



# Evolving to an innovative balanced assessment system

Jeremy Heneger, Ed.D., Director of Statewide Assessment  
Nebraska Department of Education (NDE)



# Evolving our system

- In 2017, we embarked on efforts to create a balanced assessment system – the Nebraska Student-Centered Assessment System (NSCAS)
- From day one, our intent has been to evolve the system to a more innovative, balanced approach that brings assessment closer to teaching and learning
- This winter we will pilot NSCAS Growth, an integrated through-year model which replaces the MAP Growth and NSCAS Summative components of NSCAS



# Evolving to a through-year model

## NSCAS (a traditional balanced system)

Formative instructional practice supported by professional learning

Interim tests providing growth information

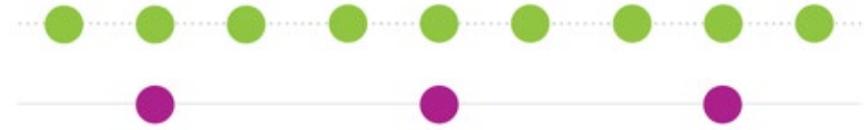
Summative test providing proficiency information



## NSCAS Growth (an innovative balanced system)

Formative instructional practice supported by professional learning

Interim tests providing growth and proficiency information, configurable and as determined by State policy



# To be clear



NSCAS Growth  
(a through-year  
model)



MAP Growth



# NSCAS Growth

**FALL**

**WINTER**

**SPRING**



Grade-level data

Grade-level data

Grade-level data  
and summative  
proficiency score

RIT score

RIT score

RIT score

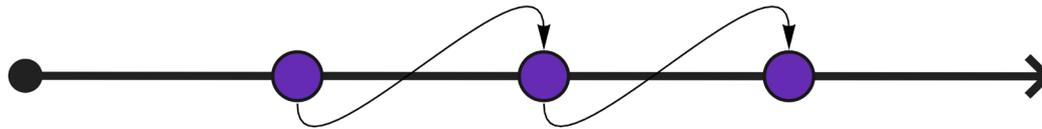
Actionable information and within-year growth measures

**Professional learning**

Meaningful connections between instruction, formative practice, and assessment



# Leveraging prior information



We can apply what we have learned about a student  
*both within and across administrations*  
to **improve the utility of results for each student.**

# Comparison of models



	NSCAS Growth*	MAP Growth	Summative
Common Blueprint	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Measures Growth	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Measures Proficiency	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Adapts on-grade	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Adapts off-grade	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Diagnostic feedback	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Bank proficiency	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

\*The integrated through-year design of NSCAS Growth provides a more comprehensive picture of student learning **throughout** the school year.



# Why? To maximize learning

- Nebraska educators and students deserve timely and coherent information to maximize learning for all students throughout the year.
- Nebraska districts and NDE leaders need a holistic and fair view of school and student performance to inform decisions intended to improve student learning.



# Key problems to solve

## **Disjointed** information

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- Different and disconnected tests give fragmented views of learning and student need
- Results are difficult to interpret or disconnected from meaningful action

## **Disruptive** summative testing

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- Stop drop and test for summative disrupts instruction, is burdensome and time consuming

## **Limited** instructional value

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- Summative assessments alone provide limited instructional value for students, negating the very purpose of accountability and ESSA



# Goals for NSCAS Growth

## **Assessment efficiency**

Streamline state and district (interim) assessments, reducing test events and avoiding time spent managing two systems and sets of protocols

## **Increased coherence**

Unify and align district and state measures, avoiding the use of one compass in the classroom and another in accountability frameworks

## **Instructional utility**

Provide both criterion-referenced and grade-independent, normative data that can be considered alongside other information to inform decisions and next steps in support of learning

## **Comprehensive view**

Produce summative proficiency data  
Show growth over time, including from fall to spring and across years



# What it looks like to succeed

Goals	Outcomes
Assessment efficiency	Students spend less time testing and more time learning
Increased coherence	Instruction better aligned to student learning needs <i>and</i> state expectations  Cohesive information informs district and state decisions
Instructional utility	Teachers use data throughout the year to adjust instruction and increase opportunities to learn  Stakeholders gain a more coherent, continuous, and granular view of the learning needs of all students
Comprehensive view	State and district administrators have a more holistic understanding of student and school performance to inform systems level decisions



# Design priorities for NSCAS Growth

Design characteristic	Why
Computer Adaptive Test (CAT)	Timely results that leverage what students show they know throughout the year
Off-grade adaptivity (when necessary)	Understand and support learning needs of students who are performing above, below, or on grade level
Interim solution that replaces summative (meets peer review requirements)	Efficiency, instructional utility
Unified platform, item pool, blueprint	Coherence, efficiency
Criterion-referenced	Promote instruction that supports students in reaching and exceeding state expectations
Norm-referenced	Understand student performance relative to peers nationally
Vertical scale (within and across-grade growth)	Document student progress over time; recognize and celebrate growth to proficiency
Flexible, actionable reports and professional learning	Matching data to purpose/user, supporting informed action
Future reports with optional opportunity to learn and student engagement lens	Qualify and clarify meaning of scores
One element of a balanced system	One assessment cannot "do it all"; does not replace all assessments or formative instructional practice

# Stakeholder needs



- **Student needs:** Increased opportunities to learn previous unlearned content, increased accessibility, growth mindset, agency, ability to set and monitor goals
- **Teacher Needs:** Actionable feedback, ability to evaluate effectiveness of instruction, identification of strengths and weaknesses at the class-level and disaggregated by group
- **District Needs:** Comparable measures representing the summative blueprint to monitor growth towards status
- **State Needs:** Summative scores that will meet peer review guidelines, increased alignment between instruction and expectations, a holistic view of student and school performance



# Information provided

What	When	Primary Use	Stakeholders
RIT scores and norm-referenced info like growth and achievement percentiles	Fall, winter, spring	Inform teaching and learning decisions	District administrators, educators, parents, students
Grade-level data based on indicators used to determine summative proficiency	Fall, winter, spring	Inform teaching and learning decisions	Educators
Informative proficiency scores and achievement levels	Fall, winter	Inform teaching and learning decisions	Educators
Official summative proficiency scores and classification	Spring	Inform systems-level decisions	District administrators and policy makers
Fall-to-spring growth	Spring	Inform systems-level decisions	District administrators and policy makers

Questions?