



*The purpose of this brochure is to answer commonly asked questions and to provide parents with an understanding of how students with disabilities are included in Nebraska's assessment and accountability systems.*

The Reauthorizations of the **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)** of 1997 and 2004 require that all students with disabilities participate in statewide accountability systems. The **Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)** the reauthorization of **Elementary and Secondary Education Act**, further reinforces the need to include all students in accountability systems. Nebraska complies with IDEA and ESSA, which mandates standards-based reform and greater accountability for all students.

### ***What is the purpose of State Assessments?***

State assessments are given for the purpose of measuring school accountability. Individual test results provide information to parents and teachers about what the child knows. State assessments are aligned with the Nebraska College and Career Ready Academic Standards.

### ***Who needs to participate in State Assessments?***

All students must be included. Public Law 105-17, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments (IDEA '97), requires that each state establish goals for the performance of students with disabilities that are consistent, to the maximum extent appropriate, and with goals and standards for all students established by each state.

**Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)** mandates that all students be included in accountability systems. Therefore, all students must be included in state assessments with the provision of appropriate and necessary accommodations.

### ***What assessments are included?***

Nebraska State Summative Assessments are required in grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, & 11. All Nebraska Schools are required to give a State Assessment at these grade levels on an annual basis in the areas of English/Language Arts, Math and Science. ACT is administered at Grade 11.

**The Nebraska Student-Centered Assessment System (NSCAS)** is administered to students with standard procedures. In addition, the state assessment system includes an Alternate Assessment for students with a most significant cognitive disability in which the NSCAS or ACT would not measure what the student is being taught even with the appropriate accommodations.

Nebraska provides the following options for students with a disability to participation in **NSCAS**:

1. **The NSCAS in the standard manner; or**
2. **The NSCAS with approved accommodations; or**
3. **The NSCAS Alternate Assessment. (Grades 3 -8 and 11)**

### ***Who decides how a student with disabilities is involved in state assessments?***

The IEP team decides. Discussion about state assessments must take place at your child's IEP meeting with you, the parent(s), present. The team must document why one assessment option is appropriate and why others are not. Decisions must be documented in the IEP regarding accommodations the student needs for success in the classroom as well as during assessment.

### ***How does the IEP team make the decisions on which assessment option is right for the student?***

Several questions need to be asked in order to make an informed decision about what assessment needs to be given and what accommodations need to be provided for a student with disabilities to successfully demonstrate what he/she knows and is able to do.

The IEP Team Decision Making Guidelines document is available at [https://cdn.education.ne.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/IEPTeam\\_Decision\\_Making\\_Guidelines\\_for\\_Statewide\\_Assessments.pdf](https://cdn.education.ne.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/IEPTeam_Decision_Making_Guidelines_for_Statewide_Assessments.pdf)

Your child's IEP manager is encouraged to use this document at the IEP planning meeting to assist the team in making the most informed decisions about state assessment options.

### ***What is the Nebraska Alternate Assessment?***

The **NSCAS-AA** is for students with *the most significant cognitive disabilities* who are assessed against Nebraska's College and Career Ready Extended Indicators.

### ***What are the criteria for participation in a Nebraska Alternate Assessment?***

If the student's intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior significantly impacts completion of part or all of the general education curriculum; **AND**

The student requires extensive, frequent and repeated individualized instruction in multiple settings in order to maintain or generalize skills necessary to function in school, at home, in the community, and during recreation/leisure and vocational activities; **AND**

The student's curriculum is so individualized that the general assessment will not reflect what the student is being taught; the student should participate in the NSCAS-AA.

**What accommodations are allowed with the state assessment?**

The Nebraska Student-Centered Assessment System (NSCAS) defines specific accommodations that allowed during test administration. The approved accessibility manual can be located:

<https://cdn.education.ne.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/NSCAS-Summative-and-Alternate-Accessibility-Manual-12.4.18.pdf>

If an accommodation is documented in a student's IEP and is used on a regular basis to support the student's education, and is an allowable accommodation, it should be used when assessing that child. This is to allow equal access to achievement measurements not to provide an advantage for that student.

**Whom can I contact if I have more questions about the Nebraska State Assessment system?**

Nebraska Department of Education  
Assessment Office  
402.471.2495

<https://www.education.ne.gov/assessment/>

**For Accommodation questions contact:**

Nebraska Department of Education  
Office of Special Education  
402.471.2471

<http://www.education.ne.gov/sped/index.html>



**Nebraska Department of Education**

**301 Centennial Mall South  
P.O. Box 94987  
Lincoln, NE 68509-4987**

**Phone: 402.471.2295  
Fax: 402.471.0117**

Additional information and a copy of this brochure can be found at:

Nebraska Department of Education  
Office of Special Education  
<https://www.education.ne.gov/sped/assessmentlearninginstruction/>

Phone 402.471.2471  
Fax: 402.471.5022



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**INFORMATION**

**FOR PARENTS**

**OF**

**STUDENTS WITH**

**DISABILITIES**

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