



# **Update: Standards, Assessment, and Accountability (SAA-15)**

**Wrapping Up the 2014-2015 School Year – March 2015**

Volume 15



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# I. Standards

## A. Key Dates

### 1. The NeSA [Timeline](#)-For Full Assessment Calendar

### 2. Upcoming Important Dates

Mar 23 – May 1	NeSA-RMS Window
Apr 16	District Access to Preliminary NeSA-W Results
Apr 20 – May 1	Districts Submit NeSA Score Verification Requests-All submissions must be received in the assessment office by May 1
Jul 8	District Access to Preliminary NeSA-RMS Results
Jul 8 – 29	Districts Review NeSA-RMS and W Data and Submit Corrections
Aug 19	District Access to Final NeSA-RMS and NeSA-W Reports and Results
Sep 3	Districts Receive Printed NeSA and NeSA-AA Individual Student Reports
Nov/Oct	State of the Schools Report (SOSR) Released

## B. Academic Standards

### 1. College and Career Ready Standards

The Nebraska State Board of Education’s number one goal is to “improve achievement outcomes for all students.” One way to do this is to ensure that all Nebraska students graduate from high school being fully prepared for college and career. To accomplish this it is imperative that Nebraska has rigorous K-12 academic standards in place that prepare Nebraska students to graduate from high school able to complete credit-bearing first-year courses without need for remediation. Nebraska is in the process of reviewing and revising all of core area standards to meet this goal. The revised English Language Arts Standards were adopted unanimously by the State Board of Education on September 5, 2014, with representatives of each of the four systems of higher education in Nebraska, the University System, the State College System, the Private Post-Secondary System and the Community College System, signing a memorandum verifying the standards to be College and Career Ready.

Mathematics is currently underway and is set to be released for public review after the April State Board meeting with an anticipated adoption date of fall 2015. Prior to any standards revisions the State Board made the decision not to adopt the Common Core Standards; rather, it directed the Department to begin with the 2009 standards and ensure that they be written for college and career readiness. Revision work began in the fall of 2013 for English Language Arts and in the fall of 2014 for Mathematics.

The review process began by asking Nebraska institutions of higher education to weigh in on the 2009 standards and identify areas for improvement. Once that information was gathered, as with all Nebraska standards development, a writing group comprised of Nebraska K-16 educators, administrators and specialists went to work. The authors represented all regions of Nebraska, all levels of education, all sizes of school districts, as well as the diverse populations of our state. The existing standards were reviewed against exemplary standards from other states, along with information from ACT, SAT, the NAEP Framework, and information from nationally known researchers. The results of the alignment study between the Common Core State Standards and the Nebraska Standards commissioned in March of 2013 were also used. The results of the alignment study are on the [NDE webpage](#). The newly revised standards look very similar to the 2009 set but have been made more rigorous as a result of the review process. The format of the standards has remained essentially the same with the following changes. In the ELA standards the high school grade band has been split into smaller 9-10 and 11-12 grade bands, replacing the 9-12 grade band in the 2009 standards. Math will remain 9-12 since students take corresponding mathematic courses at different times. In all revised standards the curricular indicators are now a required part of each standard and no longer considered to be examples. All standards are still organized with three “levels of specificity”:

- K-12 Comprehensive Standards – These broad, general statements cover key areas in each content area.
- Grade Level Standards – These statements are organized by key concepts and identify what students should know and be able to do by the end of a specified grade level. They are not course specific.
- Curricular Indicators – These statements provide more specific information to distinguish expectations between grade levels or grade bands.

Several opportunities for educators and the general public to offer comments and suggestions are always made available at various points throughout the development process through web-based surveys and public input sessions at several locations via distance technology. Representatives from business and industry are also invited to review the standards, specifically for career readiness. Designated higher education representatives are asked to certify that the standards meet the college and career ready litmus test as a final step before the final draft is forwarded to the State Board for approval and the memorandum is signed by the higher education systems. Once standards are adopted, a process is initiated to look at how and when the NeSA assessments may be revised to incorporate any changes. Districts have one year from the date of State Board adoption to adopt the standards at the local level or use their own that are more rigorous than the State’s. Dates for Science and Social Studies revision are yet to be scheduled.

## 2. New Fine Arts Standards

The Nebraska State Board of Education adopted the first ever set of K-12 Nebraska Fine Art Standards on March 4, 2014. In part, this was made possible by a Nebraska Arts Council grant awarded to the Department of Education in the fall of 2012. The goal was to develop a new set of standards reflective of Fine Arts Education in the 21st century. NDE brought together groups of educators and other experts to develop the new standards in the areas of Visual Arts, Media Arts, Music, Theatre, and Dance. NDE followed the same process used to develop the academic content standards in English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. For Fine Arts the standards were written in grade bands of K-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12, using the same format as all Nebraska standards: K-12 broad comprehensive standards, grade level standards and curricular indicators. They were written with the idea that cross curricular or integrated lessons could be used to teach the standards outside of a designated dance class, media arts class, etc. The new fine arts standards may be viewed on the [NDE-fine arts webpage](#). Debbie DeFrain, NDE Director of Fine Arts, is available to assist schools with alignment and implementation ideas for the new standards. Debbie's goal is to provide professional development on these standards across the state through the ESU system. Please contact Debbie or your local ESU representative to learn about opportunities in your area. She may be reached at [Debbie.DeFrain@nebraska.gov](mailto:Debbie.DeFrain@nebraska.gov) or 402-471-3142.

### **3. The Nebraska Teacher and Principal Performance Framework and Evaluation Models**

In November of 2011, the State Board of Education adopted the Nebraska Teacher and Principal Performance Framework. The Framework identifies a set of effective practices that characterize Nebraska's best teachers and principals.

In February 2012, the State Board of Education approved the development of models for teacher and principal evaluations based on The Teacher and Principal Performance Framework. For the past two years 17 pilot schools, representing all sizes of schools and all regions of the state, have been piloting the models. Statewide implementation is currently slated for the fall of 2015.

For questions about the material covered in this section please contact:

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# II. Assessment

## A. Graduation Requirements

Requirements were approved by the Attorney General and signed by the Governor in January of 2010. They are now in effect for the students who will graduate in 2015, the students who were 9<sup>th</sup> graders in the 2011-12 year. Districts will note that although specific courses are not named, the intent of the new requirements is that each district's courses include content reflecting the highest level of rigor of the newly revised state standards.

### Revisions to Rule 10 Graduations Requirements

003.05 Graduation Requirements. Each high school shall require from grades nine through twelve at least 200 credit hours for graduation, for which at least 80 percent shall be from the core curriculum. The number of credit hours given for a course may be less than the number of instructional units and may be increased up to 25 percent above the number of instructional units.

003.05A By the 2014-15 school year, districts will adopt and implement graduation requirements that meet the highest level of rigor of the standards as specified in the state standards set forth in the appendices of this Chapter, including, but not limited to the following:

003.05A1 Language Arts. Forty credit hours of Language Arts with course content that includes composition, verbal communication, literature, research skills, and technical reading and writing.

003.05A2 Mathematics. Thirty credit hours of mathematics with course content that includes algebraic, geometric, data analysis, and probability concepts.

003.5A3 Science. Thirty credit hours of science with course content that includes biological, earth/space, and physical science concepts with corresponding science inquiry skills and laboratory experience.

003.05A4 Social Studies/History. Thirty credit hours of social studies/history with course content that includes civics/government, geography, United States and world history, and economic concepts.

003.05A B School systems may adopt a policy allowing high school credit to be awarded to students enrolled in a middle grades course if the course content and requirements are equivalent to a course offered in the high school.

003.05B C As required in 92 NAC 18, school systems accept the academic credit earned at Interim Program Schools and issue diplomas to students transferring from Interim Program Schools who have met the requirements for graduation from their own accredited high school.

One of the federal Title I regulations is the assignment of a four-year graduation rate. Each

cohort of students, beginning with the 9<sup>th</sup> graders of 2007-08 were assigned a graduation year. For purposes of AYP calculations, students will be expected to graduate in that assigned year. Because the assigned graduation year expects that students will graduate within four years, students falling behind in earning credits may impact a district's graduation rate.

Districts will want to be sure to follow the graduation year assigned to each cohort of students. Districts will also want to be sure to keep documentation for students who have moved out. If documentation is not available for students who move, they are considered non-graduates in the four year rate.

## **1. Graduation Lookup Tool**

The NDE has built tools to assist school districts in verifying the graduation dates for students. The four-year graduation cohort rate begins with the student's first day of 9<sup>th</sup> grade in a Nebraska school district based upon the information in the student template.

Students will be expected to be assessed in their third year of high school, one year before the assigned graduation date. To verify the testing year, districts can use the Graduation Year Lookup Tool and subtract one year from the graduation date. The expected year of assessment will be the graduation year minus one.

Example: If the graduation year is 2016, the expected year of assessment will be in 2015. To access the Graduation Year Lookup Tool, you may take the following steps:

### Graduation Year Lookup Tool – Directions

- Go to the NDE Portal
- Enter the Username and Password
- Go to the NSSRS Tab
- Select the NSSRS Validation Link Click on Lookups by ID
- Select Expected Graduation Year Enter the NDE Student ID
- The year listed is the expected cohort graduation rate, so to determine the expected assessment year, subtract one year.

## **2. Graduation Cohort Analysis Tool G-Cat**

The Graduation Cohort Analysis Tool helps school districts review their Graduation Cohort data. Available through the portal, the data are displayed by Graduation Cohort Year.

### Graduation Year Lookup Tool – Directions

- Go to the NDE Portal
- Enter the Username and Password Go to the NSSRS Tab

Select to the NSSRS Validation Link Click on System Lookups

Select Graduation Cohort Analysis Tool Enter the Graduation Cohort Year

To ensure the data are correct, districts need to verify students in the current graduation cohort to ascertain whether transfer in and transfer out students are counted correctly. If corrections are necessary, please contact the NDE Helpdesk (888.285.0556).

## Reading, Mathematics, and Science

Spring 2015– Testing Window: March 23 – May 1, 2015

The last week of the window is designed to give districts opportunity to complete make-up tests.

2016 – Testing Window-Pending, dependent on NeSA English Language Arts assessment revisions

March 23-May 1, 2015	NeSA-Reading	Grades 3-8, 11
	NeSA-AA Reading (alternate)	Grades 3-8, 11
	NeSA-Mathematics	Grades 3-8, 11
	NeSA-AA Mathematics (alternate)	Grades 3-8, 11
	NeSA-Science	Grades 5, 8, 11
	NeSA-AAS-Science (alternate)	Grades 5, 8, 11

### B. District Assessment Contacts

NDE has many details to communicate to districts, and districts have many decisions to communicate to NDE. For that reason the NDE assessment and accountability office asked each district superintendent to assign a District Assessment Contact (DAC). It is the responsibility of the DAC to respond to the necessary communication from NDE, assign appropriate access to their local district personnel, and to communicate important assessment information to other administrators and teachers in their local districts.

Periodic emails are sent from the NDE assessment and accountability office to the DAC with important and updated information. It will be up to the DAC to either act upon the information or communicate appropriately within the district. NDE very much appreciates district efforts in building the communication network.

Only one DAC may be named for each district. Changes of DACs that take place during the school year should be communicated to the Assessment and Accountability office by the district superintendent. Changes for the upcoming year should be communicated by the

superintendent as soon as the information is available. NDE requests changes be submitted by August 1, 2015, using the [new DAC form](#).

### **C. N-TAC Information**

NDE has many details to communicate to districts regarding NeSA technology. For that reason the NDE Assessment and Accountability office asked each district superintendent to assign a NeSA-Technology Assessment Contact.

Periodic emails are sent from the NDE assessment office to the N-TAC with important and updated information. It will be up to the N-TAC to either act upon the information or communicate appropriately within the district. NDE very much appreciates district efforts in building the communication network.

Only one N-TAC may be named for each district. Changes of N-TAC that take place during the school year should be communicated to the Assessment and Accountability office by the district superintendent. Changes for the upcoming year should be communicated by the district superintendent as soon as the information is available. NDE requests changes be submitted by August 1, 2015, via email to [nde.stateassessment@nebraska.gov](mailto:nde.stateassessment@nebraska.gov)

### **D. 2014-2015 Testing Vendor**

Data Recognition Corporation (DRC) has been Nebraska's primary testing vendor since 2008. During that time NDE has added several facets of NeSA testing to the DRC contract: writing, Spanish translation, and the Check 4 Learning (C4L) system. DRC has been a reliable and responsive partner in the establishment of the NeSA tests and C4L system.

### **E. Testing Students - 2015**

As a result of comparability studies of online testing and paper/pencil testing, the State Board of Education in January of 2012 approved a policy position stating that beginning in the 2012-2013 school year, students will be tested in the online mode, except for the following students:

1. Students whose Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) or 504 Plans specify the need for paper/pencil tests.
2. Students who are administered the alternate assessment (less than 1%).
3. Students who are contracted to other institutions where online access is not allowed.
4. Students responding in a language other than English or Spanish.

The administration of NeSA assessments is required for students in their third year of high school. Testing will occur in the year prior to their expected graduation year rather than their

assigned grade level. A student's expected graduation year or cohort graduation year is determined by adding four years to the school year in which the student enters grade nine for the first time. The assessment year is one year less than the cohort graduation year. For example, a student with a Cohort Year of 2016 will take his/her assessment tests in 2015.

As technology use has developed with many more devices being purchased by schools, DRC has continually updated its software for use on as many devices as possible, while maintaining the necessity for test security.

A Technology Trial was conducted in Nebraska for NeSA testing to determine the operability of various devices for NeSA testing. The Technology Trial was available to all Nebraska schools and districts.

Overall the trial indicates that students prefer to use technology to take NeSA tests and found limited variation in their experiences among the devices used: iPads, Chromebooks, non-Chromebook laptops or desktops.

Some points from the overview of the [Qualitative Findings](#) provided on pages 7, 8, and 9:

1. Students preferred using their devices over taking a test using the paper/pencil format.
2. Students showed a preference for using iPads over Chromebooks and non-Chromebook desktops/laptops.
3. Students felt that the device they used was adequate to complete basic actions and to use the test engine (INSIGHT) as it was intended. Screen size was not an important factor for students using any of the devices, although non-Chromebook desktop and laptop issuers were slightly more likely to find their screen size to not be an issue.
4. Only 2-4% of participants attributed being unable to respond to a test question to their test devices.
5. Only 2-9% of students found the tools difficult to use on their testing devices. Students were slightly more likely to find the tools more difficult to use on Chromebooks compared to iPads or non-Chromebook desktops/laptops.
6. iPad users were more likely to perceive that questions loaded more quickly compared to Chromebook users, and slightly more likely to perceive that questions loaded more quickly compared to non-Chromebook desktop/laptop users.
7. Students were satisfied with using iPads and Chromebook to take the test questions presented, with iPads receiving slightly more positive survey results than Chromebooks. However, students were almost as satisfied with using non-Chromebook desktops/laptops.

### **1. Scheduling for the NeSA-RMS Tests**

Scheduling is left to each district, but planning ahead must be done to ensure that each student has an appropriate testing experience within the testing window. Specifically, districts are asked to schedule 90 minutes for each subject's test administration even though NeSA assessments

(with the exception of NeSA-Writing in grade 4) are not timed tests.

The scheduling for reading, mathematics, and science may be handled in the following ways:

1. Two consecutive days
2. Two days within the same week, preferably not Monday.
3. Two sessions within the same day with a break in between.
4. Other schedules as specified in the student's IEP.

Districts are asked to read and review the following scheduling considerations and to review, "[Suggestions for a Smooth Testing Process](#)."

Scheduling considerations:

1. All students participating online must finish each test session on the same day that it is started.
2. Districts should not wait to test until the end of the testing window. The final week of the window is designed to complete make-up tests. Mondays are not the best testing days.
3. The 90 minute scheduling guidance is not required for everyone. **Students who finish early should have other work or reading to do just as they would in norm-referenced test settings.**
4. Regardless of the schedule used, the test administration must be consistent and the scripted directions must be followed.
5. Student benefit should be considered first with regard to scheduling, not adult convenience or logistical issues.
6. Younger students will be more likely than older students to need the two-day schedule, one session each day.
7. Make-up sessions for operational testing will be required within the testing window as students will be scored on the items completed and will receive no credit for blank, incomplete, or missing items.
8. Planning ahead and coordinating within the district and building are critical for successful testing.
9. The final week of testing is designed to give districts time to complete make-up tests. Regular test sessions should not be scheduled in the final week of testing.

## 2. NeSA Protocols, Practices, and Security

Districts are reminded to review all NeSA protocols, practices, and security documents and to train all personnel in those protocols, particularly those who are involved in test administration. Specifically, care should be taken in test scheduling, test ethics, and testing security. Documents

outlining and supporting NeSA protocols and practices may be found in the test administration manuals and on the [assessment website](#).

A PowerPoint entitled “[Administration Training Orientation](#)” has been placed on our website for training purposes.

### **3. NeSA Security**

In a centralized testing process, it is critical that equity of opportunity, standardization of procedures, and fairness to students is maintained. Therefore, the Nebraska Department of Education is asking that all school districts review the [NeSA Security Procedures](#) available on the assessment website. It is critical that all administrators and teachers read the procedures, especially those who are administering the assessment. These procedures apply to all NeSA testing: reading, writing, mathematics, ELDA, science, and alternate tests.

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. Districts reporting a security breach should complete the form entitled [Report of Security Breach](#).

Principals sign a single [security agreement](#) for each testing session 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(s). Security agreements were due in the fall for the current school year.

Additionally, a [confidentiality agreement](#) is required from each District Assessment Contact. The DACs are responsible for overall oversight of the testing process in the district.

Security Forms are under the direction of

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Districts should maintain a set of district policies that includes a reference to Nebraska’s NeSA Security Procedures.

### **4. 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 NeSA Testing Security Procedures are intended to outline clear practice for appropriate security.

## 5. NeSA Tutorials, Practice Tests, and Software Downloads

Districts are able to access several online tools to provide opportunity for students to be prepared for NeSA-Reading, Math, and Science assessments:

- Online Tools Training-English
- Online Tools Training- Spanish
- Practice Tests- English
- Practice Tests- Spanish
- Guided Practice Tests

The online practice opportunities are accessed through the INSIGHT software. Tutorials are released for the purpose of practicing with the technology. Practice tests for each subject consists of Nebraska-authored items and are representative of the actual content of the tests. If the software has not yet been loaded on school computers, practice tests may be accessed by going to this website: <http://assets.drccedirect.com/States/NE/Tutorials/Student/201301/201301.html>

Districts that choose to administer the practice tests for reading, mathematics, and science online will have access to immediate results from the computer's correct answers. Districts that choose to run hard copies of practice tests and administer paper/pencil will have access to the correct answers posted on the web.

## F. NeSA Tables of Specification and NeSA Test Content

The Tables of Specification are essentially the test blueprints. Nebraska students are to experience a broad base of curriculum and need to have opportunities to experience all of the Nebraska standards. The NeSA test has been built on a test blueprint designed to represent comprehensive coverage of the newly revised Nebraska standards.

The NeSA Reading, Mathematics, and Science Tables of Specification for tested grades are on the [assessment website](#) for each content page. The Tables of Specification will not change unless the tests themselves undergo a content change.

The content of NeSA-Reading will be modified as Nebraska transitions to the revised NeSA-English Language Arts College and Career Ready Standards

The important point for districts to emphasize is comprehensive instruction on all standards so that students will be prepared for the NeSA tested indicators.

## **G. NeSA Test Administration and Online Unlocks**

Testing Students Outside of the Building: for contracted students and students in programs districts maintain the responsibility for assessing and reporting student results for students who are in Rule 18 schools or an agency under contract with school districts. Districts must have a plan for the assessment of and the reporting of those students' results. Options include:

Paper/pencil tests – districts are responsible for ordering test booklets for students outside their buildings through eDirect in October, for the monitoring of the security of the test administration, and for the return of the test booklets to the vendor.

Online test administration – access to online test administration tickets is available only to public school districts. Therefore, if districts choose to have students outside their buildings take the tests online, districts will be responsible for seeing that the software on computers is properly downloaded, for obtaining and distributing the student tickets, and for the security and monitoring of the test taking process.

With either option, districts need to communicate their plan to the Rule 18 school or agency and work with them and the academic liaisons (required in Rule 18 schools) to facilitate a smooth testing process.

### **1. NeSA Online Guidelines for unlocking**

- Once the test session has begun, the session must be completed in the same day.
- If the session is discontinued within 15 minutes of login (pause/inactivity), the student will have to log back in using the student test ticket (same day only).
- If a test session was not completed on the day of the initial login, the student's test session will lock overnight. If a student has ended the test through the End Test screen, it will become locked. If a DAC believes circumstances merit a test session being unlocked, the DAC must obtain approval from NDE.

If for some reason a student needs second day unlocking, it should be requested from NDE by phone at 402.471.2495 or by e-mail at [nde.stateassessment@nebraska.gov](mailto:nde.stateassessment@nebraska.gov). If NDE has questions about the circumstances of the unlocking, the district will be contacted.

- Request by phone: Please provide the student name, student state ID number, name of the school district and building name, grade level, subject area, session 1

or 2, and the reason for unlocking the ticket.

- Request by email: Please include student state ID number, name of district, name of building, grade level, subject area, session 1 or 2, and the reason for unlocking the ticket. However, for security purposes, please do not include the student's name in the email. Emailed requests will receive a return e-mail indicating when the unlocking is complete.

If the student is not finished with the items in a session, the following are appropriate reasons to unlock tickets:

- Technical difficulties
- Power failure / loss of connectivity
- Student logged out incorrectly
- Illness
- Emergencies
- Log in using incorrect student ticket type (Spanish, visually impaired, etc.)

Unlocking student tickets would not be appropriate for the following reasons:

- Students rushing through the tests
- Students not answering all of the questions
- Students misbehaving
- Schools not scheduling adequate test time

All materials must be picked up for shipment to DRC no later than May 6, 2015. See complete list of documents and required actions on the [NeSA Information and Responsibilities](#) chart.

## H. NeSA Scoring and Reporting

### 1. NeSA Scoring

The [scoring rules](#) that are applied to all tests in the Nebraska State Accountability System are available on the assessment website. The scoring rules were applied first in 2009-2010 and will continue until assessments are revised to assess the revised standards.

### 2. State of the Schools Report - Business Rules and Not Tested Codes

Complete sets of business rules are found on the NDE Website. Districts will find [calculation rules for NeSA, and AYP](#) that will provide guidance for the State of the Schools Report (SOSR). Business rules for the Classification Component of AQuESTT will be posted as soon as they are

finalized. Districts are responsible for testing all students enrolled at the beginning of the testing window. Assessment participation is satisfied when the student attempts one item or prompt. Districts are able to add new students through the online system or by completing a new answer sheet during the assessment window. The receiving district is responsible for determining whether or not the new student has been tested in the preceding district. Districts provide a not tested code for any student not assessed either on the student answer sheet or in the online system. 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 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 NeSA 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 1)
RAL	Recently Arrived LEP	Student was not tested because student met the requirements for recently arrived classification. (excluded from reporting for reading only)
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 1)

### 3. Score Invalidation and Waivers

In general, the following rules were applied:

Emergency Medical Waivers (EMW) are granted if the situation was an emergency medical waiver and a student’s medical situation prevented testing. The EMW needs to be approved by the Statewide Assessment & Accountability Office. During the testing window, Emergency Medical Waivers are not granted for pregnancy or for situations where the school could have tested the student. A physician’s statement is required before approval is granted. Scores for students approved under EMW are waived.

Score Invalidations are applied in situations where the construct of the NeSA test has been violated. An example of invalidation occurred when the reading test was read to a student or where cheating was documented. Students receiving score invalidations received zero scores. Participation in AYP may or may not have been affected, depending upon circumstances of the invalidation.

Expelled Students provided with education in Rule 17 schools (alternative programs with certified teachers) are required to be tested. Therefore, if students in Rule 17 schools were not tested, but were enrolled during the testing window, they received zero scores.

No Longer Enrolled (NLE) Students who were no longer enrolled in their school districts were coded NLE. Districts needed to “de-enroll” students when they left. If students left before February 1, the NSSRS should have been updated. If students left after February 1, they were to be coded NLE in the online system or on the student answer sheets. NLE codes are applied in circumstances where a student only took the first half of the test and then left the district. NLE codes resulted in waived scores.

Other – Student was not assessed for reasons not covered by other descriptions. Students receiving a designation of ‘other’ are excluded from reporting.

Business Rules for Students Who Move During the Testing Window:

- First, check to see if the student who moved in has been tested.
- If he/she has been tested, do not add or test the student.
- If he/she has not been tested, add and test the student.

#### **4. Conversion Tables**

NeSA-RMS Conversion Tables will be posted each year after testing is completed and post equating is conducted. Conversion tables for NeSA-W do not change. All conversion tables are available on the [NDE Assessment & Accountability website](#).

#### **5. NeSA-Reading, Math, & Science Cut Scores**

The cut scores for the NeSA-Reading, Math, and Science and NeSA-Alternate Assessment-Reading, Math, and Science were set consecutively in 2010, 2011, and 2012.

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:

- Below the Standards
- Meets the Standards

- Exceeds the Standards

The scale score ranges for NeSA-Reading, Math, and Science were set as follows:

Scale Score Ranges	Performance Levels
135-200	Exceeds the Standards
85-134	Meets the Standards
0-84	Below the Standards

## 6. Statewide Analytic Scoring

Since 2012 students in grades 8 and 11 and since 2013 students in grade 4 have received scores based on the analytic rubrics. Analytic scoring provides five scores for each student: a score for

- Content
- Organization
- Word Choice and Voice
- Sentence Fluency and Conventions (punctuation, grammar, spelling)
- Total overall Composite Score

The four domains of writing to be used in analytic scoring are weighted as follows:

- Content and Ideas 35%
- Organization 25%
- Word choice and Voice 20%
- Conventions (grammar, punctuation, spelling) 20%

During scoring, each student’s paper is read by two independent scorers. Each domain score from both raters is summed and multiplied by its weighting (0.35, 0.25, 0.20, and 0.20). The domain scores are summed to create a composite score total. The composite score is converted to a scale score between 0-70.

In cases where the two readers disagree by more than one score point on the domain score, the paper is re-read and the domain that is not in agreement is scored a third time. The rules of the third score reads were applied as follows:

- If the third score is an exact match to one of the originals, the two matching scores are used.
- If the third score is adjacent to one of the originals, but not the other, the third score

and the adjacent score are used.

- If the third score is adjacent to both scores (e.g. A=2, B=4, and C=3), the third score is used twice.

The rules for third reads are NOT influenced by the weighting of the domains. The final scaled score accurately reflects the performance of the student on the writing assessment.

The cut scores for NeSA-Writing were set as follows:

Proficiency Levels	Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade 11
Exceeds the Standards	57-70	55-70	53-70
Meets the Standards	40-56	40-54	40-52
Below the Standards	0-39	0-39	0-39

## 7. Printing the online test

Both the online practice test student responses and the operational test student responses may be printed. The directions for the printing may be found on the [writing page of the assessment website](#).

NDE advises that districts make copies of all paper/pencil writing papers. The 4<sup>th</sup> grade papers should be copied without taking the booklets apart, and the 8<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade papers may be copied by following the directions provided in this Update.

Copies are necessary for local scoring and the appeals process if the district finds it necessary.

## 8. Statewide Writing Verification Process – Grades 4, 8, 11

Writing Verifications are due May 1, 2015.

Although the Statewide Assessment & Accountability Office reviews each writing assessment question related to students' scores brought to our attention during the review of the preliminary results, a formalized verification process is available.

This verification process is appropriate only for very specific, not general, scoring issues in all grades. **Only the total score can be submitted for verification.** Sub scores in the analytic scoring process may not be submitted for verification. The verification process is designed for student scores that fall below the state cut score. Districts will need to complete the [score verification form](#). In addition, districts must provide a written explanation indicating the reason for the verification request and a copy of each paper in question. Papers submitted for verification will be examined by a panel of trained reviewers to be completed in May 2013. Districts must fax the

verification materials to the Statewide Assessment & Accountability office at 402.471.4311. For further information, please contact Dr. Valorie Foy.

## 9. Release of Results 2015

All NeSA results will be released through DRC's eDirect system. In addition, after all corrections are made and before Individual Student Reports are printed and delivered to districts, all data will be corrected in DRC's eDirect system. 2015 is the first year of the corrected data exchange to take place between NDE and DRC. Henceforth, the data in NDE's portal verification site and in DRC's eDirect should be the same.

## 10. Embargoed Data

Data are considered "embargoed" when they are not to be shared. Established processes determine the extent to which state data can be shared and with whom.

### For Embargoed Data:

- a. Do not share scores publically
- 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 outside the school or with students.
- c. NeSA-Writing essays can be returned to individual students (and parents if a district wishes) with the students' scores on them, including domain scores.
- d. Aggregate scores can be shared with school/district staff, but do remind recipients that scores are embargoed.
- e. No public recognition of individuals can be given if scores are revealed (A perfect 8 on the NeSA-Writing, for example).

Raw scores are converted to scale scores, and even though the scale scores do not change (0-200) for reading, mathematics, and science, because the tests are different from year to year, the conversion tables for each test vary slightly. Therefore, it is best to be very cautious when sharing data internally and is important to be public with the information only when it is formally released by the NDE.

## 11. NeSA Reports

Information regarding score releases and reports can be found on the assessment website.

NeSA preliminary reports are available to districts through the eDirect System for writing and for reading, mathematics, and science. The District Assessment Contacts (DAC) will receive email notification when the results are ready, and can access the reports for distribution to

district personnel. The reports include building, district, and state level information about the NeSA results. Districts will have time to review the data before it is made public. Sample reports can be found on the NeSA reporting page of the assessment website. Included in the various reports are the following:

- Raw scores
- Scale scores
- Proficiency levels (“Below the Standards,” “Meets the Standards,” and “Exceeds the Standards”)
- Indicators with the highest performance
- Indicators with the lowest performance
- Disaggregated student results

Additionally, DRC sends two hard copies of the ISRs to the DACs. The districts should retain a copy of the ISR in the student’s file. It is the district’s responsibility to send the ISR report to parents in a timely manner. The ISR will also be available electronically through eDirect.

## 12. NeSA Reports Interpretive Guide

The NeSA reports include terms and vocabulary that may be unfamiliar to educators and parents. It is critical that district personnel use a resource, “[NeSA Reports Interpretive Guide](#)” available on the A-Z list on the NeSA Reporting page. The Guide provides an explanation of the terms on the report and should help prepare district personnel for explaining reports to parents and the community. The Guide will be available in Spanish for reading, mathematics and science.

The Guide includes information on following terms:

**Raw Score:** The number of correct items on the NeSA tests out of the total possible.

**Scale Score:** The conversion of a raw score into an easily recognizable scale score allows year to year comparison in the same subject area. The raw scores for NeSA tests in reading, mathematics, and science are converted to a scale score between 0 and 200.

Scores for the NeSA writing test are converted to a scale score between 0 and 70.

Exceeds the Standards	135-200
Meets the Standards	85-134
Below the Standards	84 and Below

The Conversion Table for Raw Score/Scale Score will be different each year because although the test items are comparable in the various test forms, they are different. The conversion table for each new test is based on an annual equating process to the baseline year test. Each subject's conversion tables that convert raw scores to scale scores will be posted for the tested grades as soon as they are available.

Similarly, the NeSA score proficiency levels will not change in writing.

	4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	11 <sup>th</sup> Grade
Exceeds the Standards	57-70	55-70	53-70
Meets the Standards	40-56	40-54	40-52
Below the Standards	39 and Below	39 and Below	39 and Below

The Raw Score/Scale Conversion tables remain consistent in writing because the rubric does not change. Conversion tables can be found on the assessment and accountability writing web page.

**Percentile Rank:** The position of a student's score in comparison with other students in the state who took the same test. A percentile rank of 84 means the student scored better than 84% of the other students who took the test.

The NeSA scale score proficiency levels will not change in reading, mathematics, or science from year to year.

### **13. Sources for Accessing NeSA Data**

There are multiple locations where NeSA data can be accessed. Some of the locations are password protected and available only to school districts. Others are public locations and available to all users. A chart has been placed on the assessment website and identifies where NeSA data can be accessed

#### **I. Check for Learning**

##### **1. 2014-15 Check4Learning Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)**

NDE is determined to grow and improve the C4L system. Decisions about NeSA transition, caused by the adoption of new Nebraska ELA standards, are still being made. Those decisions will have an impact on the requirements for the 2015-16 C4L MOU. Once determined, these requirements will be outlined in the 2015-16 MOU. When completed, the 2015-2016 MOU will be emailed to DACs and will be accessible online.

## **J. Information for State of the Schools Report**

### **1. 2014-15 STATE OF THE SCHOOLS REPORT - Consolidated Data Collection - CDC**

The CDC site located on the NDE Portal > Data Collections > Consolidated Data Collections > State Of The Schools Report, will open April 1, 2015, and close on June 30, 2015. Information from this site is used to populate the district and school descriptions and the graduation requirements on the State of the Schools Report. Descriptions and graduation requirements on the CDC are pre-populated from the previous year, but you will need to open the site and "Save" each of the descriptions for the current year. If needed, you may edit the descriptions or graduation requirements at this time. When complete, you must click the Submit and Approve buttons on the main page of the SOSR. Access information and instructions are available on the [assessment and accountability website](#) as well as the CDC site.

### **2. The Nebraska Student and Staff Record System (NSSRS)**

The Nebraska Student and Staff Record System, the NSSRS, has been operating fully as the state's record system for several years. As the 2014-15 school year continues, districts should remember several important reporting considerations.

The Consolidated Data Collection (CDC) will continue to collect non-student level data. National assessment data may be submitted throughout the year beginning in January, but data can NOT be accepted after June 30, 2015.

National assessment (NRT) data are not required for non-public students.

[Business rules for assessment data](#) have been posted on the NDE website.

Districts need to access the NSSRS Validations and Student Verification Reports from the NDE Portal website to determine the accuracy of the assessment data. Directions for accessing reports are provided on the NSSRS Validations website.

### **3. Reporting Students Who Move**

Most students will be assessed in the district and reported by the district where they are enrolled. This is true whether students move between or within districts. During the assessment window, districts record students who move before testing as "No Longer Enrolled" on the answer booklet or in the online eDirect system. Districts need to add a new student by adding the student online in the eDirect system or by completing a paper/pencil assessment. Please call the previous district to check whether student has been tested. Test those subjects not tested. If the student has completed one session of an assessment but not completed the second session, then the student will need to complete the entire assessment in the new school.

#### **4. Contracted Students**

The NSSRS System requires clarifications regarding the reporting of contracted public school students. There are two categories for the reporting of assessment results for contracted public school students.

Category One: Students contracted from one public district to another public district. In these situations, the receiving district needs to do the following:

- Enroll the student, verify the NDE Student ID number.
- Report attendance, demographics and all NSSRS requirements.
- Administer NeSA assessments to the student.
- Report the assessment results.

Essentially, students contracted from one public school to another public school become students in the receiving district.

Category Two: Students contracted from a public district to any education agency that is not a public district. Some examples of education agencies that are not considered to be a public district include but are not limited to the following: Interim program 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 assessment.
- Report the assessment results obtained from the education agency.

Note: Assessment results for students attending non-public schools are not required to be reported to NDE unless the non-public school student is enrolled in the public school for at least .51 of the time. If a non-public school is also an approved service provider for special education, Category Two (above) applies.

#### **5. Home-Schooled Students**

Districts are responsible for reporting home schooled students only if they are enrolled in the district at least .51 of the time.

#### **6. Ward of the Court Students**

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.

## 7. Reporting Individual Scores on National Assessment Instruments

As required by the Quality Education Act, districts will need to submit individual student scores and sub scores on national tests.

The State Board of Education, as required by LB #1157, **recommended** the national tests that should be used and in which grades they should be reported.

The results of that **recommendation** are as follows:

Grades 4, 8: Terra Nova  
ITBS (Iowa Test of Basic Skills)  
Stanford Achievement Test  
NWEA (Northwest Evaluation Assessment)

Grade 10: PLAN

The recommendations are currently being revised. Districts should note that these are recommendations only and are not requirements. If districts choose to administer different tests or administer tests in grades other than those recommended, they may do so.

Districts must collect and report individual scores and sub scores. Each test provides results differently, and therefore each test state average will be calculated and displayed separately on the State of the Schools Report. The following pages outline the reporting requirements on the recommended tests.

Example of Terra Nova

 CTB/McGraw-Hill	
<b>Student Subtest &amp; Objective Report</b>	
Student Name Student ID Special Codes	
Grade Birth Date	
District School Teacher	
Test Name: TN3-CB Level/Form: 15 G Test Date: 11-03-2008 Template: Student Subtest & Objective Report Date: 02-04-2009	
<b>Degree of Mastery Key</b> ○ Low Mastery ◐ Moderate Mastery ● High Mastery N Not all items attempted	

Reading Composite

Math Composite

Total Score NCE

Scores By Subtest

Subtest	Scale Score	Grade Equiv	National Percentile	Normal Curve Eq	National Stanpipe
Reading	650	5.5	53	51	5
Vocabulary	650	5.9	58	54	5
Reading Composite	650	5.8	58	54	5
Language	665	7.9	73	63	6
Language Mechanics	642	5.6	54	52	5
Language Composite	654	6.7	65	58	6
Mathematics	647	5.6	57	54	5
Math Computation	607	4.4	30	29	4
Math Composite	627	4.9	43	46	5
Total Score	664	6.0	62	56	6
Spelling	638	5.3	53	51	5

Scores By Subtest / Objective

Subtest / Objective	Degree of Mastery
<b>Reading</b>	
Basic Understanding	◐
Analyze Text	◐
Evaluate/Extend Meaning	◐
Rda/Wrtg Strategies	◐
Subtest Average	0
<b>Vocabulary</b>	
Word Meaning	◐
Multimeaning Words	◐
Words in Context	◐
Subtest Average	0
<b>Language</b>	
Sentence Structure	◐
Writing Strategies	◐
Editing Skills	◐
Subtest Average	0
<b>Language Mechanics</b>	
Sent. Phrases, Clauses	◐
Writing Conventions	◐
Subtest Average	0
<b>Mathematics</b>	
Number & Num Relations	◐
Computation & Estimation	◐
Operation Concepts	◐
Measurement	◐
Geometry & Spatial Sense	◐
Data, Stats, & Prob	◐
Patterns, Funcs, Algebra	◐
Subtest Average	0
<b>Math Computation</b>	
Multiply Whole Numbers	◐
Divide Whole Numbers	◐
Decimals	◐
Fractions	◐
Subtest Average	0
<b>Spelling</b>	
Vowels	◐
Consonants	◐
Structural Units	◐
Subtest Average	0
<b>Total Average</b>	0



PERFORMANCE PROFILE FOR  
Iowa Tests of Basic Skills® (ITBS®)

Reading Total in NCE

Student ID:  
Class:  
Building:  
System:

Student ID:  
Form/Level:  
Test Date:  
Norms:  
Order No.:  
Page: 1  
Grade: 5

Tests	Scores				PERCENTILE RANK		
	SS	GE	NS	NCE	NPR	Low	High
Vocabulary	161	2.4	2	15	3		
Reading Comprehension	155	2.1	1	10	3		
<b>Reading Total</b>	156	2.2	1	10	3		
Spelling	174	3.1	2	23	10		
Capitalization	150	1.8	2	16	9		
Punctuation	176	3.2	3	31	18		
Usage and Expression	153	2.0	2	17	6		
<b>Language Total</b>	163	2.5	2	16	5		
Concepts & Estimation	164	2.6	1	13	4		
Prob. Solv. & Data Interp.	163	2.5	2	18	6		
Math Computation	174	3.1	2	22	9		
<b>Math Total</b>	170	2.9	2	18	5		
<b>CORE TOTAL</b>	164	2.5	1	7	2		
Social Studies	165	2.6	2	18	6		
Science	172	3.0	3	26	12		
Maps and Diagrams	167	2.7	2	23	10		
Reference Materials	174	3.1	2	22	9		
Sources of Information Total	170	2.9	2	19	7		
<b>COMPOSITE</b>	166	2.7	1	10	3		

In the upper left part of this report, scores are printed for the tests, totals, and, if available, the composite. Several types of scores are reported, including the national percentile rank (NPR), which is the percent of students in this grade in the nation with a lower score on that test, total, or composite.

The graph to the right of the scores provides a visual display of the student's performance on each test relative to the other test areas. The NPR for the various scores are displayed as horizontal bars. The varying lengths of these bars permit identification of the student's stronger and weaker areas of achievement.

The lower part of the report provides detailed information about skills in each test. The number of items for each skill, the number attempted, the percent correct for the student, and the percent correct for students in this grade in the nation are reported. The difference between the student's percent correct and the percent correct for students in the nation is displayed as a horizontal bar. These bars permit identification of skills that stand out as high or low when compared with students in the nation.

Math Total in NCE

Core Total in NCE

SS = Standard Score, GE = Grade Equivalent, NS = Natl Stanine, NCE = Normal Curve Equiv., NPR = Natl Percentile Rank

Tests and Skills	Total Items	No. Att.	%C	%C	%C	Differences*
			Stu.	Nat.	Diff.	-20 0 +20
<b>Vocabulary</b>						
Vocabulary	37	37	22	55	-33	
<b>Reading Comprehension</b>						
Factual Understanding	16	16	13	55	-42	
Inference and Interpretation	15	15	20	61	-41	
Analysis and Generalization	12	12	42	58	-16	
<b>Spelling</b>						
Root Words	23	23	30	60	-30	
Words with Affixes	9	9	22	39	-17	
Correct Spelling	4	4	0	67	-67	
<b>Capitalization</b>						
Names/Titles / Dates/Holidays	5	5	0	62	-62	
Place Names	6	6	33	54	-21	
Names, Organizations & Groups	5	5	40	46	-6	
Writing Conventions	7	7	14	51	-37	
Overcapitalization/Correct Cap	5	5	0	60	-60	
<b>Punctuation</b>						
End Punctuation	12	12	42	55	-13	
Comma	8	8	25	47	-22	
Apostrophe/Quotes/Colon/Semi	5	5	20	40	-20	
Correct Punctuation	3	3	0	62	-62	
<b>Usage and Expression</b>						
Nouns, Pronouns, and Modifiers	10	10	20	58	-38	
Verbs	6	6	17	49	-42	
Conciseness and Clarity	6	6	50	53	-3	
Organization of Ideas	6	6	17	57	-40	
Appropriate Use	7	7	14	60	-46	

Tests and Skills	Total Items	No. Att.	%C	%C	%C	Differences*
			Stu.	Nat.	Diff.	-20 0 +20
<b>Concepts &amp; Estimation</b>						
Number Properties & Operations	13	13	23	60	-37	
Algebra	6	6	33	63	-30	
Geometry	6	6	0	55	-55	
Measurement	3	3	0	59	-59	
Probability and Statistics	3	3	67	48	19	
Estimation	9	9	33	50	-17	
<b>Prob. Solv. &amp; Data Interp.</b>						
Problem Solving	15	15	27	58	-31	
Single-step	3	3	33	68	-35	
Multiple-step	8	8	25	54	-29	
Approaches and Procedures	4	4	25	58	-33	
Data Interpretation	11	11	18	54	-36	
Read Amounts	3	3	33	60	-27	
Compare Quant./Relationships	8	8	13	52	-39	
<b>Math Computation</b>						
Add with Whole Numbers	3	3	67	72	-5	
Subtract with Whole Numbers	4	4	0	66	-66	
Multiply with Whole Numbers	6	6	83	55	28	
Divide with Whole Numbers	7	7	0	45	-45	
Add or Subtract with Fractions	5	5	20	44	-24	
Add or Subtract with Decimals	4	4	25	48	-23	
<b>Social Studies</b>						
History	11	11	9	51	-42	
Geography	10	10	30	57	-27	
Economics	12	12	33	49	-16	
Government and Society	4	4	25	57	-32	

Tests and Skills	Total Items	No. Att.	%C	%C	%C	Differences*
			Stu.	Nat.	Diff.	-20 0 +20
<b>Science</b>						
Scientific Inquiry	14	14	29	54	-25	
Life Science	9	9	11	53	-42	
Earth and Space Science	8	8	38	55	-17	
Physical Science	6	6	33	55	-22	
<b>Maps and Diagrams</b>						
Locate/Process Information	8	8	25	54	-29	
Interpret Information	12	12	33	55	-22	
Analyze Information	6	6	17	47	-30	
<b>Reference Materials</b>						
Using Reference Materials	12	12	17	61	-44	
Searching for Information	20	20	30	56	-26	
<b>Critical Thinking</b>						
Reading	27	27	30	60	-30	
Language	29	29	21	52	-31	
Mathematics	34	34	26	53	-27	
Social Studies	21	21	33	52	-19	
Science	20	20	25	52	-27	
Sources of Information	28	28	29	55	-26	

\* A plus (+) or minus (-) sign in the difference graph indicates that the bar extends beyond +1/-20. No. Att. = Number Attempted %C = Percent Correct



# Student Report | FIRSTNAME M LASTNAME

National Comparison

TEACHER: SAMPLE TEACHER  
 SCHOOL: SAMPLE SCHOOL - 0000000000  
 DISTRICT: SAMPLE DISTRICT

GRADE: 04  
 TEST DATE: 04/08  
 Total Reading in NCE 9 Yrs 08 Mos  
 STUDENT NO.: 0000000000

**About This Student's Performance:**  
 Firstname recently took the *Stanford Achievement Test, Tenth Edition (Stanford 10)*. This test is one measure of this student's achievement. This report compares this student's performance to students in the same grade across the nation. Percentile Bands show ranges within which this student's true scores likely fall. For example, a student whose Percentile Band spans the 70th percentile performed as well as or better than 70% of students nationally in that subject-but not as well as 30% of students.  
 The chart below shows this student's performance in each subject area tested.

**Lexile measure = 730L**  
 Information on the use of Lexiles can be found at [www.PearsonLexile.com](http://www.PearsonLexile.com).  
 Lexiles used with permission.

Subtests and Totals	Number Possible	Number Correct	Scaled Score	National FR-5	National NCE	AAC Range	National Grade Percentile Bands
Total Reading	114	82	639	69-5	54.8	MIDDLE	1 10 32 50 71 88 98
Word Study Skills	30	25	664	76-6	64.4	HIGH	
Reading Vocabulary	30	22	627	46-5	47.9	MIDDLE	
Reading Comprehension	54	35	634	53-5	51.6	MIDDLE	
Total Mathematics	80	56	633	64-6	57.8	MIDDLE	
Mathematics Problem Solving	48	30	623	54-5	52.1	MIDDLE	
Mathematics Procedures	32	26	650	74-6	63.5	HIGH	
Language	48	28	610	59-4	44.1	MIDDLE	
Language Mechanics	24	15	617	46-5	47.9	MIDDLE	
Language Expression	24	13	603	36-4	42.5	MIDDLE	
Spelling	40	30	647	73-6	62.9	HIGH	
Science	40	30	643	69-6	60.4	MIDDLE	
Social Science	40	22	607	40-5	44.7	MIDDLE	
Listening	40	22	608	35-4	41.9	MIDDLE	
Thinking Skills	190	122	623	56-5	53.2	MIDDLE	
Basic Battery	322	218	NA	57-5	53.6	MIDDLE	
Complete Battery	402	270	NA	56-5	53.4	MIDDLE	

Otis-Lennon School Ability Test®	Number Possible	Number Correct	SAI	Age FR-5	Age NCE	Scaled Score	National Grade Percentile Bands
Total	72	38	106	65-6	XXX	XXX	1 10 32 50 71 88 98
Verbal	36	21	112	77-7	XXX	XXX	
Nonverbal	36	17	102	55-5	XXX	XXX	

Clusters	NP	NA	NC	Below Avg	Avg	Above Avg	Clusters	NP	NA	NC	Below Avg	Avg	Above Avg	Clusters	NP	NA	NC	Below Avg	Avg	Above Avg
Word Study Skills	30	30	25	✓			Mathematics Procedures	32	32	26	✓			Science (cont.)						
Structural Analysis	12	12	10	✓			Computation w/Whole Numbers	18	18	14	✓			Forms & Function	13	13	9	✓		
Phonetic Analysis-Consonants	9	9	8	✓			Computation with Decimals	8	8	6	✓			Thinking Skills	20	20	16	✓		
Phonetic Analysis-Vowels	9	9	7	✓			Computation with Fractions	6	6	6	✓			Social Science	40	40	22	✓		
Reading Vocabulary	30	30	22	✓			Computation in Context	16	16	13	✓			History	10	10	6	✓		
Synonyms	12	12	9	✓			Computation/Symbolic Notation	16	16	13	✓			Geography	10	10	8	✓		
Multiple Meaning Words	9	9	8	✓			Thinking Skills	16	16	13	✓			Political Science	10	10	6	✓		
Context Clues	9	9	8	✓			Language Mechanics	24	24	15	✓			Economics	10	10	2	✓		
Thinking Skills	18	18	13	✓			Capitalization	8	8	7	✓			App. or Knowledge/Comp.	14	14	7	✓		
Reading Comprehension	54	54	35	✓			Usage	8	8	3	✓			Org., Summ. & Interp. of info.	15	15	7	✓		
Literary	18	18	12	✓			Punctuation	8	8	5	✓			Determination of Cause/Effect	11	11	8	✓		
Informational	18	18	10	✓			Language Expression	24	24	13	✓			Thinking Skills	20	20	11	✓		
Functional	18	18	13	✓			Sentence Structure	8	8	4	✓			Listening	40	40	22	✓		
Initial Understanding	12	12	11	✓			Prewriting	5	5	3	✓			Vocabulary	10	10	3	✓		
Interpretation	20	20	12	✓			Content and Organization	11	11	6	✓			Comprehension	30	30	19	✓		
Critical Analysis	12	12	8	✓			Thinking Skills	12	12	6	✓			Initial Understanding	8	8	6	✓		
Strategies	10	10	4	✓			Spelling	40	40	30	✓			Interpretation	12	12	7	✓		
Thinking Skills	42	42	24	✓			Phonetic Principles	18	18	14	✓			Analysis	7	7	4	✓		
Mathematics Problem Solving	48	48	30	✓			Structural Principles	10	10	7	✓			Strategies	3	3	2	✓		
Number Sense & Operations	24	24	16	✓			No Mistake	7	7	7	✓			Literary	10	10	7	✓		
Patterns/Relationships/Algebra	6	6	6	✓			Homophones	5	5	2	✓			Informational	10	10	7	✓		
Data, Statistics & Probability	8	8	4	✓			Science	40	40	30	✓			Functional	10	10	5	✓		
Geometry & Measurement	10	10	4	✓			Life	11	11	9	✓			Thinking Skills	22	22	13	✓		
Communication & Representation	6	6	2	✓			Physical	11	11	6	✓			Thinking Skills	190	150	122	✓		
Estimation	8	8	5	✓			Earth	11	11	10	✓									
Mathematical Connections	21	21	13	✓			Nature of Science	7	7	5	✓									
Reasoning & Problem Solving	13	13	10	✓			Models	14	14	11	✓									
Thinking Skills	40	40	26	✓			Constancy	13	13	10	✓									

STANFORD LEVEL FORM: INTERMEDIATE 1/A 2007 NORMS: Spring National  
 OLSAT LEVEL FORM: E/5 2002 NORMS: Spring National  
 C = Content Cluster P = Process Cluster  
 Scores based on normative data copyright © 2010, 2008 by NCS Pearson, Inc. All rights reserved. COPY 01  
 PROCESS NO. 00000000-00000000-0000-0000-0

**Mathematics**

Season/ Year	Grade	Student Score Range	Dist. Avg RIT	Norm Group Avg.	Student Growth	Typical Growth	Student %ile Range
W09	6	232- 235 -238		221			75- 82 -87
F08	6	216- 219 -222	219	218			44- 51 -59
S08	5	227- 230 -233	223	219	19	8	71- 79 -85
W08	5	218- 221 -224	218	216			59- 67 -75
F07	5	208- 211 -214	212	212			49- 50 -59
S07	4	211- 214 -217	214	211	7	9	52- 61 -69
W07	4	210- 213 -216	209	208			64- 69 -77
F06	4	204- 207 -210	204	203			53- 64 -74

Most recent

No Composite Score

Mathematics Score -Percentile Rank

**Reading**

Season/ Year	Grade	Student Score Range	Dist. Avg RIT	Norm Group Avg.	Student Growth	Typical Growth	Student %ile Range
W09	6	225- 228 -231		214			80- 86 -92
F08	6	230- 233 -236	214	212			85- 96 -98
S08	5	227- 230 -233	215	211	10	4	90- 95 -97
W08	5	223- 226 -229	212	210			88- 93 -96
F07	5	217- 220 -223	208	207			80- 87 -93
S07	4	225- 228 -231	208	206	22	6	94- 97 -98
W07	4	210- 213 -216	206	204			66- 78 -85
F06	4	203- 206 -209	202	200			57- 66 -78

Reading Score-Percentile Rank

**Mathematics Goals Performance - Winter 2009**

Numeration & Number Sense	High
Computation & Estimation	Avg
Measurement	HiAvg
Geometry & Spatial Concept	Avg
Data Analysis & Probability	High
Algebraic Concepts	High

**Reading Goals Performance - Winter 2009**

Strat to Read Words / Vocab	High
Identify Main Idea / Details	HiAvg
Characteristics of Text	High
Elements / Tech Fict / Nonfict	High

Lexile Range: 1011-1161

**Explanatory Notes:**

**Season/Year**

The season (F=fall, S=spring, W=winter, U=summer) and the year the test was administered.

**Student Score Range**

The middle number is the RIT score your child received. The numbers on either side of the RIT score define the score range. If retested, your child would score within this range most of the time.

**District Average RIT**

The average score for all students in the school district in the grade who were tested at the same time as your child.

**Norm Group Avg.**

The average score observed for students in the most recent NWEA RIT Scale Norms study, who were in the same grade and tested in the same portion of the instructional year (e.g., fall or spring).

**Student Growth**

Presents the growth in RITs your child made from the previous fall to the spring of the year in which growth is reported.

**Typical Growth**

The average growth of students in the most recent NWEA RIT Scale Norms study who were in the same grade and began the growth comparison period at a similar achievement level.

**Student %ile Range**

The number in the middle is your child's percentile rank - the percentage of students in the most recent NWEA RIT Scale Norms study that had a RIT score less than or equal to your child's score. The numbers on either side of the percentile rank define the percentile range. If retested, your child's percentile rank would be within this range most of the time.

**Goal Performance**

Each goal area included in the test is listed along with a descriptive adjective of your child's score. The possible descriptors are Low (<21 percentile), LoAvg (21-40 percentile), Avg (41-60 percentile), HiAvg (61-80 percentile), and High (>80 percentile).

**Lexile Range**

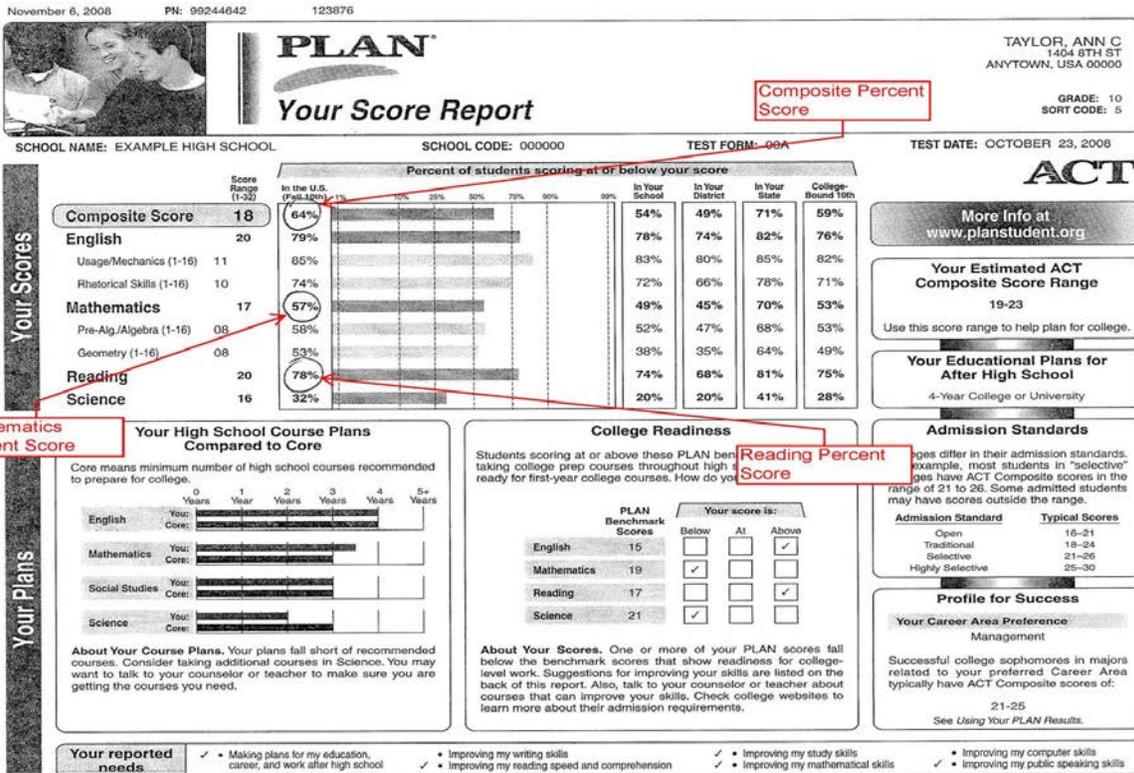
The difficulty range of text that can be understood by the student 75% of the time.

**Language Usage**

Season/ Year	Grade	Student Score Range	Dist. Avg RIT	Norm Group Avg.	Student Growth	Typical Growth	Student %ile Range
S08	5	220- 223 -226	216	212	11	4	72- 82 -89
W08	5	222- 225 -228	213	210			83- 90 -95
F07	5	209- 212 -215	210	207			49- 59 -72
S07	4	219- 222 -225	210	207	16	6	83- 90 -95
W07	4	208- 211 -214	207	205			57- 67 -76
F06	4	203- 206 -209	202	201			50- 60 -70

**Language Usage Goals Performance - Winter 2009**

There were no test events found for the selected term, Winter 2009



## K. The State of the Schools Report – Fall 2015

The State of the Schools Report will include a summary of statewide information plus individual district and building profiles. The following sections provide additional information. It will be available on the [Nebraska Department of Education website](http://www.education.nebraska.gov).

### 1. School District and Building Information

District information will include the information about each public school, district by district and by building. The data will include the following:

- Narrative description of districts and buildings.
- District and building improvement goals.
- Student characteristics including students who move frequently (mobility), students who receive special education services, students who are learning the English language, and students who receive free and reduced lunch.
- Reports of student performance on NeSA-reading, mathematics, science, and writing in the elementary, middle and high school grades in 2010-2011 (state, district and building).
- NeSA results will be reported both in average scale scores and proficiency levels.

- Percentage of students included in NeSA tests.
- Student scores and sub scores on national assessment instruments.
- Reports of student results on the statewide writing assessment at the district and individual building levels.
- 2015 State Accountability AQuESST – category rating of school/district .
- Adequate Yearly Progress determinations.
- Persistently Low Achieving Schools (PLAS).
- English/Reading/Language Arts and Mathematics graduation requirements.
- Graduation rate.
- ACT information.
- School finance.
- Teacher qualifications.
- Teacher salaries.
- Student attendance.
- High school curriculum.
- Special Education Improving Learning for Children with Disabilities (ILCD) data.

## 2. State of the Schools Report Functions

In recent years, functions were added to the State of the Schools Report. Current data are extensive but combining multiple data sources is time consuming and labor intensive. The following features are accessible from the menu:

- District Profiles will feature each district and will be accessible from the district menu. The profile will be a summary and condensed version of data sources: district statistics, student performance results on Standards, Statewide Writing Assessment, results from national assessment instruments and AYP.
- Building Profiles will be similar to the district profile. The building profile will feature building statistics and student performance information specific to that building.
- A State Profile will be available including the same features as those in the District Profile.

These profiles may be used as a state, district, or building report card.

- The Comparison Tool – This feature allows users of the website to select up to five school districts or buildings for comparison on multiple data sources. Users may select the districts and the data sources they wish to compare, i.e. student enrollment, student performance, attendance, etc.
- Cohort graduation rates of schools and districts.

Data Downloads are available on the SOSR after 2010-2011 under the LINKS tab. SOSR data before 2010-2011 have been decommissioned. The data files have been moved to <http://drs.education.ne.gov>. Use Quick Facts for access to data files from the previous SOSR

years on state, school district, school building, and staff data.

Follow these steps to retrieve the data download files from the DRS website:

- Select Quick Facts then click on Federal Accountability.
- On the Federal Accountability page, select the data file archive for the selected year
- After selecting the SOSR year, select the district data to download a zip file containing the text files.
- These files include schools within the district.

## **L. National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)**

During the 2014-2015 school year, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) sampled student performance in schools identified by the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES). Superintendents of selected schools were notified in June 2014 if their schools had been selected. Letters were sent to principals and District Assessment Contacts in selected schools as well as superintendents. The letters identified the date chosen for the assessment, administration information, and specific information about the school's responsibilities.

For 2014-2015, 333 buildings were selected to administer NAEP assessments in reading, mathematics, and science at the 4th, 8th, and 12th grades. The NAEP testing window ran from January 26th to March 6th. Three Nebraska schools will also participate in the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) which runs from April 1-May 29.

Thank you to all of the schools and students who take part in NAEP. Without your support, the NAEP process in Nebraska would be unachievable. The national 2015 NAEP reading and math results will be available in the fall of 2015, and the science results in 2016. These results will all be posted on the NDE website.

Please visit the [NAEP-website](#) for complete information about NAEP, including previous NAEP results, and other NAEP publications. If you have specific questions about NAEP, please contact the Statewide Assessment and Accountability Office:

Kim Snyder, Nebraska NAEP Coordinator

Phone: 402.471.2959 E-mail: [kim.snyder@nebraska.gov](mailto:kim.snyder@nebraska.gov)

# III. Accountability

## A. Students with Disabilities and Scoring Rules

All students with disabilities are expected to participate in the Nebraska State Accountability (NeSA) System. 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 with disabilities may be included in state assessment and accountability in one of three ways:

- Students may be tested at grade level on the NeSA tests without accommodations.
- Students may be tested at grade level on the NeSA tests with accommodations specified in the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP). Accommodations appropriate for the NeSA are found in the Nebraska State Accountability [Approved Accommodations document](#). Accommodations provided to students must be specified in the student's IEP and used during instruction throughout the year.
- 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 students on NeSA-R, the state reading test, and that accommodation is administered, the district is obligated to report to the Assessment & Accountability 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 for students with disabilities 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 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 NeSA-AA. The NeSA-AA has been designed for students with severe 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 NCLB. Further discussion of the NeSA-AA is found later in this section.

Guidelines for determining which students are to take the alternate assessment must be followed by the IEP team. The guidelines are found in a document entitled: "[The IEP Team Decision Making Guidelines](#)" found on the special education website.

If the IEP team determines that a student is to take the NeSA-AA, a statement of why the student cannot participate in the regular NeSA (based on the IEP Team Decision Making Guidelines document) and the rationale for selecting the NeSA-AA shall be included in the IEP (Rule 51 007.07A6).

### **1. Guidelines for Participation in the Nebraska State Accountability (NeSA) Alternate Assessments**

The U.S. Department of Education and the State of Nebraska do not currently define "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...

- Accesses curriculum and instruction closely aligned to Nebraska standards with extended indicators.
- Possesses significant limitations, both in intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior, expressed in conceptual, social, and practical adaptive skills.
- Requires extensive, pervasive, and frequent supports in order to acquire, maintain, and demonstrate performance of knowledge and skills.
- Demonstrates cognitive ability and adaptive behavior that prevents completion of general academic curriculum, even with extensive modifications and accommodations.
- 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 individually 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 as appropriate for the child...”

### **3. 1% Rule on the NeSA Alternate Tests**

If a district’s percentage of students who are proficient on the NeSA-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 in the summer 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.

Further information on the [1% rule for alternate assessments](#) may be found on the special education website or by contacting Sharon Heater at 402.595.1140 or by email at [sharon.heater@nebraska.gov](mailto:sharon.heater@nebraska.gov)

### **4. Instructional Guides for Alternate Assessments**

Instructional examples and clarifications for reading, math, and science extended standards are now available for teachers working with students taking the NeSA alternate assessments. The “Reading Standards with Extended Indicators and Instructional Clarifications,” the “Math Standards with Extended Indicators and Instructional Clarifications,” and the “Science Standards with Extended Indicators and Instructional Clarifications” are available on the [Special Education website](#).

## **B. The Alternate Assessments: Nebraska State Accountability Alternate for**

## Reading, Math, and Science (NeSA-AAR, NeSA- AAM, and NeSA-AAS)

In order to be consistent with the NeSA-R, NeSA-M, and NeSA-S tests for general education students and to meet federal requirements, new alternate assessments for reading, mathematics, and science (NeSA-AAR, NeSA-AAM, and NeSA-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 NeSA-AAR, NeSA-AAM, and NeSA-AAS are tests of appropriate tasks, summative in nature, that provide a single snapshot of performance. The tests have gone through the same processes as the NeSA tests for general education. Students with severe 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 NeSA-AA Practice Tests, Tables of Specification and Performance Level Descriptors on the [assessment & accountability website](#).

### C. Students Learning the English Language

#### 1. Who are English Language Learners?

According to NCLB, English Language Learners (ELL) 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 state's proficient level of achievement on state assessments, (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 ELL 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 [The Nebraska ELL Program Guide, Guide for Administrators](#).

Note: Foreign exchange students are NOT considered as ELL students and should be included in the state assessment process.

## 2. Including ELL Students in the Nebraska State Accountability [NeSA] Process

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

- NCLB requirements allow appropriate testing accommodations for all ELL students.
- In determining appropriate accommodations for students in the NeSA system, districts should use the newly revised Nebraska State Accountability [Approved Accommodations Document](#).

### **Districts must be aware of the difference between accommodations and modifications.**

For students learning the English language, accommodations are changes to testing procedures, testing materials, or the testing situation that allow the student meaningful participation in the assessment. Effective accommodations for ELLs address the unique linguistic and socio-cultural needs of the student. Accommodations for ELL students may be determined appropriate without prior use during instruction throughout the year. For a detailed discussion of accommodations for ELL students on state content assessments, please refer to "[Guide for Including and Accommodating English Language Learners \(ELLs\) in the Nebraska State Accountability \(NeSA\) Tests.](#)"

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 allowable in NeSA.

### **ELL Students Exiting Program and AYP**

Students who are coded as "redesignated as English fluent two years or less" on NSSRS will have their assessment scores included for AYP calculations. There will not be an option to exclude the scores for the two years following program exit.

### **Spanish Translations:**

**NeSA-Writing** – Spanish translations are available in grades 4, 8, and 11. Students who write NeSA-W in Spanish or any other language other than English need to use a paper/pencil booklet that is ordered in October through eDirect.

**NeSA-Reading** – is available online and paper/pencil. Districts are asked to specify their request for Spanish paper/pencil translations through eDirect. To accompany paper/pencil tests, the translations of directions and items are available in written and

audio format and are sent from DRC. Reading passages remain in English, and should not be translated. Translating reading passages will invalidate the student score.

Students have the option of using the audio and/or written translation of the directions and items in place of or alongside the NeSA-R paper/pencil test.

Student responses are entered on a regular student answer document.

The translated audio CD directions and items may be copied to iPods or audio tapes but not to any networked device. The original Spanish CD will need to be returned to DRC 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.

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

Translations for NeSA in languages other than Spanish will need to be provided by local districts. Reading passages cannot be translated.

### **Guidance for Recently Arrived Limited English Proficient Students**

Recently Arrived Limited English Proficient Students are defined by the U.S. Department of Education as a student with limited English proficiency who has attended schools 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 district may exempt a recently arrived limited English proficient student from the **NeSA- Reading test (only) for 12 months or one reporting period**. A district **must** assess the writing, mathematics, and science achievement (NeSA-W, NeSA-M, and NeSA-S) of a recently arrived limited English proficient student using appropriate accommodations.

For AYP purposes, recently arrived limited English proficient students are counted as having participated in the state’s assessments for purposes of meeting the participation requirement if they take either the English Language Development Assessment (ELDA) OR the reading test (NeSA-R) **AND** both the mathematics and science assessment (NeSA-M and NeSA-S).

Note: While districts are required to test recently arrived ELL students on NeSA Mathematics, the scores for recently arrived ELL students will not be included in federal accountability calculations.

### **ELLs with Disabilities**

Students who are ELL and also have an IEP are allowed accommodations as appropriate for both designations. These students may benefit from linguistic support accommodations 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 accommodations.

### **Language Acquisition Testing**

As required by NCLB and Rule 15, districts must annually assess the English language proficiency of all limited-English proficient students.

Beginning in school year 2015-2016, the test provided by the Nebraska Department of Education to test English language proficiency will be the English Language Proficiency Assessment for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (ELPA21.) This test replaces the ELDA and will be administered in the spring. All students designated as Limited English Proficient (LEP) on NSSRS, must participate in ELPA21 testing.

It is important to note that the purpose of this test is to determine English language proficiency, not proficiency on reading standards.

Students eligible for alternate assessments for NeSA (NeSA-AAR, AAM, AAS, and local Writing) should attempt to take the sections of ELPA21 that are deemed appropriate.

### **AMAOs (Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives)**

NCLB requires that an additional accountability decision be applied to the performance and progress of those students learning the English language. This required Title III decision known as meeting the Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAOs) is applied to all Title III districts and consortia. This accountability decision is based upon:

- The progress ELL students are making in learning English, as measured by ELDA.
- The number of students becoming proficient in English, as measured by ELDA.

- Whether or not the ELL students meet AYP.

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

Terri Schuster 402.471.4694

E-mail: [terri.schuster@nebraska.gov](mailto:terri.schuster@nebraska.gov)

## **D. State and Federal Reporting and Accountability**

### **1. State Accountability**

#### **a. AQuESST**

AQuESTT is Accountability for a Quality Education System Today and Tomorrow, a next generation accountability system for Nebraska public schools and districts. Next generation accountability systems set high, college and career-ready expectations for all students; meaningfully distinguish the performance of schools in ways that inform appropriate supports and interventions, empower stakeholders to take action through clear data, and to continuously improve for higher levels of achievement (Roadmap for Next-Generation State Accountability Systems, Council of Chief State School Officers, 2012).

#### **AQuESTT Tenets**

With a vision to improve teaching and learning and student success and access in all Nebraska public schools and districts, AQuESTT is built upon the following tenets: College and Career Readiness; Assessment; Positive Partnerships, Relationships, and Student Success; Educator Effectiveness; Transitions; and Educational Opportunities and Access. These tenets acknowledge the key investments that all stakeholders – schools and districts, communities, and policymakers – must make to ensure a quality education for every student every day.

#### **AQuESTT Components**

AQuESTT is designed to integrate the components of accountability and related statutory requirements, accreditation, the effective use of data, and support of professional learning for educators into a system focused on school improvement that will help to ensure a vibrant and economically successful future for Nebraska students.

Each of these major system components works together to provide a comprehensive approach to accountability that goes beyond meeting minimum requirements mandated

by statute (79-760.06-.07 R.S.S.).

## **Performance Classification of Public Schools and Districts**

Included in the statutory requirements for accountability is the performance classification of public schools and districts, based on the following indicators: status, improvement, growth, and participation on NeSA reading, mathematics, science and writing assessments and graduation rate. Based on these indicators, all schools and districts will be assigned to one of four performance classification levels: Excellent, Great, Good, and Needs Improvement.

The classification system was developed through the collaboration of Nebraska Department of Education and school districts in Nebraska. A full report of the classification component is included at the end of this overview section of AQuESTT.

## **Designation of Priority Schools**

In addition, three schools will be designated from the lowest performance classification level (Needs Improvement) as Priority Schools. Priority Schools are defined as those in most need of assistance to improve. Criteria for designating Priority schools are being developed and will be based on indicators and relevant data already reported to the Nebraska Department of Education by all public schools and districts and as required in Rule 10.

## **Intervention Teams and Support for Priority Schools**

As specified in statute (79.760.07 R.S.S.) an intervention team shall be established for each Priority School to assist the district in which the Priority School is located to:

- Diagnose issues that negatively affect student achievement in the Priority School.
- Develop measureable indicators of progress.
- Design and implement strategies to address issues that negatively affect student achievement in the Priority School.
- Develop a Progress Plan for approval by the State Board of Education that outlines the measureable indicators of progress, actions, and strategies the school and district will implement in order to improve student achievement.
- Develop the criteria by which the school will exit the priority status.
- Monitor the progress of the school in meeting the indicators of progress.

An Intervention team for each Priority School shall consist of up to five members with

educational and professional experience to carry out the responsibilities of the team. Intervention team members may be NDE staff, staff from the school district, which contains the Priority School, or outside experts. The NDE will provide training and oversight of the intervention teams.

Any intervention team member will be compensated for work performed in conjunction with work as part of the team and will receive reimbursement for actual and necessary expenses associated with the work of the team.

### **Support for All Needs Improvement Schools**

AQuESTT recognizes and accepts the responsibility to provide levels of support for all schools in the lowest (Needs Improvement) performance classification level. Therefore, in addition to the intensive support provided for the three Priority Schools, the NDE will provide consultation and opportunities for professional development in the continuous school improvement process for teachers and principals to assist them in developing strategies for improving the academic achievement of their students.

### **Recognition for Good, Great, and Excellent Schools**

Schools selected from the Good, Great, and Excellent performance classification levels may be recognized for their successful efforts in improving student achievement through evidenced-based practices that lead to high levels of student achievement, growth, and improvement. The NDE will also provide opportunities (e.g. professional learning conferences and school improvement workshops) for these schools to showcase and share promising practices with educators from other Nebraska schools.

### **A Systems Approach to Building Quality Education Systems**

AQuESTT truly reflects a systems approach to support schools and districts in providing a quality education for all students. While AQuESTT highlights key investments in a quality education system that are reflected in the six AQuESTT tenets, it also acknowledges successful processes, programs, and strategies already implemented by many schools and districts that contribute to a quality education system. Through a systems approach to next generation accountability, Nebraska schools, districts, the NDE, Educational Service Units, institutions of higher education, business and community partners, and local and state policy makers can work together to provide Accountability for a Quality Education System Today and Tomorrow – AQuESTT for Nebraska.

### **Timeline for Implementation**

<b>2014</b>	
<b>August</b>	Announcement of AQuESTT as Nebraska’s Accountability System for public schools and districts
<b>September-October</b>	AQuESTT Statewide Public Policy Forums
<b>2015</b>	
<b>January</b>	State Board approves hearing draft of Rule 10 to include the addition of AQuESTT tenets and statutory requirements for accountability  Public hearings for revisions and additions to Rule 10
<b>February</b>	Initial State Board review of AQuESTT Classification Component for the performance of public schools and districts
<b>March</b>	State Board approves AQuESTT Classification Component for the performance of public schools and districts
<b>April</b>	Commissioner’s recommendation for the AQuESTT Component for the designation of Priority Schools  AQuESTT emPOWERED by DATA Conference (April 27-28, Younes Conference Center, Kearney, NE)
<b>May-June</b>	AQuESTT Classification simulation based on 2013-2014 data
<b>October-November</b>	Performance Classification of schools/districts (based on 2014-2015 data) reported on the State of the Schools Report (SOSR)  Commissioner’s recommendation to the state Board for the designation of Priority Schools
<b>2016</b>	
<b>January-July</b>	Intervention Teams assist Priority Schools in developing Progress Plans

**August-September**

Priority Schools submit Progress Plans to State Board for approval

### **Classification Component of AQuESTT**

A Quality Education for Every Student, Today and Tomorrow was released in September 2014. AQuESTT provides a vehicle for increased communication, cooperation, and partnership between Nebraska school districts and Nebraska Department of Education. It also includes a classification component.

The passage of LB #438 in April 2014 established that an accountability system to place all Nebraska schools and districts into classification levels be developed. In addition, the statute requires the identification of three Priority Schools, to be designated from schools that place in the lowest performing level. These three Priority Schools will be those schools determined as “most in need of assistance to improve.”

This new classification system, the AQuESTT Classification Component, will place schools and districts into four levels:

- Excellent
- Great
- Good
- Needs Improvement

The distribution of schools will be approximately-

- Excellent- 15%
- Great- 50%
- Good- 30%
- Needs Improvement- 5%

The AQuESTT Classification Component

- will be released in fall of 2015 and
- will be calculated using results of 2015
  - NeSA-Reading,
  - NeSA-Math,
  - NeSA-Science,
  - NeSA-Writing,
  - NeSA-participation, and
  - lagged graduation results, the highest of four year or seven year.

A Task Force began work on the classification component of AQuESTT in February of

2014. Members of the Task Force represented school districts with varying sizes, geographic locations, and characteristics of membership. In addition, the group included NDE staff, policy partners, ESU partners, superintendents, special education coordinators, English language learner coordinators, building principals, and teachers. Since July of 2015 a smaller work group drawn from the full Task Force has been determining the details of business rules.

The Task Force established a set of Guiding Principles to steer its work:

- Include multiple indicators.
- Incorporate trend data.
- Incorporate status, improvement, and growth.
- Be fair, sensitive to change.
- Be transparent.

The model follows the steps below to determine each Nebraska school's and district's accountability classification:

- Includes calculations based on a minimum number (N) of 25 scores or students.
- Includes only students enrolled for Full Academic Year.
- Begins with a level of 1-4 based on status of NeSA scores.
- Awards a compensatory increase of one level for a set measure of improvement.
- Awards a compensatory increase of one level for a set measure of growth.
- Awards either an increase or decrease of one level for set measure of increase or decrease of scores of non-proficient students.
- Limits classification level, based on graduation rate.
- Limits classification level, based on participation.

Cut scores for all the calculations are currently being finalized. Standard setting was completed using a Dominant Profile Judgment which is explained in the [Developing the NePAS: Processes, Outcomes, and Recommendations](#) and was guided by impact data. Cut scores set currently will establish the baseline and will not be reset each year.

# AQuESTT

## *Accountability for a Quality Education System, Today and Tomorrow*

### Classification Component of AQuESTT

Using results on Nebraska State Accountability (NeSA) assessments and high school graduation rates, place each school or district into a classification level of Excellent, Great, Good, or Needs Improvement.

**Step 1. Identify students to be included.**

- **Full Academic Year**

All students enrolled for full academic year will be included in a school's and district's calculations.

**Step 2. Determine initial performance level.**

- **Status**

The current year's assessment results are used to determine the performance level.

Indicator	Performance Level
<b>Status:</b> <b>Reading/Mathematics/Science/Writing</b>	4, 3, 2, 1

**Step 3. Make adjustments to the performance level.**

- **Improvement in Elementary, Middle School, and High School**
  - If the current year's assessment results compared to the previous year's results are equal to or greater than the cut score, increase the performance level by one.
- **Growth in Elementary and Middle School**
  - If students' assessment results demonstrate growth equal to or greater than the cut score, increase the performance level by one.
- **Change in Non-Proficient Supergroup**

- If the current year's measure of non-proficient students compared to the previous year shows improvement in assessment results equal to or greater than the cut score, increase the performance level by one.
- If the current year's measure of non-proficient students compared to the previous year does not show improvement in assessment results equal to or greater than the cut score, decrease the performance level by one.
- **Participation Rate**
  - If participation rate is less than the first cut score, decrease performance level by one.
  - If participation rate is less than the second cut score, decrease performance level by two.
  - If participation rate is less than the third cut score, classification level is Needs Improvement
- **Graduation Rate in High School**
  - If graduation rate is equal to or less than the first cut score, the classification cannot be Excellent (highest level)
  - If graduation rate is equal to or less than the second cut score, the classification cannot be Excellent or Great.
  - If graduation rate is equal to or less than the third cut score, adjust classification to Needs Improvement.

**Step 4. Assign Classification Level**

- **4= Excellent**
- **3= Great**
- **2= Good**
- **1= Needs Improvement**

**2. Federal Accountability**

a. AYP Goals

Federal accountability will continue through AYP and PLAS until reauthorization of the Elementary Secondary Education Act. (ESEA)

AYP Mathematics Goals			
	Elementary	Middle School	High School
2013-2014 and Beyond	100%	100%	100%

AYP Reading Goals			
	Elementary	Middle School	High School
2013-2014 and Beyond	100%	100%	100%

b. Small Schools AYP Goals-Reading and Math

If a grade span (elementary, middle, or high school) has no group of 30, the data will be aggregated for the previous and current school years to determine if two years of data will enable the grade span to meet the minimum group size of 30. If using two years of data still results in a grade span with no groups of 30, the data are aggregated for the districts and the AYP district level decision for that grade span is applied to all buildings.

The calculations for Small Schools AYP are explained in the [Title I AYP Guidance](#).

If you have questions about the goals or calculations, please call the Director of Federal Programs:

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c. Display of Adequate Yearly Progress on the State of the Schools Report

The State of the Schools report will display the AYP decisions for each school and district.

The AYP status is available for auditing during August and September on a State of the School's Preview window. During this time districts are to review their data to ensure accuracy. The formula and process for determining AYP decisions are provided in the [AYP Guidance](#).

The AYP status should be reviewed and Nebraska Department of Education should be notified if there are questions or concerns.

d. Persistently lowest achieving schools (PLAS)

All schools identified as being in need of improvement under AYP are considered PLAS. High Schools with graduation rates below 75 percent over a period of three years are considered PLAS. Secondary schools that are eligible for Title 1 funds, but not served, that are the lowest ranked among all the schools in the state are also considered PLAS. The identification in 2015 is determined by the combination of several data sources: combined

reading and mathematics proficiency levels from 2011-12 through 2013-14, graduation rates, and a growth calculation based on three years of data.

## **E. ESEA Flexibility**

The Nebraska Department of Education will submit a Request for ESEA Flexibility to the U.S. Department of Education by March 31, 2015. The U.S. Department of Education asks states to address four primary principles in their requests: College- and Career-Ready Expectations for All Students; State-Developed Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, and Support; Supporting Effective Instruction and Leadership; and Reducing Burden on Schools and Districts. Approval of Nebraska's request would provide waivers to ten ESEA requirements.

Nebraska's request aligns itself to the current work of AQuESTT (Accountability for a Quality Education System Today and Tomorrow) and its six tenets, classification process, and focus on support for continuous improvement. Developing a Request for ESEA Flexibility provides Nebraska an opportunity to highlight its current work and outline a vision for the State's education system moving forward. A copy of Nebraska's Request for [ESEA Flexibility](#) is available on the Nebraska Department of Education website.

## **F. The Continuous Improvement Process**

The Continuous Improvement Process, 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 and systemic, 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 improvement of 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.



## G. School Improvement Workshops

In 2015 the School Improvement Workshops have been collaboratively developed and sponsored by NCSA, AdvancED, the Nebraska Educational Service Units, and NDE. Dates to be announced.

### 1. External Review Training is available for:

- AdvancED schools who have reviews in 2015-2016
- People interested in becoming External Review Team Chairs
- Those interested in AdvancED/North Central Accreditation

For additional information regarding External Review Training or School Improvement, contact:

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Nebraska Department of Education, Accreditation and School Improvement  
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