

Keeping Our Focus, Expanding Our Vision, Finding The Balance

Standards, Assessment, and Accountability: The Transition Years—2008-2012

BY PAT ROSCHEWSKI, Director of Statewide Assessment, Nebraska Department of Education

Legislation

The legislative sessions in 2007 and 2008 initiated sweeping change in state policy regarding standards, assessment, and accountability. This shift in policy direction will, over time, result in significant adjustments in assessment implementation for districts. All educators, policymakers, and stakeholders need to be informed and aware of the anticipated changes during the transition years.

LB 653 passed in May of 2007 and set into motion the revision of state content standards in reading, mathematics, science, and social studies. This legislation also initiated the development of statewide criterion-referenced assessment instruments in reading and mathematics. Under the legislation, the State Board of Education was to determine the three grade levels that would administer the state tests in those two content areas. The responsibility for the development of assessment tools to be used for state and federal accountability purposes had begun to shift from the local district to the state level.

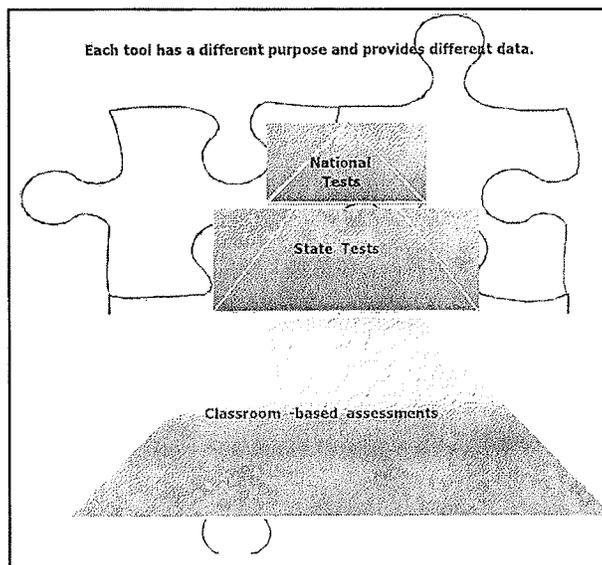
Additional legislation was passed in 2008. With the passage of LB 1157 in April of 2008, the work that had begun under LB 653 was expanded to add additional criterion-referenced tests in grades 3-8 and once in the high school. The new legislation also included an assessment of science in one grade in the elementary, one grade in the middle school, and one grade in the high school. Local assessment is eliminated as a data source for state or federal accountability reporting by the 2011-12 school year.

The purpose of the new state-generated tools, as outlined by LB 653 and LB 1157, is that of comparative accountability. Therefore the administration of such large-scale tools must be consistent, comparable, and summative in nature. The purposes for the new tests as required under LB 653 and LB 1157 are different from those that were primary to the state's

local assessment system.

Therefore, among the many decisions critical to local school districts during the transition years will be the decision of balancing assessment tools. The local assessments used in the last eight years have been designed for informing the classroom teacher and guiding instruction. The new state tests will serve a different purpose, that of comparative accountability. How districts decide to integrate the state accountability tools into their local school improvement processes will be critical to student learning. Each district will need to find that appropriate balance of the various assessment tools, those designed for informing instruction, and those designed for summative accountability.

Each tool has a different purpose and provides different data.



Implementation

The Nebraska Department of Education designed an implementation plan to be approved by the State Board of Education. That plan, inserted below, was approved on May 8th, 2008 and was reviewed by the National Advisory Committee that has been advising the Nebraska Department of Education since 2005. As specified in LB 1157, the plan will also be reviewed by the Technical Advisory Committee whose members will be appointed by the Governor and approved by the Legislature.



Roschewski

“...the involvement of Nebraska educators has been a very important component of the work that has been done.”

LB 1157 IMPLEMENTATION WORK PLAN

<p>I. Standards Revision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Standards • Mathematics Standards • Science Standards • Social Studies Standards 	<p>By July 1, 2009 By July 1, 2010 By July 1, 2013* By July 1, 2013 (The above dates are specified in the legislation)</p>
<p>II. Test Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Test Grades 3-8, one grade in high school • Mathematics Test Grades 3-8, one grade in high school • Science Test One grade elementary, one grade middle level, one grade high school 	<p>January 2008-January 2009 Development Spring 2009 – Field Test Spring 2010 – Full Implementation Spring 2011 – Verification Studies</p> <p>January 2009-January 2010 Development Spring 2010 – Field Test Spring 2011 – Full Implementation Spring 2012 – Verification Studies</p> <p>January 2010-January 2011 Development** Spring 2011 – Field Test Spring 2012 – Full Implementation Spring 2013 – Verification Studies</p> <p>** (Science Test development will occur after standards are revised.)</p>
<p>III. NCLB Compliance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AYP Student Performance • Documentation of Standards Revision • Documentation of Test Development 	<p>2008-09 STARS Reading / STARS Mathematics 2009-10 State Reading Test / STARS Mathematics 2010-11 State Reading Test/ State Mathematics Test</p> <p>Summer 2008 – Summer 2011 (Intermediate deadlines to be mutually agreed upon by NDE and USDE)</p> <p>Summer 2008 – Summer 2011 (Intermediate deadlines to be mutually agreed upon by NDE and USDE)</p>
<p>IV. NRT Recommendation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommend NRT(S) for reporting scores and sub-scores for national comparison 	<p>Decision – Summer 2008 Reporting to begin 2009-10</p>
<p>V. Reporting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual Student Records (by District) • Scores, sub-scores on NRT (by District) • State Reading Scores (by State) • State Mathematics Scores (by State) • State Science Scores (by State) 	<p>2008-2009 2009-2010 2009-2010 2010-2011 2011-2012</p>

Because the timelines of LB 1157 require standards revision and the implementation of the new statewide tests to begin with reading and the other subject areas phased in over time, the ongoing federal reporting requirements make it necessary to continue with the current local assessment system until all the new state tests are fully implemented in the 2011-12

school year. This requirement for continuing with the local assessment system was confirmed in writing from USDE on April 24, 2008.

Among the most notable points in the schedule are the following:

- Nothing changes in 2008-09, as STARS data will be used for both state and federal accountability (AYP)

- as it has been used since NCLB was passed.
- STARS data will be used for accountability in one or more content area until 2011-2012.

- of Education – June 2008
- Approval – of Hearing Draft Fall 2008
- Rule 10 Hearing – Fall-Winter 2008-09

ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING SCHEDULE 2008-2012

YEAR	ASSESSMENT	GRADE LEVELS
2008-2009	STARS Reading STARS Mathematics STARS Science Statewide Writing Assessment AYP – STARS Reading and Mathematics, Writing (4, 8) Pilot – New State Reading Assessment	3-8, High School 3-8, High School 4 or 5, 8 and 11 4, 8, and 11
2009-2010	STARS Mathematics STARS Science Statewide Writing Assessment New State Reading Assessment AYP – New State Reading Test & STARS Mathematics, Writing (4, 8) Pilot – New State Mathematics Assessment	3-8, High School 4 or 5, 8, 11 4, 8, 11 3-8, High School
2010-2011	State Reading Assessment State Mathematics Assessment State Science Assessment Statewide Writing Assessment AYP — State Reading and Mathematics Assessments, Writing (4, 8)	3-8, High School 3-8, High School Three Grades 4, 8, 11
2011-2012	State Reading Assessment State Mathematics Assessment State Science Assessment Statewide Writing Assessment AYP — State Reading and Mathematics Assessments, Writing (4, 8)	3-8, High School 3-8, High School Three Grades 4, 8, 11

- Additionally, at this time there is no statutory or legislative requirement for social studies to be reported at the state level.

In order to meet the legislative deadlines, the NDE has been working with educators from the across the state, with technical advisors, and with the State Board of Education and our policy partners to communicate the steps that have been taken thus far in completing the work. The inserted document below indicates much of the work that has been done and that is underway.

Update: Standards, Assessment, and Reporting LB 1157

- Standards Revision
 - Reading Standards – Rough Draft to State Board

- Mathematics Standards – Revision process began March 2008

- Science and Social Studies standards revision – to be completed by 2013

- Assessment Development – Reading – Plan for Assessment Development to be reviewed by:
 - National Advisory Group – in place since 2005
 - State Technical Advisory Committee – Required by 1157 – TBD

February 2008 Identification of concepts and indicators to be assessed

January 2008 Research of models and examples from within/out of state

March 2008 Research/Examination of Computer Assistance for Assessment System

April 2008	Tables of Specification Development / Initial PLD Development
April-May 2008	Development of Scoring Rubric/ Commission of Passage Writing
May 2008	RFP for Software/Computer Assistance
June-July 2008	Item development for reading assessments
After July 15, 2008	Governor appointment of technical advisory committee
August 2008	Sharing of initial assessment model at Administrator Days
Sept 1 2008	Contract for computer assistance completed
Sept-Dec. 2008	Loading and entering assessment items for reading assessments
Sept-Dec. 2008	Continued Development of items /Passages for reading assessments
Spring, 2009	— Pilot Reading Assessment – Spring 2009 – Details to be announced in January 2009.

Next Steps

As specified in LB 1157, the involvement of Nebraska educators has been a very important component of the work that has been done. The expertise in the state is being utilized in standards revision, test item development, and advisory capacities. As the planning and the work are reviewed by all of the respective groups, the Department will communicate the expectations of the revised standards and the new assessments in as timely a manner as possible. The Department does understand that this information is vital so that districts can continue in their planning for the transition years. Please consider the following bullet points that might be helpful as the work, planning, and transition continues:

- All meetings, summaries, new developments, and updates are placed on the Assessment link of the Nebraska Department of Education website.
- Standards, as they are revised, are placed for public review on the Assessment link of the NDE website.
- By early June, a Request for Proposals (RFP) will be issued requesting proposals from vendors regarding computer assisted support for online test administration. (Districts will have options for paper/pencil test administration.)

- At Administrators' Days districts received the first draft of reading standards, the basic logistics of the reading test, including the proposed assessed indicators and the performance level descriptors.
- NDE will be providing a series of communication opportunities to provide all new information to districts.
- NDE will seek ways to provide leadership in the process of how to integrate multiple assessment tools into the continuous improvement process
- NDE will continue to seek resources to support districts in the curriculum work that is a necessary and critical component of the transition in standards and assessment.
- NDE will be documenting the NCLB requirements as the work is being done.
- NDE is anticipating a three year agreement with USDE in providing the documentation necessary for approval of the new assessment system.

Please know that we appreciate all of the support and time that you have been providing by allowing staff in your districts to contribute to this work. We have made extensive efforts to be fair and representative with the involvement of educators. This work cannot be done without all of you if we really want this to be Nebraska's system, built, owned, and operated by Nebraskans.

We have quality schools, teachers, leaders, and outstanding students. Let us continue to work together to create the best possible environment and maximum opportunities that we can for these students. They will achieve if we as adults continue to learn, grow, and support them. ■

National Convention Dates

- AASA – February 19-21, 2009 – San Francisco, CA
- NASSP – Febr. 27-March 1, 2009 – San Diego, CA
- ASBO – March 19-23, 2009 – Pittsburgh, PA
- NAESP – April 2-6, 2009 – New Orleans, LA
- CASE – July 9-11, 2009 – San Francisco, CA