Spanish Paper/Pencil Practice Tests-NSCAS-ELA/M/S

If a district places an order for a large print or Braille assessment, a corresponding practice test will be sent to the district.

The purpose of the NWEA Practice Test is to familiarize students with the system interface, system functionality, and embedded universal tools and accommodations. As a result, scores will not be provided. A publicly available PDF answer key will be provided.

Student Tutorials are available on the [NDE/NWEA Assessment Portal](#):

12. NSCAS Accommodations

All students including those tested with the alternate test (the 1% most significantly cognitively challenged) are included in the Nebraska Student-Centered Assessment 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 Student-Centered Assessment System Accessibility Manual. It is expected that a student's IEP and/or 504 plan will include the appropriate accommodations for inclusion in NSCAS 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 included in the manual, 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 online, a Test Administrator must transcribe the student responses into the online system or if using a paper/pencil form onto the answer sheet.

13. NSCAS Unlocking

Unlocking does not apply to NSCAS. Due to the adaptive nature of the assessment, students will be required to answer each test question before a new question will be presented. At any point during the test session, proctors can end the test session, which will pause the students' assessment. Later or on another day, the proctor can start a subsequent test session, and students can resume testing. This functionality provides schools with flexibility in scheduling test sessions.

14. Spanish Translations

All paper/pencil Spanish-translated testing materials were requested through the Comprehensive Assessment Platform between November 27 and December 8. All paper/pencil tests, including Spanish, are returned to NWEA. Online Spanish forms are designated in the in the test session management component of the Comprehensive Assessment Platform . **NSCAS-English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science:** The NSCAS-ELA test is available in Spanish; however, only directions are translated. The Spanish-translated NSCAS-ELA is available both paper/pencil and online. NSCAS-Mathematics and NSCAS-Science tests in their entirety are available in Spanish – both paper/pencil and online forms.

NWEA 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-provided Spanish translations must be returned to NWEA-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 NSCAS-Math, Science, and for ELA (directions only) are to be destroyed.

15. NSCAS Software Update

For the 2017-2018 school year, the lock down browser required for online assessment was available by January 1, 2018. The download of this lock down browser will provide the online interface for all subjects and will be used for MAP Growth testing.

Information about installation, including system requirements can be found at [NDE/NWEA Assessment Portal](#). Click on the tab labeled "Technology Coordinators." Questions about system requirements and installation of NWEA software should be directed to NWEA help desk.

Nebraska NWEA Help Desk

Toll Free (855) 225–9926

Email: NWEANebraska@nwea.org

7:00 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 of Statewide Assessment

Phone: 402.471.2495

E-mail: valorie.foy@nebraska.gov

16. TestWiz

General Information

- a. The NSCAS 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 NSCAS tests. Educators need to see the curriculum, assessment, and instructional processes linked together – as ongoing, continuous, and grounded inside each classroom.
- b. For that reason the Nebraska Department of Education has joined with NWEA and Certica Solutions Inc., with school districts, and with service units to build a state system of formative assessment to “wrap around” the summative NSCAS tests given in the spring. The system, TestWiz™, includes the Navigate Item Bank™ and a state-level item bank of locally-developed multiple choice questions in reading, mathematics and science (C4L item bank). 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 formative assessments that may be given at point of instruction at any time in the year. One of the purposes of the formative assessments will be to determine whether or not students are “on track” with the important skills measured in the summative NSCAS tests.
- c. TestWiz will provide 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 instructional processes.
- d. 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 (NSCAS) 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. TestWiz is a tool intended to provide immediate feedback to teachers so that learning throughout the year becomes the focal point, and the summative NSCAS tests are used as the verification of that learning.

- e. ESU assessment contacts have been provided access to a TestWiz demonstration site.
- f. TestWiz resources, including instructional videos, can be accessed when logged into the application at <https://ne.testwiz.net>
- g. The TestWiz system was ready August 14, 2017, and power user accounts were automatically created. Districts can upload students to the system at any time; and can contact TestWiz Support to automate student roster setup or for help with bulk user account creation.

17. TestWiz- Future Plans

The transition of NSCAS tests, including new standards and item types, will bring about the need for TestWiz to be updated. NDE continues to work on plans to update the C4L item bank and to align content to new standards. NDE's goal is to keep NSCAS and the C4L item bank parallel in content and item types.

18. C4L Item Bank Dates

- a. Availability of C4L items in TestWiz pending successful UAT: November 20, 2017
- b. Item Authoring capability available: January 2018

Questions about any of the information in this section may be directed to:
jeremy.heneger@nebraska.gov

or

Certica Help Desk

Phone: 877.456.8949 E-mail: TestWiz@CerticaSolutions.com

19. MAP Growth

A balanced system of summative, interim benchmarks, and formative assessment practices allows educators to understand performance from the state level to the classroom level. When a comprehensive assessment program at the classroom level balances interim assessments and formative assessments practices, a clear picture emerges of where students are in their learning. The more known about individual students as they engage in the learning process, the better educators can adjust instruction to ensure that all students continue to move forward in their achievement. As a computer adaptive interim assessment, MAP Growth data can be used to help identify students' instructional needs and track growth.

MAP Growth is available in grades 3 through 8 in reading, language usage, mathematics, and science. Participation is voluntary. Districts choosing to participate will be able to select

specific assessment windows in Fall, Winter, Spring and Summer and subject areas for the test administration. In partnership with NWEA, the Nebraska Department of Education has made the following assessments available to districts:

- **MAP Growth** - Measure growth, inform instruction and assess strategy with a RIT score (subject and instructional areas)
- **Screening** (grades 2-5+ - Quickly place students with a RIT score (subject-level only)
- **Growth Tests** - Growth tests for Algebra 1 or 2, Geometry and Integrated Mathematics

Growth:	Screening:
Math 2-5 NE 2015	Math 2-5 NE 2015
Math 6+ NE 2015	Math 6+ NE 2015
Reading 2-5 NE 2014	Reading 2-5 NE 2014
Reading 6+ NE 2014	Reading 6+ NE 2014
Language 2-12 NE 2014	Language 2-12 NE 2014
Science 3-5 NE 2010	Science 3-5 NE 2010
Science 6+ NE 2010	Science 6+ NE 2010
Algebra 1 NWEA 2017	Algebra 1 NWEA 2017
Algebra 2 NWEA 2017	Algebra 2 NWEA 2017
Geometry NWEA 2017	Geometry NWEA 2017
Integrated Mathematics 1 and 2 NWEA 2017	Integrated Mathematics 1 and 2 NWEA 2017
Integrated Mathematics 3 NWEA 2017	Integrated Mathematics 3 NWEA 2017

20. MAP Growth provides Student Profile Reports, Class Reports, and School and District Reports. These reports assist educators in evaluating student performance and growth. For example, the Student Profile Report draws from the learning continuum to help determine instructional areas and skills to focus on for continued growth. This report also provides projected proficiency on the state summative report.

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

NWEA Nebraska Help Desk
 Phone: 855-225-9926
 E-mail: NWEANebraska@nwea.org

21. Professional Learning

The Professional Learning Plan for Nebraska has been designed to help build balanced assessment literacy reaching from formative assessment and instruction, through the use of the interim and summative assessment results. This approach will help balance the variability in purpose, design, and data from each assessment type. In partnership with NWEA, the Nebraska Department of Education will be expanding upon existing Certified Facilitator Program. This program provides focused professional development and online resources to the Nebraska certified facilitators. Equipped with the training and tools from this program, certified facilitators are then able to tailor the professional learning for Nebraska educators to meet the needs of both large and small schools or districts. Prior to the fall of 2017, these trainings focused primarily on the MAP Growth Foundation Series Workshops (Applying Reports, Informing Instruction, Focusing on Growth). In expanding this program, the year one professional learning will be expanded to include balanced assessment literacy, understanding and application of multiple measures of learning, and formative assessment practice for the classroom.

a. Existing Certified Facilitators

In the spring of 2017, there were fifty certified facilitators across the state. These facilitators consisted of ESU staff developers and some district instructional leaders. All facilitators have been previously trained in Applying Reports, Informing Instruction, and Focusing on Growth. These offerings are all designed to support the appropriate use and implementation of MAP Growth.

b. Additional Certified Facilitators

As part of the Nebraska Assessment contract with NWEA, an additional fifteen certified facilitators were added in the fall of 2017. The new certified facilitators were selected and recruited by the Nebraska Department of Education. Throughout the 2017 – 2018 school year, the additional fifteen certified facilitators and any needed replacements for the existing fifty, will be trained in Applying Reports and Informing Instruction.

Other Trainings

All 65 certified facilitators will be trained in new offerings, Assessment Literacy for Teachers and Building Your Formative Assessment Practice.

Professional Learning Plan 2017 – 2018

Assessment Literacy
for Teachers

Provided to all 65
Facilitators

Building Your
Formative Practice

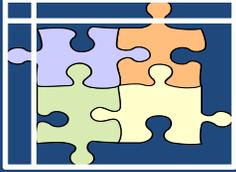
Provided to all 65
Facilitators

Applying Reports

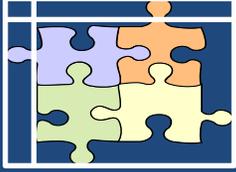
Provided to new
Facilitators

Informing
Instruction

Provided to new
Facilitators



STANDARDS



ASSESSMENT



ACCOUNTABILITY

V. National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)

V. National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)

The National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP) assesses student performance in various subject areas using a wide variety of assessments. These assessments provide the largest nationally representative measures of what students know and can do. NAEP assessments also include questionnaires for students, teachers and school principals. The information gathered provides contextual information and gives additional insight into background variables.

NAEP 2017 Results Coming This Spring

Because of the increased role of technology, the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) transitioned from paper and pencil to digitally based assessments. Nearly 300 Nebraska schools were selected for participation in the NAEP 2017 assessments. The table below shows the grades and the content areas tested.

Grade	Content Areas				
4	Reading	Mathematics	Writing		
8	Reading	Mathematics	Writing	Geography	U.S. History

The NCES designed a special mode comparability study to make sure that the transition to digitally based assessments does not compromise their ability to report on student progress. Due to this study, release of the results from the 2017 assessment will be reported later than usual. NCES's goal is to complete the analysis and release the report sometime in April.

NAEP 2018

The testing window for NAEP 2018 is from January 29 through March 9, 2018. This is a national year which means that results will be reported nationally and not at the state level. Across the state, 27 schools have been selected. Except for the small population of students in the ongoing comparability study, students will use NAEP-provided tablets or laptops to take the assessments.

The table below summarizes sample groups and the content being assessed.

Grade 8	Civics, Geography and U.S. History	Most students will use tablets, but a few will use paper and pencil. Students will be tested in only one content area- civics, geography, or U.S. history.
	Technology & Engineering Literacy (TEL)	This assessment will be taken on laptops. TEL measures a student's ability to use, understand and evaluate technology as well as understand technological principals and strategies.

International Studies

Several more Nebraska schools were also chosen to participate in international studies. The table below provides a brief description of these studies and the time period in which they will be administered.

Sample Group	Test Name	Description	Time Frame
Grade 8	International Computer and Information Literacy Study (ICILS)	Measures trends in computer and information literacy as well as school and teacher practices related to instruction. ICILS	May 2018
5-Year-Olds	International Early Learning Study (IELS)	Provides information about what children know and can do as they enter the school system. Abilities in emergent literacy, mathematics, self-regulation, and social emotional skills are measured.	Fall 2018
15-Year-Olds	Program for International Student Assessment (PISA)	Assesses reading, mathematics, science literacy, and financial literacy. Measures students' ability to apply what they have learned in and out of school.	Fall 2018

Schools and students who take part in NAEP assessments are greatly appreciated because they provide assessment results that are used to develop ways to improve education. Look for the national and state results of NAEP 2017 to be posted on the NDE website this spring. Please visit the [National Center for Educational Statistics: The Nation's Report Card](#) for additional information about NAEP, to access results from previous assessments, and gain access to NAEP publications. If you have specific questions about NAEP in Nebraska, please contact the Statewide Assessment Office:

Terry Ough, NAEP Coordinator
Phone: 402.471.2959 E-mail: terry.ough@nebraska.gov



VI. Including All Students in Assessment and Accountability

VI. Including All Students in Assessment and Accountability

Students with Disabilities and Scoring Rules

All students with disabilities are expected to participate in the Nebraska Student-Centered Assessment System, NSCAS. 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 EL and also have an IEP are allowed accommodations as appropriate for both designations. These students may benefit from linguistic supports in addition to 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:

1. Students may be tested on the NSCAS tests without accommodations.
2. Students may be tested on the NSCAS tests with accommodations specified in the student's IEP. Accommodations appropriate for the NSCAS are found in the *Nebraska Student-Centered Assessment System Summative & Alternate Accessibility Manual*.
3. 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.
4. Students may be tested with the NSCAS alternate assessments.
5. 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 NSCAS 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 NSCAS -AA. The NSCAS -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 NSCAS -AA is found later in this section.

If the IEP team determines that a student is to take an alternate assessment, the NSCAS -AA, a statement of why the student cannot participate in the regular NSCAS and the rationale for selecting the NSCAS alternate shall be included in the IEP (Rule 51 007.07A7).

1. Guidelines for Participation in the Nebraska State Accountability (NSCAS) 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...

- a. Accesses curriculum and instruction aligned to Nebraska standards with extended indicators.
- b. Possesses significant limitations, both in intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior, expressed in conceptual, social, and practical adaptive skills.
- c. Requires extensive, pervasive, and frequent supports in order to acquire, maintain, and demonstrate performance of knowledge and skills.
- d. Demonstrates cognitive ability and adaptive behavior that prevents completion of general academic curriculum, even with extensive modifications and accommodations.
- e. 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 NSCAS -Alternate Assessment (AA)

If a district's percentage of students who are administered the NSCAS -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.

For further information on the 1% rule for alternate assessments contact Assessment Office or Sharon Heater at 402.595.1140 or by email at sharon.heater@nebraska.gov

4. The Alternate Assessments:

Nebraska Student-Centered Assessment System Alternate for English Language Arts, Mathematics and Science (NSCAS -AAELA, NSCAS -AAM, and NSCAS -AAS)

In order to be consistent with the NSCAS-ELA, NSCAS-M, and NSCAS-S tests for general education students and to meet federal requirements, alternate assessments for English language arts, mathematics, and science (NSCAS-AAELA, NSCAS -AAM, and NSCAS -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 NSCAS -AAELA, NSCAS -AAM and NSCAS -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 NSCAS 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 NSCAS -AA practice tests, Tables of Specification, Performance Level Descriptors, and Extended Indicators on the [NDE-Alternate Assessment](#) website.

Like the NSCAS tests, the alternate assessment will be administered between **March 19 - May 4, 2018**. This is a six-week administration window. Various trainings on the alternate assessment will be provided in the 2017-2018 school year.

5. 2018 NSCAS-AA Testing

- a.** The NSCAS -AAELA, the NSCAS -AAM, and the NSCAS -AAS are required in 2018 for all students whose IEPs specify the need for an alternate assessment.
- b.** All three tests (English language arts, mathematics, and science) are in one booklet.
- c.** Students who take the alternate must take it in all subjects. They will not be allowed to only take it in one subject like in the past.
- d.** In 2018, the alternate assessment answers will be entered by the teacher into the computer.
- e.** All security procedures outlined in this Update also apply to the NSCAS -AA testing process.
- f.** All students who have been flagged in the NSSRS as students eligible for the alternate testing will receive NSCAS-AAELA, NSCAS-AAM, and NSCAS-AAS 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

Students Learning the English Language

Who are English Learners?

According to ESEA, English Learners (ELs) 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 challenging State academic standards, (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 EL 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 [Nebraska ELL Program Guide, Guide for Administrators](#).

Note: Foreign exchange students are NOT considered eligible for English learner service and should be included in the state assessment process.

1. Including EL Students in State Assessments and Accountability

Accessibility and Supports for ELs

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

- a. ESEA requirements allow appropriate testing accessibility supports for all EL students.
- b. In determining appropriate supports for students in the system, districts should use the newly revised *Nebraska Student-Centered Assessment System Summative & Alternate Accessibility Manual*.
- c. Approved accessibility supports are not test modifications. Districts must be aware of the difference between accessibility supports (allowed), and modifications (not allowed.)
 - For students learning the English language, linguistic supports are changes to testing procedures, testing materials, or the testing situation that enable accessibility to the assessment and thereby allow the student meaningful participation in the assessment. Effective supports for ELs address the unique linguistic and socio-cultural needs of the student. Some supports for ELs may be determined appropriate without prior use during instruction throughout the year. For a detailed discussion of supports for ELs on state content assessments, please

refer to the *Nebraska Student-Centered Assessment System Summative & Alternate Accessibility Manual*.

- 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 allowed on state content assessments.

2. Translated Assessments

Under ESSA, English learners may be provided linguistic supports on state assessments to ensure students are assessed in a valid and reliable manner, including to the extent practicable assessments in the language and form are most likely to yield accurate data on what the students know and can do in academic content areas. Students may receive translated content tests, with the exception of the ELA test, for up to three years. An additional two years may be allowed if the LEA determines, in consultation with NDE, on a case-by-case basis a native language test is appropriate for a student. *§1111(b)(2)(F)* ELs are allowed accommodations on the ACT according to ACT guidance.

Spanish Translations

Note: Only the official NDE Spanish translations are allowed on state content testing.

NSCAS- ELA– The translations of directions are available in written and audio format and are sent from NWEA. 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 English NSCAS-ELA paper/pencil test. Student responses are entered on a 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 NWEA 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.

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

Translations into Languages other than Spanish

Translations for NSCAS in languages other than Spanish will need to be provided by local districts. Reading passages and test items on the NSCAS–ELA cannot be translated. Districts must follow NDE security protocols when translating assessments into languages other than Spanish. All test forms must be secure.

3. Guidance for Recently Arrived English Learners

NEW: Under NCLB, students who had attended a U.S. school for less than 12 months could be granted a waiver from the NSCAS-ELA assessment. Under ESSA, this exemption is no longer allowed. All ELs must participate in all state-administered content assessments. Scores in the first year of assessing the student, however, will not be included in state accountability. In the second year, students must test, but only growth will be calculated. In the third year, students will participate and scores will be included in state accountability systems.

Under ESSA, Recently Arrived English Learners (RAELs) are ELs who have been enrolled in a school 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 state must assess and report the performance of a RAEL on the ELA and mathematics assessments in each year of the student’s enrollment.

For the purpose of accountability:

In Year 1: For the first year of enrollment, exclude the results on the English language arts assessment in the state accountability system.

In Year 2: Assess the student but include only a growth measure in the state accountability system.

In Year 3: Assess the student and include proficiency (achievement scores) in state accountability system.

§1111(b)(3)(A)(ii)

4. ELs with Disabilities

Students who are EL and also have an IEP are allowed accommodations as appropriate for both designations. These students may benefit from linguistic supports 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 supports and/or accommodations.

5. Former English Learners

Former English learners or “redesignated English fluent” students are allowed some linguistic support on content tests, if appropriate. These supports may include additional time to process the language demands and the use of word-to-word bilingual dictionaries or word lists. No translated assessments or paper/pencil forms are allowed. Former ELs, for the purposes of accountability, remain in the EL subgroup for the duration of the four-year federal monitoring period. *§1111(b)(3)(B)*

6. Language Acquisition Testing—ELPA21

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

All students designated as English learners on NSSRS, must participate in ELPA21 testing. The ELPA21 2017-18 testing window is **February 5- March 16, 2018.**

It is important to note that the purpose of this test is to determine English language proficiency, not proficiency on ELA standards. Former ELs do not participate in ELPA testing.

English learners eligible for alternate assessments for NSCAS (NSCAS-AAELA, AAM, AAS) are still required to participate annually in the ELPA21, with appropriate accommodations as allowed in the ELPA21 Accessibility and Accommodations Manual (not this document.) DACs concerned about a student with a disability that would prohibit access to a domain subtest of ELPA21, for example, in the case of a deaf student being unable to hear the Listening subtest, should contact the NDE Title III office for further guidance.

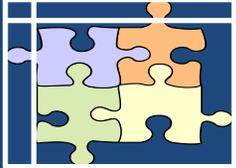
Questions about any of the information in this section may be directed to:

Terri Schuster

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

Brooke David

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



STANDARDS



ASSESSMENT



ACCOUNTABILITY

VI. State and Federal Accountability

VI. State and Federal Accountability

1. NSCAS Data – Release and Use

a. NSCAS Reports and Use of NSCAS Data

NSCAS reports are available to districts through the NWEA Comprehensive Assessment System. Reports include building, district, and state level information about the NSCAS-English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science. Districts have opportunity to review the data before reports are made public. Sample reports and full explanations of all reports will be available in the in an NWEA Reports Interpretive Guide, available in 2018.

In 1018 NWEA will provide PDF copies of the Individual Student Reports (ISR) to the districts through the Comprehensive Assessment System. 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.

2. NSCAS proficiency levels

Important Note: The NSCAS scale score proficiency levels will not change in science.

3. Science

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

NSCAS-ELA cut scores will be reviewed and placed on a vertical scale in summer 2018. NSCA-Mathematics cut scores will be placed on a vertical scale and standard setting will occur in summer 2018.

The Raw Score/Scale Conversion tables for science will change from year to year because while test forms are comparable, the items are different. Raw Score/Scale Conversion tables for English language arts and mathematics will not be available because the tests will be computer adaptive. Student ability estimates will be generated based on response patterns to items adjusted to students momentary ability estimates as the test is being administered. DACs will be notified.

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

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

Differences

- a. Norm-Referenced tests are built to compare student performance across the country. NSCAS tests compare student performance within Nebraska on Nebraska specific standards.
- b. Criterion-Referenced tests like NSCAS are built to measure state standards; norm-referenced tests do not measure the state's standards as deeply and specifically as a criterion-referenced test.
- c. Norm-Referenced tests usually result in bell curve distribution. NSCAS is built to measure student proficiency on standards and may result in skewed distributions.

Similarities

- a. Technical processes used are the same: reliability analyses, SEMs, production of scale scores.
- b. Both tests are administered under standardized conditions.
- c. Terminology in reports can be similar.

4. 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.

- a. The Consolidated Data Collection (CDC) will continue to collect non-student level data as it did last year.
- b. In 2018 STATE and ACT test results will be used for reporting English Language Arts (ELA), mathematics, and science.
- c. Districts need to access the verification and validation reports from the NSSRS website to determine the accuracy of the STATE and ACT data.
- d. National assessment data may be submitted throughout the year beginning in January, but data can NOT be accepted after June 30, 2018. Districts needing to submit data after June 30, 2018 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.
- e. National assessment (NRT) data are not collected for non-public students.

5. Checking assessment labels

Districts must check assessment labels before January 10, 2017 for ELPA21 and STATE and ACT. This report reflects the student demographic data submitted to DRC/NWEA/ACT 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 STATE and ACT 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 – STATE ELA , Math, and Science Labels
 - Report –STATE Alternate ELA, Math, and Science Labels
 - Report – ACT Labels

6. Validating NSCAS 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 STATE/ACTgroups:

- ✓ 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 STATE/ACT 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.

7. Verifying demographic indicators for tested students

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

To check the STATE/ACT 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 – STATE ELA, Math, and Science Roster Review
 - Report – STATE Alternate ELA, Math, and Science Roster Review
 - ACT Roster Review

8. 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 NSCAS 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.

a. Home-Schooled Students

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

b. 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.

9. 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 and one grade at middle

school. If available a composite/total score along with subscores for reading/ELA and math are submitted for each student tested.

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. NDE is reviewing the requirement for the district to report with the addition of MAP Growth in the Nebraska Student-Centered Assessment System as provided by NDE.

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 2018, but data can NOT be accepted after June 30, 2018. 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 2018-06-30. 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:

Director of Statewide Assessment

Dr. Valorie Foy

402 471 2495

Federal Accountability

NDE will NOT be calculating AYP based on data from the 2016-17 school year. Ratings for 2015-16, based on 2014-15 data, will be frozen for a second year for the 2017-18 school year.

Looking ahead: Data from the 2017-18 school year will be utilized when determining schools for Comprehensive Support & Improvement and Targeted Support & Improvement. Determinations will be made based on the AQuESTT (Accountability for a Quality Education System, Today and Tomorrow) classification system.

10. Public Reporting Fall 2017

The Nebraska Education Profile, which was released in early December 2017, includes a summary of statewide information, individual district and building profiles, and disaggregated data. The NEP for 2016-2017 is available at [Nebraska Education Profile](#)

11. Nebraska Accountability System- AQuESTT –

AQuESTT is an acronym for 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. AQuESTT is fully aligned with the requirements of ESSA which promotes and support efforts to have a single system of accountability for Nebraska schools.

Statutory requirements of AQuESTT include:

- a. Performance classification of public schools and districts
- b. Designation of three priority schools
- c. Intervention teams for priority schools
- d. Progress plans for priority schools

12. Performance Classification of Public Schools and Districts

a. 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:

- NSCAS (ELA, Mathematics, Science, ACT)
 - Status
 - Improvement
 - Growth
 - Participation
 - Non-Proficient Students (ELPA21)

- Graduation Rate
- Chronic Absenteeism (approved by the State Board in 2017)

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. This process is subject to review and potential changes as we work to develop a more “holistic” measure of a schools success.

b. Final Classification

In addition to the Raw Classification indicators, responses provided by schools and districts to the AQuESTT Evidence-based Analysis (EBA) will be included in the Final Classification rating. Final Classification results were released to schools, districts, and the public in December 2015, this process will occur again in the fall of 2018 using data from 2017-18.

c. 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

Each school will be asked to complete the EBA annually, between January and June.

d. The School Profile

Data from the Final Classification (i.e., NSCAS status, improvement, growth, participation, ELPA21 scores, graduation rate, chronic absenteeism and the EBA results) and demographic characteristics are used to create a Profile for each public school and district.

13. Designation of Three Priority Schools

Three schools from the Needs Improvement classification level were designated as Priority Schools in 2015, those most in need of assistance to improve. The process for designating the Priority Schools included a comprehensive analysis of the following:

- a. Raw Classification Data
- b. Evidence-based Analysis Responses
- c. Demographic Characteristics
- d. School Improvement Plans
- e. Existing Systems of Support

Announcement of Priority Schools occurred in December 2016. As schools move out of priority status, based on successful implementation and evidence of success on their approved progress plans, a similar process will be used to select a replacement school.

14. 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:

- a. School Leadership
- b. Educator Effectiveness
- c. Improvement of Instruction
- d. School Culture
- e. Family and Community Engagement
- f. Use of Data for Continuous Improvement

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

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

15. 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.

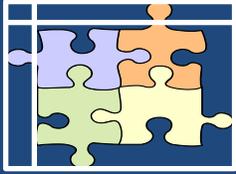
The content of the Progress Plan for Improvement includes:

- a. Required actions for improvement
- b. Measureable indicators of progress
- c. Strategies for improvement
- d. Timelines for improvement

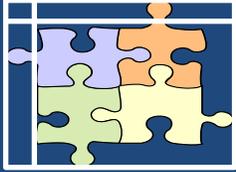
The State Board of Education will review the Progress Plans annually and determine when a Priority School may exit priority status.

AQuESTT Information and Resources

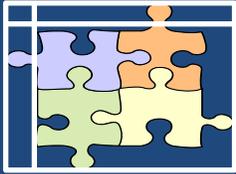
Additional AQuESTT information and resources may be found at www.AQuESTT.com



STANDARDS



ASSESSMENT



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VII. Early Childhood Assessment

Early Childhood Assessment: Results Matter

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 Programs (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 the following:

- 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 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)
<https://www.education.ne.gov/oec/early-learning-guidelines/>
- 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/oec/rule-11/>
- NDE Rule 51, Regulations and Standards for Special Education Programs.
https://2x9dwr1yq1he1dw6623gg411-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Rule51_2017.pdf

Rule 51 applies to all children with disabilities birth - 21.

- NDE Rule 52, Regulations and Standards for the Provision of Early Intervention Services.
<https://www.education.ne.gov/sped/regulationspolicies/>

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. idea.ed.gov/part-c/downloads/IDEA-statute.pdf

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 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:

- a. Positive social-emotional skills, including social relationships
- b. Acquisition and use of knowledge and skills, including early language, communication and early literacy; and
- c. 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 annual NDE 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](https://www.education.ne.gov/oec/early-childhood-training-center), (<https://www.education.ne.gov/oec/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 completed one year of use 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 only one age group of children is served by a teacher, then only that certification level is required.

For information, resources, and updates related to *Results Matter*, see the Results Matter Technical Assistance Document (July 2017)

https://www.education.ne.gov/OEC/rm/RMTA_Doc.pdf

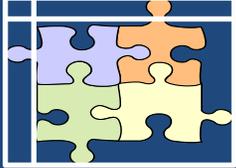
Questions about any of the information in this section may be directed to:

Melody Hobson, Administrator, Early Childhood

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

Teresa Berube, Coordinator, Early Childhood Special Education

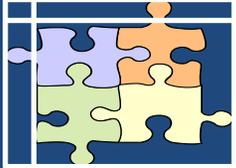
Phone: 402.471.4319 Email: teresa.berube@nebraska.gov



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VIII. The Continuous Improvement Process

VIII. The Continuous Improvement

The Continuous Improvement Process (CIP), 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.

1. School Improvement Workshops

In 2018 the School Improvement Workshops will be collaboratively developed and sponsored by NCSA, AdvancED, the Nebraska Educational Service Units, Learning Forward, and NDE accreditation, special education, and data research and evaluation teams.

2018 dates and locations TBD.