

The challenges in adding the ACT as a measure of high school proficiency in Nevada

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Introduction

For many years, Nevada's K-12 education system has faced the dual challenge of raising the percentage of students who meet all of the requirements for graduation and receive their high school diploma, and also the challenge of ensuring that the rigor of a Nevada High school education was sufficient to prepare graduates for successful entry into postsecondary education or career training. The Nevada Education Reform Act (NERA) of 1997, put the state on a standards-based education system, increased the expectations for student achievement, and also provided financial support for schools to help them meet the higher expectations. The NERA also required that the Nevada Department of Education increase the rigor of the High School Proficiency Examination (HSPE) to match the expectations of the new standards based program. While educators across the state supported the higher expectations for students outlined in NERA, there was also great concern that raising the final hurdle would have the unintended consequence of increasing the number of students who did not graduate because they had not passed the HSPE. When decisions were made to establish the achievement levels that students had to meet to pass the HSPE tests, decisions were made based on what level of basic understanding that all students needed to demonstrate to meet the standard, knowing that there could be a gap between meeting the graduation requirement and being academically ready for post-secondary coursework. Over the years, the HSPE math test was targeted as the highest barrier that students had to get over to graduate. The reading test has not typically been a major problem with most students able to pass on their first attempt, although higher expectations set for the 2011 test saw a large drop in first time passing rates. In 2008, science was added to the HSPE and the arguments were repeated, supporting the increased rigor and higher expectations for students and concern that another barrier had been placed in the path to reach graduation.

Even before Nevada adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), there was significant and growing concern that many students were not prepared for postsecondary study or entry into a career pathway. In spite of the increasing rigor built into the current state content standards and assessments, too many students were graduating from high school in need of participating in one or more remediation courses. At the same time that Nevada schools are focused on raising graduation rates, they are also looking to change the expectations for students getting diplomas from just making it through high school, to becoming prepared for college or careers.

The Nevada High School Proficiency Examination is the benchmark for graduation from Nevada high schools. The HSPE is a criterion referenced test and students have up to seven opportunities to take the test between the end of grade 10 and the end of grade 12.

The HSPE has been a graduation requirement for most of the past two decades. The requirement that all students pass all portions of the HSPE to receive their diploma has often been cited as one reason for

Nevada's low graduation rates. However, this allegation is arguably in opposition to the expectation that students should exit high school college- and career- ready. In fact, the achievement level descriptor for meeting the HSPE standards and passing the tests targets students that minimally meet the expectations for what all students should know and be able to do at the completion of grade 12.

To address the need for more rigorous expectations for Nevada students to be college- and career-ready on exit, the Nevada Department of Education is engaged in several long-term improvement initiatives. In 2010, Nevada joined the majority of other states and adopted the CCSS in ELA and Math as the state's academic content standards and as the basis for preparing all students for college- and career-readiness. The stated goal of the CCSS is that all students who meet the achievement goals will leave grade 12 ready to be successful in their postsecondary education. The academic rigor of the CCSS is a significant change from the previous Nevada standards, and the NDE, along with district leaders, is already engaged in a well-planned transition to implement the CCSS into classrooms across the State.

Nevada is also engaged in redesigning its assessment system to effectively measure student progress towards college- and career-readiness. In 2010 Nevada joined the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) as a governing state, and is now working with 34 other member states to develop and use a series of formative, interim, and summative assessments that will measure student learning relative to the CCSS. The SBAC member states have indicated that the target achievement level for the final, grade 11 summative assessments will be an accurate measure of college and career readiness. The SBAC assessments are currently in development and will be administered for the first time during the 2014-15 school years. Proficiency standards, the score it will take to meet the target achievement levels, will be set after the first administration.

The SBAC assessments will be criterion-referenced based upon the CCSS shared by a majority of states, and will be administered in grades 3-8 and in 11th grade. The SBAC assessments will include a variety of assessment types including formative, interim, performance and summative tests. As a governing state in the SBAC, Nevada has committed to support the development of the assessments and also to full implementation of the assessments across all grades and subjects. If the SBAC summative assessments are used for accountability or graduation decisions, there will need to be additional opportunities for students to attempt the 11th grade assessment, however the timing and format for any retests have not yet been determined. Results of the SBAC tests will not only be comparable across schools and districts in Nevada, but also with student performance in other states for the same grades and subjects.

At the same time, as Nevada is implementing the CCSS and transitioning the state assessment program to measure their academic content, there has been an increased interest in having all Nevada students take the ACT tests. It should be made clear however, that because of current statute and regulation requiring that all students take and pass the HSPE, and future commitments to administer the full suite of SBAC assessments, that administration of the ACT to all students would necessarily be in addition to and not in place of current high school assessments. According to ACT Inc., the ACT is administered to students in every state, although participation is usually voluntary. The results of the ACT tests are used by many colleges and universities to make admissions decisions and to place students in courses. Typically participation rates for Nevada students have been between 28-40%. Students who take the

ACT receive a score for each of the four sections of the test (Language, Reading, Math, & Science) which indicates their performance relative to all other students in the country who participated in that administration. The ACT tests measure content included in the ACT course standards, which are based on ACT's evaluation of high school courses and curricula at a wide range of high achieving high schools across the country. In 2010, ACT completed an alignment study between the ACT course standards and the CCSS and reported strong alignment. However, it should be noted that the alignment study was conducted by ACT, and it was not possible to find independent validation of the results. ACT has established their own College Readiness Benchmarks (CRB), based on a large study of how students scored on the tests relative to a series of entry level college courses. According to ACT, if a student's score on a section of the ACT meets or exceeds the CRB, the student has a 50% chance of earning a grade of B or better (75% chance of a C or better) in the corresponding college course.

ACT scores compare performance of all students across the country, but shouldn't be used to compare schools and districts. ACT scores place individual students within a population of all the students who took the test during that particular administration. So while these scores can be used to rank students, because of the relational nature of the ranking system, equal academic performance on two different administrations of the ACT could result in different scale scores depending on the overall performance of the population of students that took the test each time. Also, because they are intended to create a distribution of student scores, ACT tests measure a more limited and generalized set of content indicators, which may or may not match the balance or depth of the curriculum taught in a school, school district, or state.

If one of the goals for improving education in the state is to have students graduate from high school ready to attend college, then it is tempting to suggest that all students should take the ACT, and be challenged to achieve the CRBs. However, even if all the students in Nevada took the ACT it would be very unlikely (very low probability) that they could all reach the CRBs because of the way the test is normed.

The fact that the ACT is a norm referenced test and the scale score indicates the position of that score in the overall distribution of scores for that administration requires that not all students can be at the CRB. For example, the ACT CRB for math is set at a scale score of 22 (max score 36) which would put a student achieving that score at the 81st percentile ranking. 81% of the students who took the ACT during that administration had scores lower than 22. If the decision was made to use the ACT CRB (ACT scale score of 22) in math as a graduation requirement, only the top 19% of students (nationally) would be in line to receive a Nevada high school diploma. In December 2011, NDE conducted a small study of the relationship between scores that students received on the HSPE in grade 10 and the scores that they received for the ACT test taken in grade 11. Using data from the 2010 HSPE and the 2011 ACT tests administered to students in Nevada, he was able to find 2315 students with scores for both assessments. It has to be noted that this sample is not a random selection of students who took the HSPE as sophomores in 2010, but represents a subset of students who have signaled their interest (intent) to apply to attend post-secondary education by registering and paying to take the ACT. That these students represent an atypical sample is also evident in that the mean scale scores for students in the group are: reading 335 (passing = 251); math 314 (passing = 304); science 340 (passing = 300). These

HSPE scale scores correlate to ACT scale scores of reading 22, math 22; science 21. The correlated ACT scores are at or above the ACT CRB for Reading and Math, but below the benchmark for science.

For this small, post-secondary bound, sample of students, using the ACT College Readiness Benchmarks as a target for high school performance, would not present an insurmountable hurdle. However, for the majority of students in the state the challenge would be much greater. Using the correlated scores from the NDE study as a guide, and applying data on the distribution of scores from the 2010 Technical Report for the NV HSPE, we find that for each of the tests (reading, math, science) there is a large population of students who's scores fall between "passing" and the HSPE scale score that correlates with the ACT College Readiness Benchmark .

Test	HSPE passing score	ACT CRB	Correlated HSPE scale score	Impact
Reading	251	18	335	50% of NV scores fall between 251 and 335
Math	254	22	314	30% of NV scores fall between 254 and 314
Science	300	24	340	22% of NV scores fall between 300 and 340

What these data mean for students is that for students who took the HSPE in 2010 is that for the HSPE reading test, the initial passing rate for students was above 75%. However, nearly 2/3 of the students who passed the reading test (50% of all the students who took the test) would have received a score high enough to pass the test, but would not be considered College Ready by the ACT. For math the gap would include 30% of all students who took the test, and for science the gap is reduced to only 22%.

In terms of costs, based on current contract values the average cost for each of the NV HSPE tests in Reading, Math, and Science is about \$9.68 (\$29.04/per student) when they are administered for the first time in grade 10. The cost for the HSPE writing test is about \$6.25/ student. For students who need to retake one or more parts of the HSPE, the cost is approximately \$8.46 for each test that is administered. The costs associated with the SBAC assessments has not yet been finalized, but is anticipated to be about \$20 per student for both Language and Math tests. At this time the design of the SBAC assessment for ELA will include writing as a performance component. Because the critical elements of the writing assessment will be subsumed by sections of the SBAC ELA test, the need to maintain a separate writing test may disappear after the SBAC assessments are fully implemented. The inclusion of writing as a component of the SBAC ELA test would therefore eliminate the need to separately fund the Nevada writing assessment program. There are currently no provisions by SBAC or any other assessment consortium, to develop a science assessment that could replace the HSPE science test. If the state maintains a separate science assessment in conjunction with the SBAC tests, the cost would be about \$31 per student, plus costs associated with writing, if necessary. Also, if the state maintains separate science assessments, the cost per test will most likely increase as more of the administrative, development, production, and quality control costs that had been distributed across all tests in the current contract are assigned to the tests developed for science.

The registration fee for a student to take the ACT is \$33.00 which includes the ACT tests for Language, Reading, Math, and Science. The ACT writing test has a separate registration fee of \$18. The registration fees for the ACT tests must be paid each time a student takes the tests.

Cost comparison

HSPE	SBAC	ACT
Grade 10 - \$9.68 / test R,M,S (\$29.04/ student) Grade 11 (retests) \$8.46/ per test Writing - \$6.25 per test	Grade 11 - \$20/ student for ELA and Math **may have to maintain HSPE writing \$6.25/ test *** Need to maintain HSPE science \$ 11.00? / test	Grade 11 \$33.00 / student – Reading, Language, Math, Science Writing \$18.00
\$ 35.30 – first administration	\$ 37.00 with separate writing \$ 31.00 with writing included in ELA	\$ 51.00 / student including writing

** If the Writing test continues to be a HSPE graduation requirement, it will be necessary to maintain the program until the SBAC is fully implemented.

*** There is currently no plan to replace the HSPE science assessment within the SBAC.

Policy Questions –

As a governing state in SBAC we are committed to full implementation of the assessments including the grade 11 tests. Do we put our resources (fiscal and human) into transitioning to the SBAC or do we commit to use of the ACT as an accurate measure of college- and career-readiness, which would require additional fiscal resources.

Two alternatives: Transition into the new SBAC or adopt another test (ACT) as a measure.

Problems with the first alternative – we do not have the system geared up yet, but are transitioning into instruction and programs aligned to CCSS. While we are incorporating CCSS items into our current assessments, we have to wait until the pilot SBAC in 2013-2014 to fully transition to that assessment.

Problems with the second alternative: ACT claims to be aligned to the CCSS, but the report is their own and I am unable to find another report substantiating their claim? Also, the norming of the test means that there must be per se students above and below the passing mark, even if they have accomplished a high percentage rate on the ACT.

If we assume the ACT is more rigorous than the HSPE, can we project how many more students will need retakes of the ACT? And it would also assume the districts will engage in remediation of those students who need retakes.

Alternatives:

Districts might propose to use ACT or SAT scores as measures of College and Career Readiness if they choose to commit to that path (and use their own funds). Meanwhile we continue to use the HSPE and pursue our transition plan to the SBAC, with that becoming both our HS graduation requirement and measure of CCR as we transition students into full implementation of the CCSS.

If all students who earn a diploma should be ready for postsecondary education (college or career), how do we/ should we track their progress towards that goal? This could be done using the suite of tests produced by ACT (Explore-PLAN- ACT), or if there were CCR standard scores established for the Nevada HSPE, students could retake the test (even if they had already reached the passing score) to track growth towards meeting the CCR target scores.

Should Nevada (NDE) expand the earlier study and then report where individual student scores from the HSPE fall on the corresponding equivalent ACT College Readiness Scale?

If the HSPE provides the state information about meeting minimum standards for graduation, and the ACT (or SAT) provides information about college readiness, should all students take both?

If Nevada wants all students to take the ACT, who pays for the test: student, school district, or state? (Approximately \$1.1 million/ per year for all grade 11 students to take ACT)

Would having all students take the ACT (or SAT) to provide information on their readiness for post-secondary coursework, encourage more students to aspire for advanced educational opportunities? (The “if we have more AP courses available more students will take them”, argument)

If the SBAC test is a college readiness measure, will all students be required to “pass the test”, and if so will there be multiple passing scores: one college ready score for all of SBAC states, one college ready score for Nevada, and one that signifies passing but not quite college ready?

If Nevada has access to the SBAC assessment results, does the state need to maintain the HSPE as a graduation requirement?

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Background information

Nevada High School Proficiency Examination

Nevada students are currently required to pass the Nevada High School Proficiency Examination (HSPE) in Reading, Mathematics, Writing, and Science as well as earning a minimum of 22.5 credits in specific subjects, to meet the requirements for a standard high school diploma. These requirements are established in both statute (NRS 389.015, 389.550, 389.018) and regulation (NAC 389.655, 389.662, 389.664).

The HSPE is designed specifically to measure the knowledge and skills (what students should know and be able to do) that all students should demonstrate in the areas of reading, mathematics, writing, and science as defined by Nevada's Academic Content Standards in these areas. The Nevada content standards were developed by committees of Nevada educators with expertise in the specific content areas, approved by the Council for Academic Standards and adopted by the State Board of Education. NRS 389.019 requires that courses offered to students in the state be based on the content standards approved by the Council and adopted by the Board. In order to be sure that the HSPE actually measured the appropriate academic standards, content specialists at the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) in consultation with educators across the state, and the Nevada Technical Advisory Committee, and the state's testing contractors, constructed test blueprints and item specifications, that were used by the contractor to develop items that are used for the various assessments. The tests that students take as part of the HSPE are developed using procedures established by the testing contractor, and the resulting assessment system has been approved by the US Dept. of Education Peer Review process, for all subject areas.

Determination of the level of performance required to achieve a passing score (meets the standard for proficiency) for each assessment was established using a nationally accepted standard setting procedure conducted by the testing contractor. In establishing the passing score for each assessment, panelists of Nevada educators, parents, and representatives from business and industry, were asked to make recommendations regarding the level of content knowledge and skills that a student who "meets the standard for high school graduation" must demonstrate to be eligible to receive their high school diploma. Passing scores are stable year to year, only changing when there are significant changes in the standards or assessments. It should be noted that the current passing scores were established with the understanding that meeting the minimum requirements for graduation did not always translate to being college or career ready.

The costs for the HSPE are included in the state's contract with Measured Progress, Inc. Under current regulations, the HSPE in reading, math, and science is first administered to all students in the spring semester of their sophomore (10th grade) year. The HSPE writing assessment is offered for the first time in the fall of grade 11. If a student does not achieve a passing score on their first attempt, they have up to six additional opportunities to pass the tests prior to the end of grade 12. Once a student has passed

one of the subject area tests (e.g. reading), they only have to retake the tests that they have yet to pass. The cost for the grade 10 HSPE is about \$9.68 per test, for each student for a total cost of \$28.86 per student. To provide opportunities for those who don't pass on their first attempt, the cost for each additional test is approximately \$8.46 for each test taken.

Common Core State Standard (CCSS) and the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC)

In 2010, Nevada joined with nearly all other states in deciding to adopt the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in Language and Math as our state's academic content standards. Originally adopted in support of the state's application for the Race To The Top application, the CCSS were officially adopted by the State Board of Education in October 2010. Preparation to transition of the state's academic programs from the Nevada State Content Standards, to the CCSS started during the fall of 2010, even prior to their adoption by the State Board. Because of the differences between the standards documents, NDE developed a multiyear plan for rolling the CCSS out to the districts, schools, teachers, and students. It was determined that teacher training would be a critical component for a successful roll out. The NDE is working closely with professional development staff in the school districts and the regional professional development programs (RPDP), supported in part by funds from the state Math and Science Partnership programs, and Striving Readers grant, to provide assistance to teachers during the transition.

Transition to the CCSS also requires that the state change the assessment system to measure the new content. As part of the transition to the CCSS, Nevada joined the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) as a governing state in 2011. As a governing state in the SBAC, Nevada is involved in the development of the new assessments through participation on a number of work groups. The SBAC assessments will be given in grades 3-8 and grade 11. They are designed to be administered online and be computer adaptive. The SBAC grade 11 assessment is being developed specifically as a measure of college readiness. By joining the SBAC as a governing state, Nevada educators have had the opportunity to participate directly in the development of the planned assessments. However, this level of commitment to the SBAC development also obligates the state to use the assessments that are developed by SBAC for school and student accountability starting in 2014-15. The SBAC is planning to conduct a large scale field test of the new assessment items in 2013- 14, with the first live administration of the assessments in 2014-15. Because of the existing requirements that all students pass the Nevada HSPE to receive their high school diploma, NDE will continue to administer the HSPE through the graduating class of 2018. All states in the SBAC will have to pay approximately \$20 per student to administer the CCSS tests for ELA and Math. All states in the SBAC will be administering the same tests across grades and subjects, so the results of the tests have the potential to provide information to compare student achievement with students in other states across the country. After the first live tests are administered in 2015, SBAC will convene a standard setting meeting to determine what level so student performance is required on each of the tests to meet the standard for proficiency. For the grade 11 test, the criteria for being proficient will be tied to college or career readiness. Depending on the results of the SBAC standard setting, Nevada would have the option to conduct a separate, state specific, standard setting meeting to establish cut scores to use for accountability purposes.

The ACT

The ACT is a norm referenced, standardized test used to measure high school achievement and as a criteria college admissions in the United States produced by ACT Inc. The ACT can be used as a stand-alone program or as part of ACT's Educational Planning and Assessment System (EPAS), a series of assessments that include the Explore (grade 8-9), Plan (grade 10), and ACT (grade 11-12). The ACT test measures as directly as possible the academic skills, in key content areas, that a student will need to be ready for college level work. The ACT is considered to be a curriculum based test and is designed to measure what students are able to do with what they have learned in school, not abstract qualities such as aptitude or intelligence. The academic content measured on the ACT is derived from study of existing, secondary level (grades 7-12) curricular frameworks published by states and a review of text books on approved state adoption lists, with significant input from educators at the secondary and post-secondary levels. The ACT (and other EPAS tests) provide information about how well a student performs compared to other students, and through the College Readiness Standards describe student performance in terms of the knowledge and skills they have acquired. ACT's College Readiness Benchmark Scores (English Composition, Algebra, Social Science, and Biology) were developed to help identify students who would be likely ready for college-level coursework in these areas.

In 2010 ACT conducted a study of the alignment of the between the CCSS and the ACT College Readiness Standards, and found a 100% match between the CCSS ELA standards and the ACT course standards. The alignment with the ACT CRS was close in reading and language, less close in writing, and not at all for speaking and listening. The alignment study found that in the area of mathematics, that both the ACT course standards and the College Readiness Standards, showed a close (88-100%) match with the CCSS.

The ACT College Readiness Standards were developed based on a review of the normative data from the ACT tests, college admission criteria, and information obtained by ACT through their course placement service. Content specialists at ACT analyzed test items from a large number of test forms, across all the tested subjects. After analyzing the data items were assigned to different score ranges to distinguish levels of student achievement. The score ranges selected were: 1-12, 13-15, 16-19, 20-23, 24-27, 28-32, and 33-36. Items were assigned to a specific level if they were answered correctly by 80% or more of the students who scored within that specific score range. Once written, the ACT conducted an independent review of the CRS, to evaluate whether they accurately reflected the skills and knowledge needed to test items in the specified ranges, and represented a continuum of increasing understanding across the score ranges.

The ACT College Readiness Benchmarks were established based on evidence from the actual performance of students in college courses: English Composition (ACT English), College Algebra (ACT math), Social Sciences (ACT reading), and College Biology (ACT science). ACT looked at the student scores received on ACT tests and then the grades students earned in their first year courses. Based on the data collected, a student who meets the College Readiness Benchmark scores has about a 50% chance of earning a B or better in the corresponding college course or courses, and approximately a 75% chance of earning a grade of C or better in the course or courses.

Apart from the predictive value of student scores relative to the College Readiness Benchmarks, ACT scores have been used extensively over the years to identify students for gifted and talented education programs, and by IHEs for admission decisions.

High School graduation vs College and Career Ready

Subject/ Test	ACT College Readiness Benchmark*	Percentile
English	18	56
Mathematics	22	81
Reading	21	71
Science	24	91

*ACT CRB from ACT 2007 Technical Manual

In 2011, The CEP (center for education policy) surveyed the states on the changing nature of high school exit exams. Of the 34 states which responded, 30 states still require students to pass an exit exam(s) to receive their diploma. Although a few states do allow for students to use scores from the ACT or SAT in lieu of passing part of the state exit exam, no state specifically uses the ACT (or SAT) for the state graduation exam. 12 of the 30 states also provide the opportunity for students to take either a College & Career Readiness test or a college Entrance exam. Two states have students take tests in all three areas. The four states without HS exit exams require students to take either a C & CR exam or a college entrance test.

Policy notes

HSPE are state (through contractor) developed tests that measure content defined by NDE and approved by the State Board. Nevada adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for ELA and math in 2010, and is currently in the process of transitioning the state assessments in these areas from the Nevada Academic Content standards to the CCSS. The time line has a target date of 2014-15 for implementation.

Proficiency decisions are made based on achievement standards set using an industry approved methodology, with final passing “cut” scores approved by the State Board.

HSPE is a criterion referenced test and with multiple opportunities (grade 10 – grade 12) nearly all students are able to achieve passing scores in all subjects.

Proficiency scores are set based on expectations for what students need to know and be able to do to graduate from high school, knowing that this may not be the same as being ready for college level coursework.

HSPE is currently required by statute for high school graduation in NV.

HSPE results only comparable within the state.

HSPE is given in Reading, Writing, Math, and Science.

Participation and performance on the HSPE in grades 10 and 11 are used to meet the federal accountability requirement for high schools.

Many students who receive diplomas in Nevada require at least some remediation to become ready to enroll in credit bearing courses in post-secondary education.

HSPE administration schedule set by state (NDE), results returned within 28 days (grade 10) or 14 days (grade 11 & 12).

SBAC tests

The SBAC tests will be developed by contractors hired by the SBAC states. States will contribute to the development of test design plans, test blueprints, test item specifications, and on panels to review items. SBAC plans to conduct a full census field test for all assessments in 2014, and to have the first live test available for administration in 2015.

The SBAC assessments will be designed to measure content included in the Common Core State Standards for ELA and Math. Nevada adopted the CCSS standards in 2010, and the Nevada tests in reading and math are based on the same standards.

The SBAC summative assessments will be criterion referenced and administered in 11th grade. Decisions regarding the level of performance required to “pass the tests” and be considered ready for post-secondary education, will be made after the first live administration in the spring of 2015.

Unlike the HSPE, these tests will be designed to be taken on line and will be administered as Computer-adapted tests. Each student will take a potentially unique set of items determined by how they answer the individual items.

Because the tests are administered on line, individual results will be returned quickly, although summary results for schools, districts, or states will not be available until all students have tested.

Results of the SBAC assessment will allow for comparison between performance of students in Nevada and those in other SBAC member states at the same grade level.

Grade 11 test will be part of the federal accountability requirements for schools, districts, and states in the SBAC.

Although the SBAC states are required to use the SBAC grade 11 tests as their college readiness assessments, it is not known at this time, what the opportunities will be for students who don't achieve the passing (?) score in grade 11 to take the test again in grade 12 (or in the adult education program).

Because the SBAC assessments are only for Reading and Math, state will still be required to maintain current assessment programs in writing and science.

Switching to the SBAC assessments for reading and math from the HSPE in those subjects would require a change in both NRS and NAC.

The impact on graduation rates and numbers is unknown at this time and will be determined in part by the decisions made by the standard setting panels on what level of performance is required for meeting the standard of proficiency.

ACT tests

ACT tests are developed by ACT Inc., items are written by writers contracted by ACT to measure content defined by the ACT course standards.

ACT is a norm referenced test which ranks all students participating on a given administration in a normal distribution.

ACT scale scores are comparable across the population that participated on that administration of the assessment, but because the scores are relative to the tested population, not exactly equivalent across years.

ACT used across country to help determine a student's readiness for post-secondary course work, but not to make accountability decisions.

ACT conducted alignment study in 2010 between CCSS with ACT course standards and also with ACT College Readiness Benchmarks. ACT found good alignment with course standards and weaker alignment with CRBs.

ACT has established CRB, however these measures have not been used by other states for accountability or graduation measures.

ACT is part of a series of assessments developed by ACT Inc. (Explore, Plan, ACT) to aid students in understanding where they are on the path to being ready for college or careers.

ACT would serve the same purpose, and measure the same standards as the SBAC assessments (reading & math) and Nevada is obligated to use the SBAC assessments including the grade 11 tests starting in 2015.

