Leading from the middle with NSCAS Growth

Implementing a first-of-its-kind assessment system that puts students, learning, and teaching first

Jeremy Heneger Ed.D., Director of Statewide Assessment

Introducing NSCAS Growth

- The journey
  - Where we are going
- The details
  - Under the hood
- The experience
  - Management and testing
- The results
  - Data and reports
- The impact
  - Professional learning

The journey

Leading the nation

- This school year (2021-22), we will embark upon a preliminary transition to an adaptive, through-year assessment for English language arts (ELA) and mathematics, grades 3-8

- We will be the first in the nation implementing this kind of model

- NSCAS Growth will help us unify state and district tests so we can:
  - **support instruction** and
  - **improve equitable learning opportunity** with
  - **results that are actionable** at both the classroom and systems level

NSCAS Growth
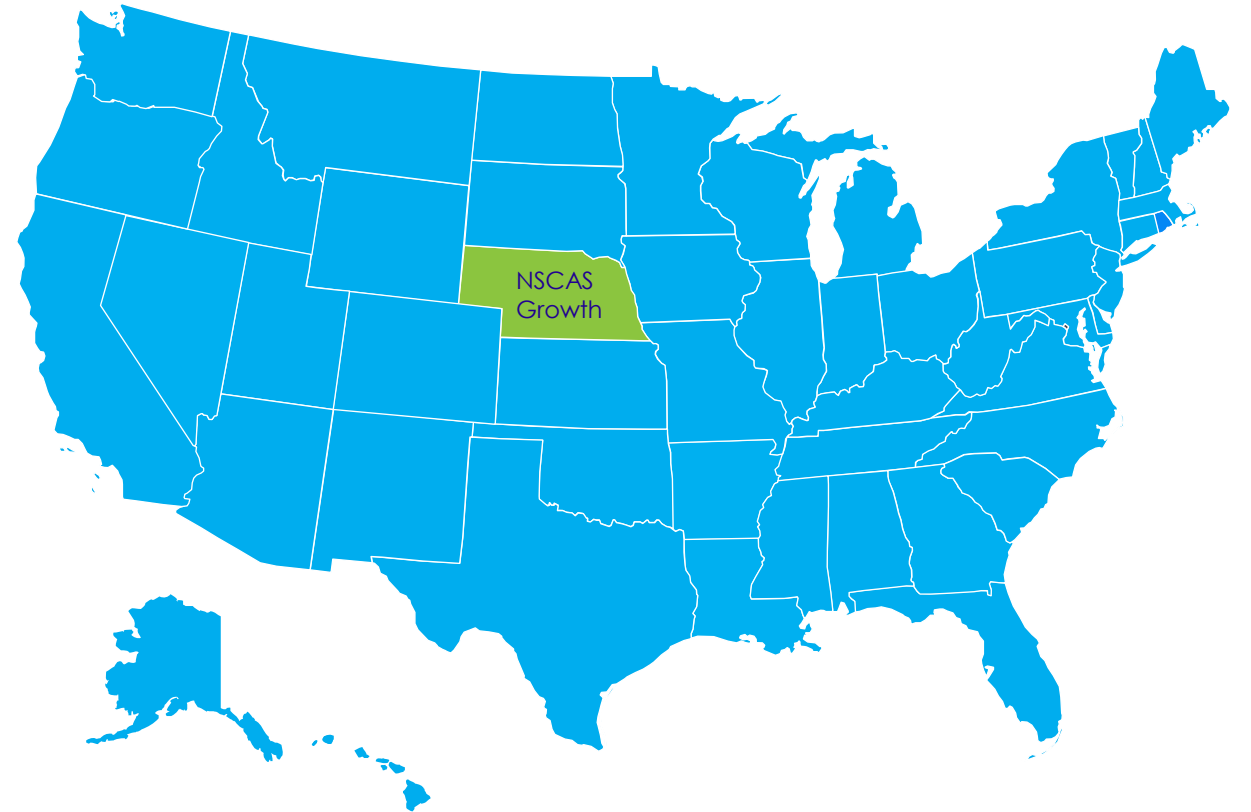
The journey started in 2017-18

NEWS RELEASE

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

FEBRUARY 27, 2018

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.

Formative   Interim   Summative

"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."
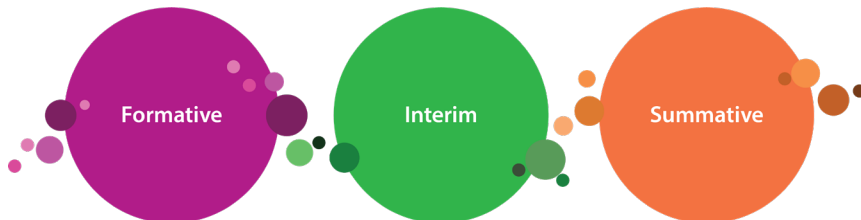
Evolving the system in response to educators

Nebraska educators expressed a desire for an assessment system that:

- Provides insights that inform daily instruction
- Is aligned to standards
- Accelerates learning for all students
- Is easy to use/administer with consistent experiences for students and teachers

- Produces understandable, applicable results
- Helps reveal which schools need support
- Includes collaborative, ongoing professional learning
- Supports a single assessment model/less testing

The outcome: NSCAS Growth

- Assessments administered fall, winter, and spring:
  - Assess student performance relative to Nebraska's grade-level expectations and summative blueprint
  - Adapt off grade-level as needed to reveal student learning needs
  - Produce summative proficiency scores at year's end
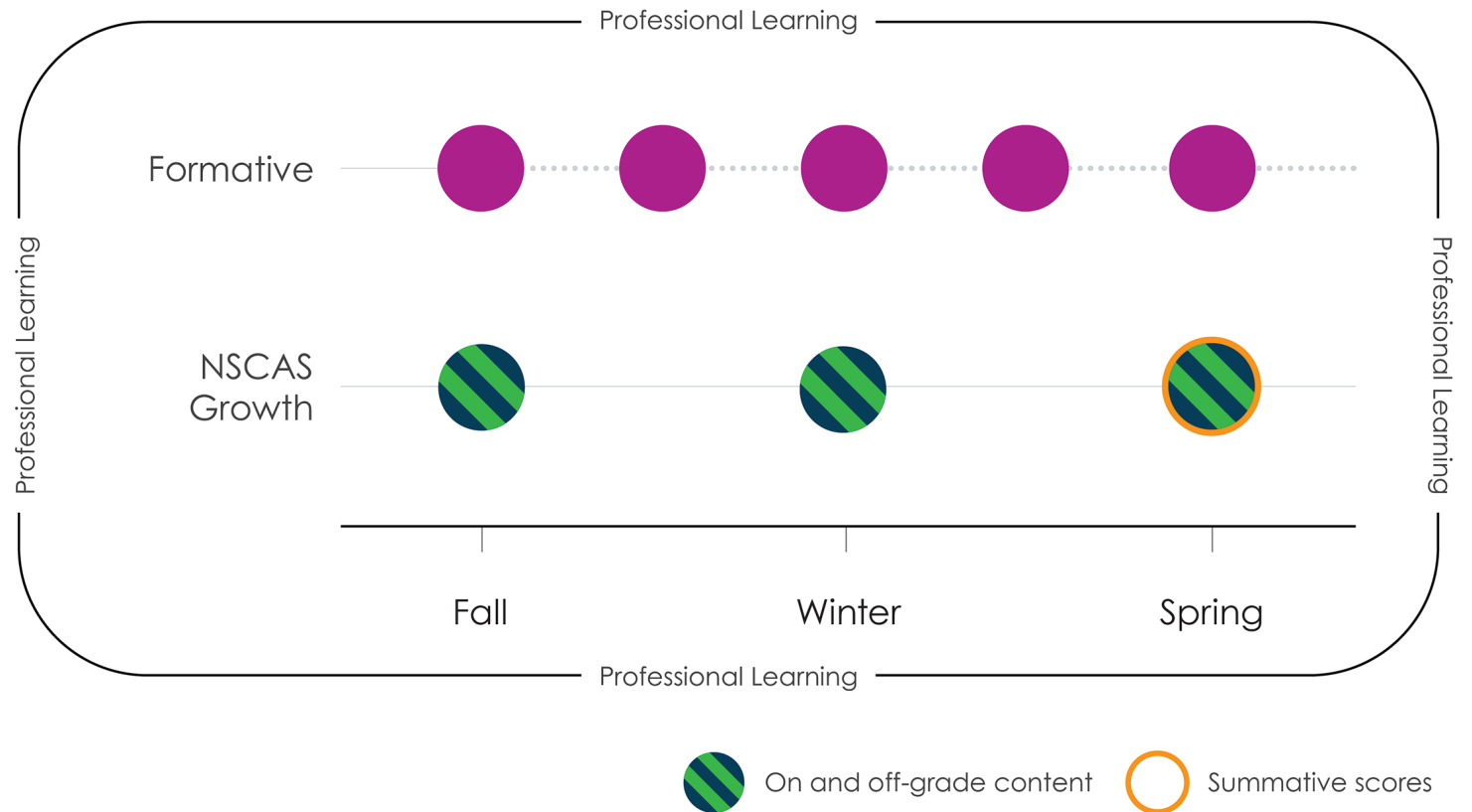
NSCAS Growth benefits

- **Utility**
  - Normative and criterion-referenced information throughout the year to support teaching and learning
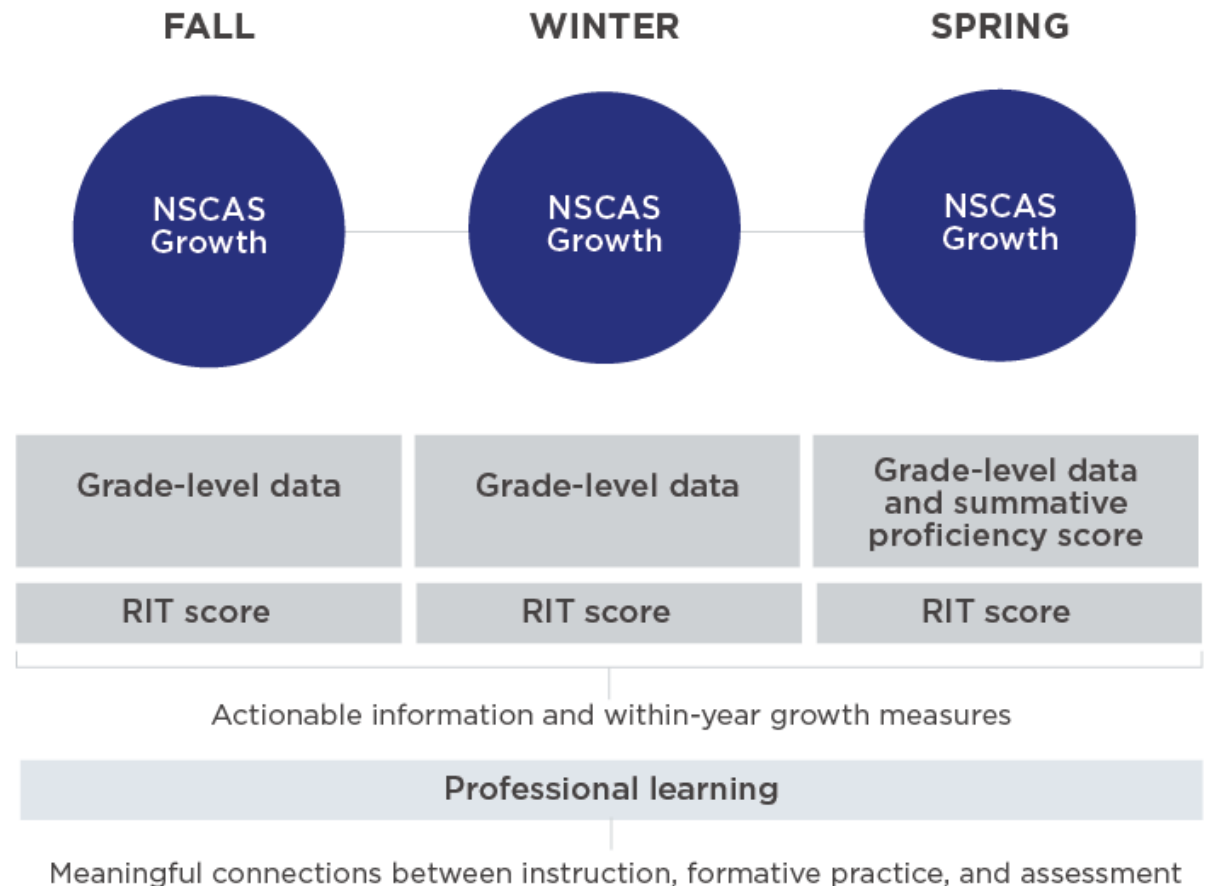- **Efficiency**
  - One platform and set of protocols.
  - Replaces MAP Growth and the NSCAS General summative
- **Coherence**
  - Common conception of student learning/common scales across all three assessments
- **Opportunity**
  - Schools and students have more opportunity to show growth (NDE sees fall- to-spring growth vs. changes in summative performance alone)

FALL — NSCAS Growth — Grade-level data — RIT score

WINTER — NSCAS Growth — Grade-level data — RIT score

SPRING — NSCAS Growth — Grade-level data and summative proficiency score — RIT score

Actionable information and within-year growth measures

Professional learning

Meaningful connections between instruction, formative practice, and assessment

Showing Nebraskans – and the nation – that growth matters

AQuESTT Tenet Change
A balanced assessment system that includes results from multiple sources is used to measure student growth and achievement of Nebraska's college and career ready standards. A balanced assessment system is a necessary part of the instructional process to improve achievement and growth for each student.

K–12 DIVE   Deep Dive   Opinion   Library   Events

Leadership   School Models   Technology   Curriculum   Pre-K & Early Childhood   Professi

COLUMN

Fast Forward: Will COVID-19 trigger shift from standardized assessments?

Published Aug. 27, 2020

"That ability to get two different measures of growth should increase how much weight we put on growth instead of simply status or proficiency," said Jeremy Heneger, director of statewide assessment at the Nebraska Department of Education.

The shift, said Heneger, is also an attempt to emphasize the instructional feedback provided by interim assessments and incorporate growth in accountability metrics . . .
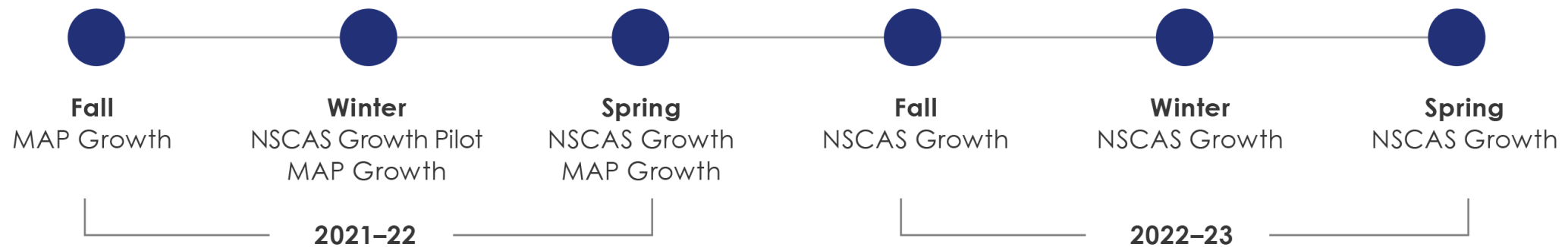
How we'll get there

2021-22: Preliminary transition

- NSCAS Growth pilot in winter; NSCAS Growth in spring
- MAP Growth recommended as well, as NSCAS Growth not yet operational
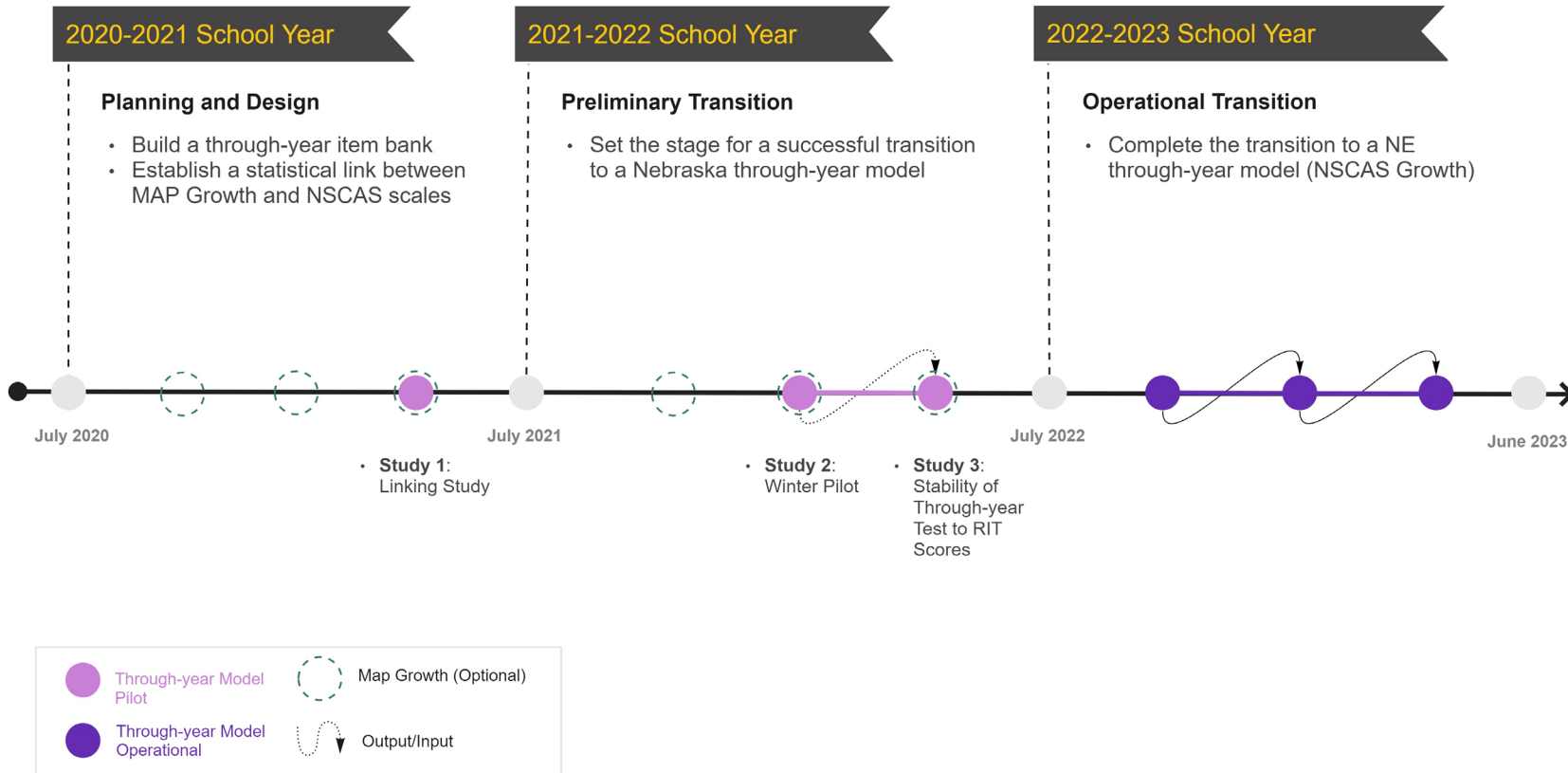
2022-23: Operational transition

- NSCAS Growth in fall, winter, and spring
- MAP Growth and NSCAS General Summative no longer needed

Fall
MAP Growth

Winter
NSCAS Growth Pilot
MAP Growth

Spring
NSCAS Growth
MAP Growth

Fall
NSCAS Growth

Winter
NSCAS Growth

Spring
NSCAS Growth

2021–22

2022–23

The details

NSCAS Growth research

- **Study 1 (Spring 21):** Linking study – establish item bank, statistical link

- **Study 2 (Winter 21/22):** NSCAS Growth pilot – validate model

- **Study 3 (Spring 22):** NSCAS Growth census – verify that score trends are consistent with both the linked RIT and NSCAS scale scores

- **Operational (2022-23):** If study outcomes are as expected, we will transition to operational NSCAS Growth in Fall 2022

NSCAS Growth winter pilot

Pilot Objectives

- Validate the Nebraska adaptive through-year model
- Experience the assessment and platform ahead of the spring census administration
- Provide feedback on test administration and reporting to support improvements

Caveats

- Pilot will not feature a complete suite of reports and tools
- Results may not represent the timing/turnaround expected in operational year
- Districts will need to decide if they should administer MAP Growth in the winter if scores are used for high-stakes decision-making or used with MAP Accelerator or other content connections

NSCAS Growth content

- Item bank is made up of items from MAP Growth and NSCAS General Summative

- All items are reviewed by NE educators for alignment and appropriateness

- Content is aligned to NE standards, NE summative blueprint, and NE Range Achievement Level Descriptors

Challenge and support every student with Range Achievement Level Descriptors (ALDs)

Measure student learning as it progresses from beginning to advanced understanding within each grade-level standard

Enable finer on-grade adaptivity, while still adapting off-grade for students performing above or below grade level

Help educators meet students where they are while supporting productive struggle to propel students forward

	Developing	On track	College & Career Ready Benchmark
MA 4.2.1.a Algebra	Determines an equation that represents the situation when given a simple math process or context . . .	Determines a one-step algebraic expression with a variable for an unknown to represent a . . .	Solves two-step whole number equations that include the use of a letter to represent the unknown . . .

Student-focused test design

- The test engine uses what was learned about the student in the previous test and what is being learned in the current one to inform item selection.

- We can stop asking questions we already know the answers to about what students know and use the time saved to ask questions we do not know the answers to yet.

- In other words, individual learning needs help guide results, ultimately improving their utility.
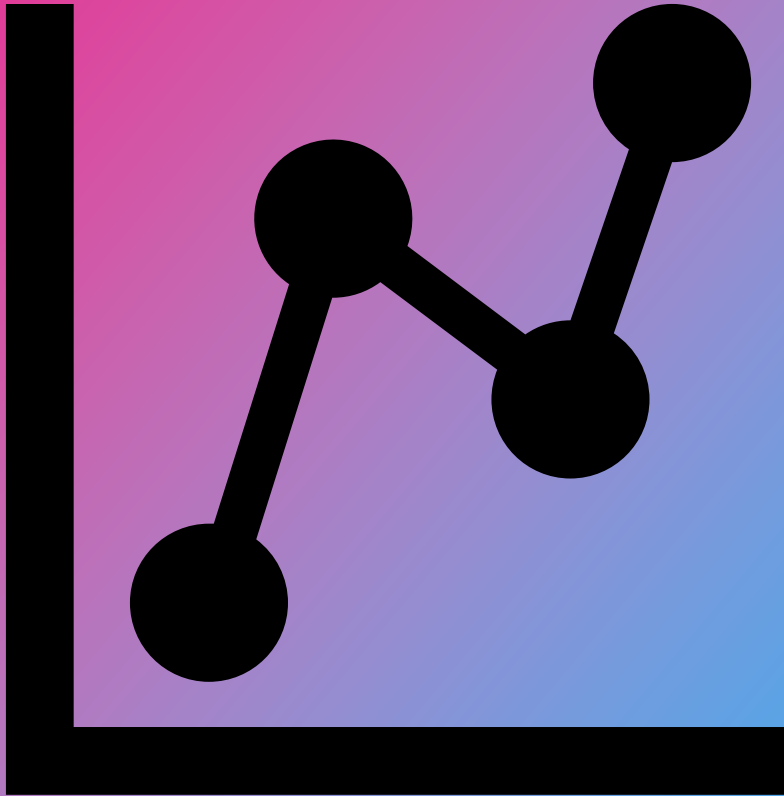
How it works

- The test begins with on-grade items to estimate a student's achievement level

- Then it can refocus the blueprint and move below and beyond grade as needed in response to student performance

- When moving off-grade, content from the adjacent grades above and below is prioritized over other grades

The experience

Platform for NSCAS Growth

- New, enhanced platform – neither the MAP Growth nor the NSCAS General Summative platform

- New platform aims to address feedback from NE educators re: existing platform:
  - Time spent creating test sessions
  - Difficulties transferring students between districts
  - Need for more flexible user roles
  - More streamlined approach to off-site testing (such as external programs)

New platform highlights

- Test Sessions can automatically be created by class information provided in the roster.
- In-platform ability to transfer students between districts and notifications to DACs when students have been transferred.
- Flexibility to differentiate between home school and testing site if different.
- Students will be grouped by testing status and shown as a percentage to easily identify testing progress.
- Accommodations/accessibility may be assigned automatically with roster upload.

Training resources

- District and School resources:
    - Assessment Coordination Guide
    - Proctor Guide
    - System and Technology Guide
    - How-to videos
    - Test administration webinars

- Student Resources
    - Item Type Sampler
    - Tools and Accommodations instructional videos

The results

NSCAS Growth data

Information produced by NSCAS Growth

What	When
RIT scores, including access to national norms	Fall, winter, spring
Grade-level data based on indicators used to determine summative proficiency	Fall, winter, spring
Projected summative proficiency scores	Fall, winter
Official summative proficiency scores and classification	Spring

Remember that 2021-22 is a *preliminary transition year*, so MAP Growth could also be administered if RIT is used for high-stakes decision-making or MAP Accelerator/curricular connections

Reports on testing itself

- District and school levels of tracking (like Student Testing Progress)
- Testing Status reports
- District/School of Attendance reports
- District/School of Accountability reports
- Testing Registration reports
- NTC usage reports
- Transfer reports (into/out of a given district)

Available as part of NSCAS Growth winter pilot (2021-22)

Search Sessions

Test Administration *	Subject *	Testing Grade *	School *
- Select Test Administration ▾	- Select Subject -	- Select Grade -	Default School Name ▾

Search

Results: --

	Ready to Test	In Progress	Alerts	Submitted	Voided
	--	--	--	--	--
	--	--	--	--	--

#	Name	Ready to Test	In-Progress	Alerts	Submitted	Voided	Actions
-		-	-	-	-	-	-

State/ESU management reports

- Organization report
- ESU/state testing status reports
- NTC usage reports
- Transfer reports

Score reports

Instructional utility

Student's Item Responses: 8 of 11 Correct

Instructional Area 1: Number Sense: 3 of 4 Correct

Item	Standard	Difficulty Level	Student Response
1	5.1.A	Easy	✓
2	5.1.A	Medium	✓
3	5.1.C	Medium	✗
4	5.1.F	Medium	✓

Instructional Area 2: Geometry: 4 of 4 Correct

Item	Standard	Difficulty Level	Student Response
1	5.2.A	Easy	✓
2	5.2.B	Medium	✓
3	5.2.D	Medium	✓

Winter pilot 2021-22
- Interactive reporting via user interface
- Classroom reports and grouping
- Drill down to student and item level from entity level
- CSV/PDF downloads available

Plus, in Spring 2022:
- Longitudinal comparisons for students
- Achievement Level breakdown for student performance

Score reports

Accountability insights – Spring 2022

- Interactive reporting via user interface
- Student content area reports
- Classroom reports
- School reports
- District, ESU, and State aggregations
- Longitudinal comparisons
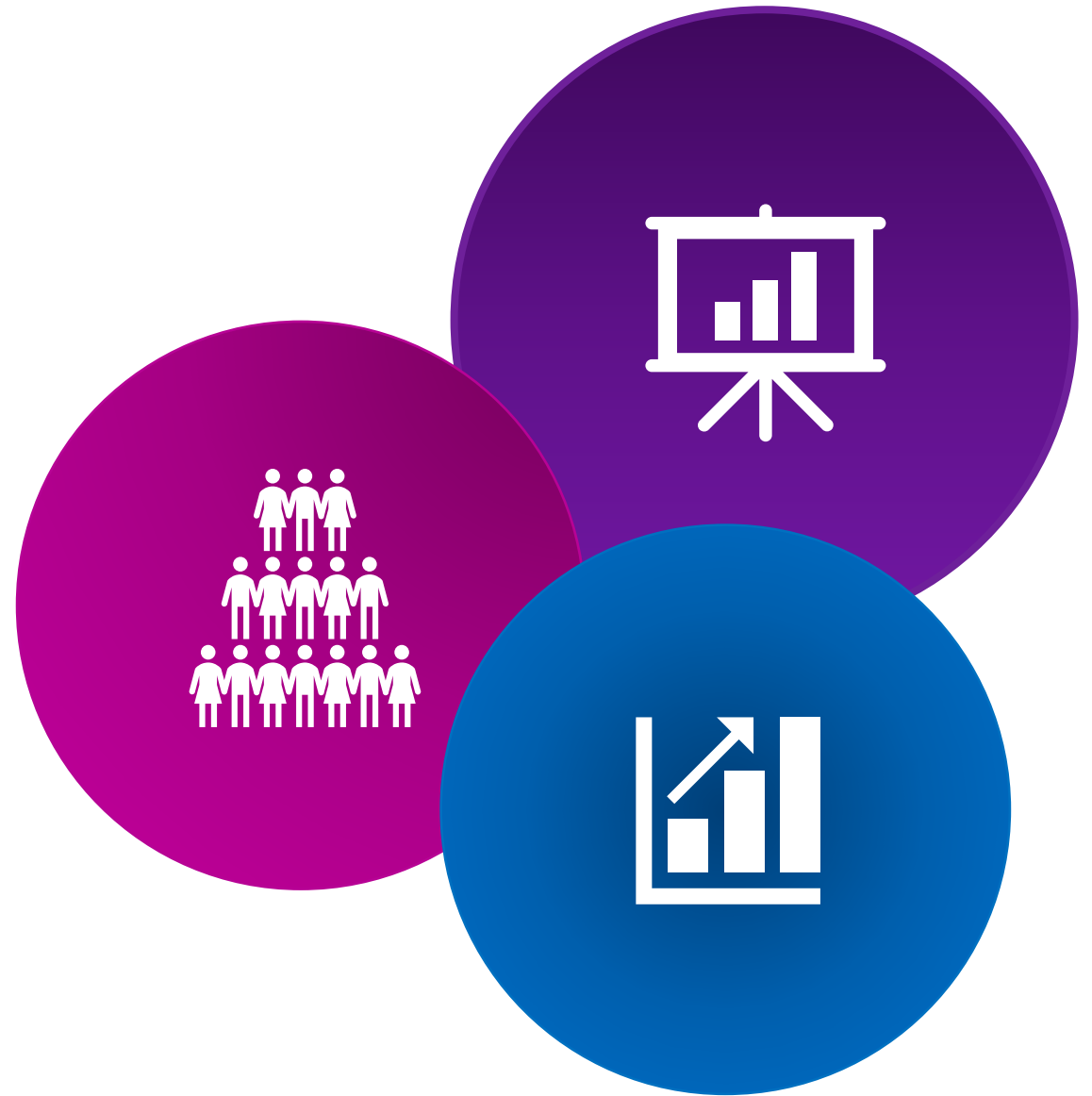
When will data be available?

Information produced by NSCAS Growth – 2021-22

What	When
RIT scores, including access to national norms	Within 72 hours of student test completion
Grade-level data based on indicators used to determine summative proficiency	• Scores may be subject to change with analysis
Projected summative proficiency scores	• Updated during active testing on screen refresh
Official summative proficiency scores and classification	After calibration (Spring 2022 testing)

Remember that 2021-22 is a *preliminary transition year*, so MAP Growth should also be administered if RIT is used for high-stakes decision-making or MAP Accelerator/curricular connections

Making NSCAS Growth data actionable

- An online resource (the Achievement Level Explorer) will help Nebraska educators more easily access and use Nebraska range ALDs

- Once fully operational, NSCAS Growth will also include a new tool (similar to the Learning Continuum) rooted in Nebraska's range ALDs

The impact

Videos and webinars

Videos for districts to use to introduce NSCAS Growth

- **"Universal video"** introducing NSCAS Growth in the context of Nebraska's commitment to supporting educational equity
  - *Intended audience:* educators, parents, board members, legislators, and other community members)

- **"Educator video"** introducing NSCAS through the lens of school leaders, teachers, paraprofessionals
  - *Intended audience:* district administrators, educators of all levels

- **"Vignette" webinars** tackling more specific, technical details
  - *Intended audience:* district assessment coordinators and others interested in going deeper on NSCAS Growth

NSCAS Growth materials

- NSCAS Growth one-sheet
- NSCAS FAQ
- NSCAS Growth PowerPoint

Professional learning

Webinar(s) will support understanding of NSCAS Growth reports and data expected from the 2021-22 winter pilot and spring administration

Professional learning for 2022-23 will support effective use of grade-level and grade-independent data from NSCAS Growth to inform instruction and foster student learning

NSCAS Growth FAQ Sessions

- NSCAS Growth Q&A
  - Recording

- Planned Q&A sessions with vignette release
  - Tuesday, August 10th 1-2 PM CT
  - Wednesday, August 18th 3-4 PM CT
  - Tuesday, September 7th 12-1 PM CT

Please contact us if you have questions!

- [Contact Us Link](#)

- Statewide Assessment Office

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