



NEWS RELEASE

For additional information, please contact David Jespersen by phone (402-471-4537) or email (david.jespersen@nebraska.gov)

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NEBRASKA ASSESSMENT RESULTS HIGHLIGHT IMPORTANCE OF STABILITY AND SUPPORT FOR SCHOOLS TO MEET STUDENT NEEDS

The Nebraska Department of Education released the Nebraska Student-Centered Assessment System (NSCAS) results today that provide insight into how students who tested are performing academically as part of our COVID-19 recovery efforts.

NSCAS English Language Arts (ELA) and NSCAS Mathematics, rigorous assessments with high expectations for college and career readiness, were given in grades three through eight. The NSCAS Science assessment is given in grades five and eight but was in a field test last spring and did not produce scores. The NSCAS ACT is given to all Nebraska juniors statewide.

Nebraska's participation rate is normally more than 99% of students. Due to the pandemic, last year's participation dropped by approximately 8,500 students but was still almost 95%. This shows us Nebraska led the nation by returning to school sooner and more consistently than most other states.

The significant change in participation along with several other pandemic related challenges such as changes in opportunity to learn, impact of trauma, and shifts in access to instruction due to quarantine and shortened assessments, make it difficult to provide any comparisons across years and/or between schools. However, the data can be used as a baseline for understanding growth out of the pandemic.

The following are among the key findings from this year's NSCAS:

- 46% of Nebraska students across all grade levels were on track or met the benchmark for college and career ready in math and 48% were either on track or met the benchmark of college and career ready in English Language Arts.
- Nebraska has consistently ranks high in national comparisons. In the most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) report Nebraska students scored above the national average in all categories and only 4 states outscored Nebraska in 4th grade reading and math. Nebraska also ranked in the top 10 in 8th grade reading and top 5 in 8th grade math.
- ACT scores also remained competitive nationally. According to the most recent report from ACT, of the 14 states that tested more than 80% of students Nebraska had the second highest average composite score. However, state scores did decline. Nebraska juniors scored an average of 16.8 in English, 18.0 in math, and 18.3 in science.
- The impact of the pandemic appears to have widened many achievement gaps over the last 18 months. 55% of White students were on track or met the benchmark for college and career ready in math and 56% in English. By comparison 19% of African American students, 28% of Hispanic students, and 22% of English Language Learners met those same standards in math and 25% of African American students, 31% of Hispanic students and 24% of

English Language Learners met those standards in English.

- Chronic absenteeism increased substantially during the 2020-21 school year. Chronic absenteeism is when a student misses 10% of their time in school.

In 2018-19, 45,244 or 14.7% of students were classified as chronically absent. That number jumped to 68,802 or 22.44% in 2020-2021. Research shows that as few as 4 days absence has a measurable impact on student achievement.

Like before the pandemic, the NSCAS results will be used to inform the state's ongoing work to support schools, reduce and eliminate achievement gaps, and improve the educational outcomes for students. The results will also be used to help direct COVID-related recovery efforts supported by state and federal relief funds.

Accountability for a Quality Education System Today and Tomorrow, or AQuESTT, allows schools to focus on educational equity for their students, ensuring all students across backgrounds and circumstances have access and opportunities for success. AQuESTT annually classifies schools and districts as excellent, great, good, or needs improvement. Due to the pandemic, classifications did not change for 2021-2022.

Detailed information on the AQuESTT system is available at aquestt.com. The full detailed report on NSCAS is available at <https://www.launchne.com/20-21/covid-19-special-report/>.

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David Jespersen
Public Information Officer, Nebraska Department of Education
402-471-4537
david.jespersen@nebraska.gov
@NDE_News