

Nebraska Department of Education
Summary of Procedures
2005-2006 Nebraska Statewide Writing Assessment for Grades 4, 8 and 11

During the 2005-2006 school year Nebraska students in Grades 4, 8 and 11 participated in the Statewide Writing Assessment. The assessment was conducted pursuant to state statute 79-760, amended in the 2000 session of the legislature, to require that a statewide writing assessment be conducted. The following summarizes the assessment process and procedures.

- The assessment was conducted in all public schools in January - February 2005 for all students in Grades 4, 8 and 11. A total of 62,214 participated in the assessment using materials and procedures provided by the Nebraska Department of Education.
- Students wrote on an assigned topic. Students in grade 4 wrote in the narrative mode. Students in grade 8 wrote in the descriptive mode. Students in grade 11 wrote in the persuasive mode. Students completed the assessment during timed sessions of 40 minutes on two consecutive days.
- The writing assessments were scored by experienced educators at Educational Service Unit (ESU) 3 in Omaha. Each student paper was read and scored by two raters.
- The scoring criteria were based on six traits of writing: ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, and conventions. The writing samples were scored holistically (the writing was evaluated as a whole rather than on the individual components).
- The process of scoring resulted in a range of scores between 2.00 and 8.00. The proficiency level, also known as the cut score, represents the score necessary to show that students have met the Nebraska standards for writing.
- External scorings of a random sample of papers were conducted by Measured Progress, Dover, NH. The results of the external scorings of the sample were consistent with the scoring of the papers at the in-state regional scoring sites.
- Students in Grades 4, 8, and 11 will be assessed in the 2006-2007 school year.