

NeSA-Reading: Q & A

Q. How will NeSA-Reading affect our schools?

A. Nebraska schools have realigned reading instruction to ensure all students have an opportunity to learn what they need to know to meet the new reading standards. Teachers continue to work with students everyday to improve their reading skills and to integrate reading across the curriculum. The focus on helping students meet standards has not changed. Our students will be prepared.

Q. How will NeSA-Reading affect students?

A. The new test will measure learning on new reading standards that focus on the 21st Century learning skills. Integrating technology and building critical thinking skills are the core of those skills. Taking an online test will be a new experience for some students but not all. Teachers will prepare students for the test.

Q. How are the test results used?

A. Test results will be displayed on the State of the Schools Report. The results will allow for the comparison of school and district scores. The Nebraska Department of Education will develop reports on performance for districts. The state will not publicly report individual student performance results to the public.

SAMPLE READING TEST QUESTIONS

Sample questions are available at: <http://www.nde.state.ne.us/Assessment/ReadingTestDevelopment.htm>. These questions are similar to actual test questions that may appear on NeSA Reading tests.

NEBRASKA READING STANDARDS

Nebraska reading standards are available at: <http://www.nde.state.ne.us/read>. Nebraska content reading standards state what students should know and be able to do. The NeSA-Reading test will measure how well students meet the standards.

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Additional information about standards and testing is available at: <http://www.nde.state.ne.us/Assessment/index.htm>. The Nebraska Department of Education homepage is available at: <http://www.nde.state.ne.us>. The department's homepage provides links to numerous resources for educators and the public, including the State of the Schools Report.

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STATE ACCOUNTABILITY: NeSA-Reading

NeSA-Reading is a new statewide reading test that all Nebraska students in grades 3-8 and 11 will take beginning the spring of 2009-10.

NeSA-Reading will allow for comparisons of student performance as required in recent legislation.

All Nebraska public school districts will have four opportunities to participate in preliminary or practice tests. No student performance results will be reported until 2010.

The reading test will be available as an online test and a paper/pencil test. Some schools may choose to use the online version as well as the paper/pencil test.

The field test will 1) allow for a statistical analysis of the individual test items or questions to ensure their appropriateness 2) determine the districts' capacity to administer the test. This field test will take place between April 13 and May 1.

The testing system allows for thousands of students to take the test online at the same time.

In 2010, student performance results will be publicly reported by total reading score as well as student performance on reading comprehension and vocabulary. Student performance will be reported at three levels.



NeSA-Reading

NeSA-Reading vs STARS

The new NeSA-Reading test and the previous STARS assessment system are alike in some ways.

How are the two systems alike?



- Both systems measure student learning on state reading standards.
- Student performance will be reported to the state and to the public on the State of the Schools Report.
- The state will not divulge individual student performance results to the public.
- Classroom teachers continue to be the best source of information for parents on how well their child is learning.

How are NeSA & STARS different?

- **NeSA-Reading** is a single statewide test developed at the state level. **STARS** assessments were developed by individual school districts.
- **NeSA-Reading**: All students will take the same test to measure learning on statewide reading standards. **STARS**: Nebraska students took different locally developed assessments on statewide reading standards.
- **NeSA-Reading** is a multiple-choice test. **STARS** included multiple-choice questions but also allowed students to demonstrate what they knew in different ways.

- **NeSA-Reading**: Students take the test once and in the same time frame. **STARS**: Students were allowed to retake their school's assessment and were tested at point of instruction.
- **NeSA-Reading**: Student performance is reported by 1) total reading score 2) reading comprehension and 3) vocabulary. **STARS** reported student performance by individual state standard.
- **NeSA-Reading**: Students are tested on revised state reading standards. **STARS** assessed students on a previous version of the state reading standards.
- **NeSA-Reading** allows for the comparison of student performance. **STARS** did not allow for the comparison of student performance because students took different tests.
- **NeSA-Reading** allows students to take the test on-line or by pencil and paper depending on the capacity of the school district and the needs of the student. **STARS** allowed students to demonstrate what they knew in multiple ways such as a test or actual demonstration or student portfolio.
- **NeSA-Reading** test results are scored by the state. **STARS** assessments were scored by the district under a state-approved process.
- **NeSA-Reading** requires the state to provide reports for parents on the performance of their children. **STARS**: School districts developed performance reports for parents.

