



NEWS RELEASE

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NEBRASKA STUDENT-CENTERED ASSESSMENT SYSTEM HELPS TEACHERS ACCELERATE STUDENT LEARNING



The new Nebraska Student-Centered Assessment System (NSCAS), announced statewide this school year by the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE), introduces a new approach to the role of assessment that puts students at the center of teaching and learning.

NSCAS features a more efficient, connected system of targeted assessments coupled with an increased commitment from NDE to professional learning opportunities for teachers. The assessments are used throughout the school year, providing information on each student's in-the-moment understanding, academic growth, and grade level proficiency. The system helps teachers accelerate learning by ensuring they receive timely and in-depth assessment results they can use to meet the unique learning needs of each of their students.

"We've been intent on implementing an assessment system that helps students prepare for success in postsecondary education, career, and civic life," said Commissioner of Education Matthew Blomstedt. "We're building a model system to understand the individual successes and challenges of each student, which allows us to provide all Nebraska children with educational experiences tailored to their needs."

NSCAS aligns with the goals of Nebraska's Accountability for a Quality Education System, Today and Tomorrow (AQuESTT) that supports and rewards improvement for every student, school, and educator and classifies all schools into four performance levels.

NSCAS is comprised of multiple measures of learning – formative assessments that enable educators to monitor student understanding and adjust instruction in the moment; interim assessments that track academic growth and target learning needs over time; and summative assessments that measure achievement relative to Nebraska's content area standards in grades three through eight for English language arts (ELA) and math and grades five and eight for science. The system also includes professional learning opportunities that help teachers use assessment data to strengthen their instruction and effectiveness.

In addition to assessments and related resources already in place within districts, initial components of NSCAS that NDE is providing at no cost to schools and districts include:

- TestWiz and Navigate Item Bank, two technology tools introduced statewide this year that help teachers create customized formative assessment
- MAP Growth, currently used by educators in nearly 95% of Nebraska districts, measures each student's academic growth over time, and provides immediate in-depth results about what each student knows and is ready to learn next
- The new annual NSCAS Summative assessment, custom built by NDE and Nebraska teachers with NWEA designed to measure grade-level achievement relative to Nebraska's Content Area Standards for ELA and math in grades three through eight and science in grades five and eight.
- The ACT college entrance exam, provided by NDE to all high school juniors in the spring, will continue to serve as the summative assessment in English language arts, math, and science at the high school level
- NDE is adding to the professional learning opportunities already offered in Nebraska by providing workshops at no cost to help educators understand the purpose of each assessment, gain expertise in interpreting reports, and apply assessment information to inform instructional decisions

Over the coming months, NDE is providing districts and schools with information they need to support parent and guardian engagement in assessment, such as test-taking strategies, recommended questions to ask teachers about assessment results, and guidance on how results can be used to support student learning. More information on the new NSCAS assessment system can be found at <https://www.education.ne.gov/assessment/>

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