

NOTE: The COVID-19 pandemic in the spring of 2020 significantly impacted The Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) Summative Assessment Administration and Reporting Plan for the 2019-2020 school year. The Nebraska Student-Centered Assessment System (NSCAS) Summative assessments were all suspended.

- No statewide assessments were given for the 2019-2020 school year.
- The US Department of Education approved assessment and accountability waivers for all states, including Nebraska.
- Governor Pete Ricketts waived Nebraska requirements for assessments and accountability as part of Executive Order #20-20 pertaining to the pandemic.

The Nebraska Department of Education Summative Assessment Administration and Reporting Plan includes information for the Nebraska Student-Centered Assessment System (NSCAS) for the 2020-2021 school year.

- The State Board of Education has adopted Nebraska College and Career Ready (CCR) standards for English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science. The assessment plan reflects the transition of the statewide summative assessments to measure Nebraska's College and Career Ready Standards.
 - English Language Arts assessments transitioned to measure CCR in spring 2017.
 - Mathematics assessments transitioned to measure CCR in spring 2018.
 - Science assessments will transition to measure CCR in spring 2022.
- All Nebraska statewide assessments are reported in three categories of achievement.
 - Assessments that are measured with the ACT report three performance levels:
 - Developing
 - On Track
 - ACT Benchmark
 - Students who score in the On Track and ACT Benchmark levels are identified as meeting expectations.
 - Assessments that have transitioned to measure Nebraska's College and Career Ready Standards for general assessment (at grades 3-8 and for alternate assessment at grades 3-8 and High School) report three performance levels:
 - Developing
 - On Track
 - College and Career Ready Benchmark (CCR Benchmark)
 - Students who score in the CCR Benchmark and On Track levels are identified as proficient.
 - In 2021, NSCAS General English Language Arts and Mathematics will be replaced by the NSCAS Phase I Pilot. In October of 2019, NDE announced the transition to a new summative assessment model, through-year adaptive assessments. The decision to replace the NSCAS General Assessment with the Phase I Pilot offers several advantages in a school year that continues to be heavily impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic.

- The assessments are still based on the same Nebraska standards and will provide important information to schools, districts, and the NDE.
- The assessments will provide important data that will help facilitate the transition to the new through-year adaptive assessment model.
- The assessments will take about half the time as the NSCAS General Assessments, which will help protect valuable instruction time.
- The assessments will provide data to conduct research into the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on student learning.
- The assessments are fully adaptive, which means each student will receive a unique assessment that changes to meet the student where they are on their learning journey.
- In 2021, NSCAS General and Alternate Science will be field tested only. Field tests are common processes used to assure that future operational tests are technically sound and of high quality. Results for students, schools, and districts are not made public during a field test. NDE received a waiver from the testing and reporting requirement from the US Department of Education for the 2019-2020 school year. NDE has requested an extension of the waiver due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Pages four and five cover two items:
 - NDE protects the confidentiality of student information.
 - NDE assures inclusion of all students in statewide summative assessment, including students with disabilities and English learners. Nebraska schools have high participation rates, easily meeting the 95% federal requirement with many schools at 100%.
- At the top of page six is a link to the Statewide Summative Assessment Technical Reports. These reports include hundreds of pages explaining item validity, reliability of scoring, use of universal design, and hundreds of other technical requirements of large scale testing.



Nebraska Department of Education Summative Assessment Administration and Reporting Schedule 2020-2021				
Name of Summative Assessment	Grades Tested	Administration Dates	Performance Levels Reported	Released on Nebraska Education Profile (NEP)
English Language Proficiency Assessment for the 21st Century (ELPA21)	Kindergarten-12	February 8- March 19, 2021	Proficient Progressing Emerging	Growth Towards Proficiency is Calculated as Part of Accountability Classification
NSCAS Phase I Pilot English Language Arts and Mathematics*	3-8	March 22 – April 30, 2021	CCR Benchmark On Track Developing	Pilot Data is Preliminary and will not be Reported
NSCAS Alternate English Language Arts and Mathematics	3-8 and 11 (third year cohort)	March 22 – April 30, 2021	CCR Benchmark On Track Developing	Fall 2021
NSCAS General Science	5 and 8	March 22 – April 30, 2021	Exceeds Meets Below	Field Test Only Not Reported
NSCAS Alternate Science	5, 8, and 11 (third year cohort)	March 22 – April 30, 2021	Exceeds Meets Below	Field Test Only Not Reported
NSCAS ACT English Language Arts Mathematics Science	11 (third-year cohort)	March 23- April 16, 2021 Dependent on mode	ACT Benchmark On Track Developing	Fall 2021
Nationally Norm-Referenced Assessment	At least one grade in each of the following two levels: grades 2-5; grades 6-8	Varies- Dependent on Assessment Used	Percentiles	Fall 2021

*Replaces NSCAS General as part of the Transition to New Through-Year Adaptive Tests

- **Nebraska Department of Education provides measures to protect confidentiality of student information.**

NDE shall utilize various procedures and security measures to ensure the confidentiality of student records collected and maintained by the agency. These procedures shall include assignment of a unique identifier to each student, a system of restricted access to data, and statistical cutoff procedures.

 - A unique student identification number (NDE Student ID) is assigned to each Nebraska student. The NDE Student ID is computer-generated and contains no embedded meaning.
 - After being checked for duplicates, it becomes permanently assigned.
 - Security protocols shall be designed and implemented by NDE. They shall limit who may have access to the data and for what purposes.
 - NDE has adopted masking rules to ensure that confidentiality is maintained in all public reporting of personally identifiable student information from educational records.
 - All NDE personnel collecting or using personally-identifiable student information shall be provided instruction regarding procedures adopted in accordance with this policy.
 - NDE shall maintain a current listing of agency personnel who have access to personally-identifiable student information through authentication and internal links.

- **Nebraska Department of Education provides measures to assure inclusion of students with disabilities, students who are English Learners, and students entering school for the first time.**
 - Students with Disabilities
 - All students with disabilities are expected to participate in the statewide summative assessments. 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 the following ways:
 - Students may be tested on the statewide tests without accommodations.
 - Students may be tested on the statewide tests with accommodations specified in the student’s IEP. Accommodations appropriate for the statewide tests are found in the *Nebraska Student-Centered Assessment System Accessibility Manual: How to Select, Administer, and Evaluate Use of Accessibility Supports for Instruction and Assessment of All Students*
 - Students may be tested on alternate statewide summative assessment measures.
 - Students Learning the English Language
 - Both state and federal laws require the inclusion of all students in the statewide summative assessments; therefore, English Learner students must be tested on statewide summative assessments.
 - ESEA requirements allow appropriate testing accommodations for all EL students.
 - In determining appropriate accommodations for students, districts should use the *Nebraska Student-Centered Assessment System Accessibility Manual: How to Select, Administer, and Evaluate Use of Accessibility Supports for Instruction and Assessment of All Students*

- Recently Arrived Limited English Proficient Students
 - A Recently Arrived Limited English Proficient Student is 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.
 - Under NCLB, students who had attended a U.S. school for less than 12 months could be granted a waiver from the NSCAS-ELA assessment. Under ESSA, all ELs in Nebraska must participate in all statewide summative assessments.

Technical Reports for Administration of Statewide Summative Assessment

- The department shall conduct studies to verify the technical quality of assessment instruments.

All Technical Reports of summative statewide assessment are available on the Nebraska Department of Education website. <https://www.education.ne.gov/assessment/technical-reports/>

- The department shall conduct studies to demonstrate the comparability of assessment instrument results.
 - Annual correlation studies were not conducted since NSCAS Summative assessments were suspended and National Norm Referenced assessments were likely not completed by districts and therefore not collected by NDE due to the interruption of the COVID-19 pandemic in the spring of 2020.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

March 27, 2020

The Honorable Matt Blomstedt
Commissioner of Education
Nebraska Department of Education
301 Centennial Mall South
Lincoln, NE 68509-4987

Dear Commissioner Blomstedt:

I am writing in response to Nebraska's request on March 25, 2020 that the U.S. Department of Education (Department) waive statewide assessment, accountability and reporting requirements in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) for the 2019-2020 school year due to widespread school closures related to the novel Coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

Specifically, Nebraska requested a waiver of the following:

- Assessment requirements in section 1111(b)(2) for the school year 2019-2020.
- Accountability and school identification requirements in sections 1111(c)(4) and 1111(d)(2)(C)-(D) that are based on data from the 2019-2020 school year.
- Report card provisions related to assessments and accountability in section 1111(h) based on data from the 2019-2020 school year. These include:
 - Section 1111(h)(1)(C)(i) (accountability system description);
 - Section 1111(h)(1)(C)(ii) (assessment results);
 - Section 1111(h)(1)(C)(iii)(I) (other academic indicator results);
 - Section 1111(h)(1)(C)(iv) (English language proficiency results);
 - Section 1111(h)(1)(C)(v) (school quality or student success indicator results);
 - Section 1111(h)(1)(C)(vi) (progress toward meeting long-term goals and measurements of interim progress);
 - Section 1111(h)(1)(C)(vii) (percentage of students assessed and not assessed);
 - Section 1111(h)(1)(C)(xi) (number and percentage of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities taking an alternate assessment); and
 - Section 1111(h)(2)(C) with respect to all waived requirements in section 1111(h)(1)(C) as well as 1111(h)(2)(C)(i)-(ii) (information showing how students in an LEA and each school, respectively, achieved on the academic assessments compared to students in the State and LEA).

After reviewing Nebraska's request, I am pleased to approve, pursuant to my authority under section 8401(b) of the ESEA, a waiver of the assessment, accountability and reporting requirements listed above for the 2019-2020 school year.

400 MARYLAND AVE., SW, WASHINGTON, DC 20202
<http://www.ed.gov/>

The Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.

As part of this waiver, Nebraska assures that:

- Any school that is identified for comprehensive or targeted support and improvement or additional targeted support and improvement in the 2019-2020 school year will maintain that identification status in the 2020-2021 school year and continue to receive supports and interventions consistent with the school's support and improvement plan in the 2020-2021 school year.
- The State educational agency will provide the public and all LEAs in the State with notice of and the opportunity to comment on this request (*e.g.*, by posting information regarding the waiver request and the process for commenting, on the State website).

I know that you are doing all in your power to support your districts and schools to ensure the health and well-being of students and educators. Thank you for your dedication to this effort. If you have any questions about this waiver, please contact my staff at OESE.TitleI-a@ed.gov

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Frank T. Brogan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "F" and a long, sweeping underline.

Frank T. Brogan
Assistant Secretary
for Elementary and Secondary Education



STATE *of* NEBRASKA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
LINCOLN

EXECUTIVE ORDER No. 20-20

CORONAVIRUS – EDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT WAIVERS

WHEREAS, a state of emergency was proclaimed in Nebraska on March 13, 2020, to control the spread of the coronavirus known as COVID-19;

WHEREAS, social distancing and deliberately increasing the physical space between people decreases the likelihood of transmitting COVID-19;

WHEREAS, Nebraska schools are conducting remote learning to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and are not able to resume in-person classroom instruction through May 31, 2020;

WHEREAS, on March 25, 2020, the U.S. Secretary of Education granted Nebraska a waiver of the assessment requirements in § 1111(b)(2) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the accountability and school identification requirements in § 1111(c)(4) and § 1111(d)(2)(C)-(D), and certain reporting requirements related to assessments and accountability in § 1111(h) for the 2019-20 school year due to COVID-19;

WHEREAS, not having students in classrooms limits the ability of schools to administer educational assessments to students;

WHEREAS, the state accountability system is largely dependent on student assessment data;

WHEREAS, all school districts were required to administer at least one of the required reading assessments, but may not have administered three reading assessments to all students in kindergarten through third grade during the 2019-20 school year; and

WHEREAS, reliable assessment is the cornerstone of the Nebraska Reading Improvement Act.

NOW THEREFORE, I, Pete Ricketts, Governor of the State of Nebraska, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of Nebraska, do hereby waive specific statutory provisions pertaining to the education assessments, reporting, and classification.

Pursuant to this declaration, I hereby order the following:

1. The provisions of Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-760.03(1) and § 79-760.05(1) requiring the annual administration of a system of assessments of student learning and the reporting of school performance based on such assessment data are waived for the 2019-20 school year;
2. The provisions of Neb. Rev. Stat. §760.06(2) and (3) are waived for the 2019-20 school year only to the extent that the statutes require the State Board of Education to annually calculate a school performance and district performance score on which to classify and report the performance of public schools and school districts on or before December 31, 2020. The requirement for the State Board to designate priority schools under Neb. Rev. Stat. §760.06(3) shall continue and shall be based on data reported prior to the 2019-20 school year.
3. The provisions of Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-2603(1) are waived only to the extent that those provisions require a school district to administer an approved reading assessment three times during the 2019-20 school year. Assessments administered prior to March 13, 2020, shall continue to be used for purposes of the Nebraska Reading Improvement Act. Nothing in this order shall prohibit a school district from administering an approved reading assessment in accordance with the Nebraska Reading Improvement Act; and
4. This Executive Order shall become effective immediately and shall remain in effect through the 2019-20 school year.

IN WITNESS THEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Nebraska to be affixed on this 20th day of April, 2020.



Attest:

Pete Ricketts, Governor
State of Nebraska

Robert B. Evnen,
Secretary of State
State of Nebraska