



NSCAS Spring 2021 FAQ for Nebraska Educators

1. Is the spring 2021 NSCAS Phase I Pilot the same as through-year assessment?

No. The spring 2021 NSCAS Phase I Pilot is different from both the NSCAS Summative and adaptive through-year assessment. It is a transitional assessment that will help us create the adaptive through-year assessment that will be piloted in the 2021-22 school year. The NSCAS Phase I Pilot uses on-grade items. The test is also shorter than usual to minimize impacts on instructional time, given the unique circumstances created by the pandemic this year.

2. If MAP Growth results from fall 2020 or winter 2020-21 project that a student is “On Track” or “College and Career Ready,” do they still have to take the spring 2021 NSCAS Phase I Pilot test?

Yes. MAP Growth *projects* student performance on the NSCAS Summative test, but is not designed to measure student performance relative to grade-level expectations for summative purposes. In contrast, the spring 2021 NSCAS Phase I Pilot will measure grade-level performance and produce a NSCAS scale score and achievement level, as well as a linked RIT score.

3. How and when will the results from the NSCAS Phase I Pilot be reported?

The NSCAS Phase I Pilot is a new, transitional test that is being administered in a school year that has been unlike any other. Results will be reported through the Nebraska Department of Education, however they will not be used for school classifications/ratings; classifications from the 2018–19 school year will remain in place. Individual Student Reports (ISRs) will be provided to parents and guardians. In addition, districts will receive a file containing data for individual students.

4. Can results be used to compare performance to preceding years? How should districts use them?

Results will be used to conduct research related to the impact of COVID-19 and may shed light on unfinished learning for students. However, given the transitional nature of the tests, results will not be comparable to preceding years. They should be interpreted with caution and should not be used for high-stakes decisions. Results should be considered in context of other data sources such as student grades, MAP Growth results, and information about students’ opportunity to learn (such as attendance, learning mode, and school start date). Teachers should continue to rely on formative instructional practices and other data sources such as student grades and MAP Growth reports to inform instruction.

5. When will Nebraska implement the adaptive through-year assessment?

A through-year assessment pilot will be rolled out during the 2021-22 school year; details will be shared when available.