



STATEMENTS OF SCORE INTERPRETATIONS AND USES (SIUs) FOR THE NEW MEXICO MEASURES OF STUDENT SUCCESS AND ACHIEVEMENT (NM-MSSA) ASSESSMENT

Writing

Score Interpretation and Use (SIU) Statements for the NM-MSSA and NM-ASR Assessment Programs

The phrase “intended score interpretations for uses” appears several times in the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* and is at the core of the field’s views on validity and validation. It also is central to responding successfully to USDE peer review requirements. For the NM-MSSA ELA and mathematics assessments and NM-ASR, the phrase refers broadly to **test scores** (i.e., total test scale scores, subdomain indicators), **aggregations of test scores** (e.g., the percentage of students at and above Level 3. Proficient), and **other test performance informational elements** (e.g., the definition of Proficient in the Proficiency Level Descriptors).

SIU Statements for the NM-MSSA: Writing

Using this broad interpretation of the phrase, the intended score interpretations and uses for NM-MSSA are stated below. These statements reflect input from and PED’s Technical Advisory Committee and multiple statewide webinars with educator and parent stakeholders on the similar NM-ASR SIU statements.

PED and Cognia will use the final, approved SIU statements to guide decisions about test design and score reporting.

NM-MSSA score reports include scale scores for ELA, Reading, and Writing & Language. The ELA scale score includes performance on the Reading, Writing & Language, and Writing sections of the test. Score reports for NM-MSSA Writing include only rubric scores (i.e., no scale scores).

Intended Interpretations and Uses for Individual Students and Groups of Students

Score Interpretation/Use Statement	Explanation/Annotation
NM-MSSA Program Purpose Statements	
<p>Program Purpose Statement, Grades 3–8 NM-MSSA</p> <p>The NM-MSSA grades 3–8 assessments are designed to measure whether students are on track to be ready for college or career, as defined by the state, by showing they have mastered <i>the New Mexico Common Core State Standards</i> (NMCCSS) for ELA, Reading, Writing</p>	<p>NM-MSSA scores should be interpreted in relation to the <i>New Mexico Common Core State Standards</i> that are targeted by the assessment.</p> <p>College readiness indicates that a student is prepared to enter directly into and succeed (i.e., earning a C or better) in entry-level, credit-bearing college and relevant technical courses at two- and</p>



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<p>& Language, and Writing. Writing results are presented using rubric scores only. In grades 3–8, these rubric scores are Production of Writing (1–4 points) and Use of Conventions (1–3 points).</p> <p>Proficient writing performance in each grade indicates mastery of both current grade level and preceding grade level expectations and progress toward college and career readiness. Proficient writing performance is inherent in the description in each rubric’s score level 3.</p> <p>The Writing standards require students to (a) learn to use writing as a way of offering and supporting opinions, demonstrating understanding of the subjects they are studying, and conveying real and imagined experiences and events; (b) communicate clearly to an external, sometimes unfamiliar audience; and (c) adapt the form and content of their writing to accomplish a particular task and purpose. See http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/CCRA/W/</p>	<p>four-year public institutions of higher education, without the need for remediation.</p> <p>Career readiness indicates that students have developed the academic and technical skills (i.e., workplace competencies in one or more of 16 career clusters) necessary to succeed in future careers and to become lifelong learners.</p> <p>College and Career Readiness is defined by the State and can be found in the following College and Career Readiness Bureau’s web page: https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/bureaus/college-career-readiness/</p>
Individual Students	
<p style="text-align: center;">Master Claim</p> <p>Performance on the NM-MSSA indicates a student’s progress toward college and career readiness.</p>	<p>College and career readiness requires that students can, without significant scaffolding, (a) write to support opinions, demonstrate understanding of the subjects they are studying, and convey real and imagined experiences and events; (b) communicate clearly to an external audience; and (c) adapt the form and content of their writing to accomplish a particular task and purpose as set forth in the <i>New Mexico Common Core State Standards</i> for English Language Arts.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Interpretation of Production of Writing Rubric Scores</p> <p>In grades 3–8, student writing is scored for Production of Writing using a 1–4 point rubric for each of three different purposes for writing: opinion/argument,</p>	<p>Student performance is reported, using this rubric, on one of four score levels. Score point 3 indicates Proficient performance on this element of writing. The scoring rubrics and other information about scoring student writing are available at https://newmexico.onlinehelp.cognia.org/wp-</p>



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<p>informative/explanatory, and narrative. Writing that is scored as a 3 indicates that the student (a) presents ideas that generally address the task; (b) generally develops the topic as appropriate for the intended purpose for writing with mostly pertinent facts, definitions, details, examples, and other information from relevant sources, or descriptive detail and somewhat varied narrative techniques; (c) establishes and generally maintains an organizational plan or sequence of events with an introduction and generally related conclusion; and (d) generally makes language choices to create cohesion or transitions and to generally contribute to a style and tone appropriate to the purpose for writing.</p>	<p>content/uploads/sites/10/2020/11/NM-MSSA Writing-Assessment-Resources-for-Teachers.pdf</p>
<p>Interpretation of Use of Conventions Rubric Scores</p> <p>In grades 3–8, student writing is scored for Use of Conventions using a 1–3 point rubric. Writing that is scored as a 3 indicates that the student (a) demonstrates general command of standard English grammar and usage, (b) demonstrates general command of standard English conventions relative to the length and complexity of text, (c) produces writing with infrequent errors that do not interfere with meaning or confuse the reader.</p>	<p>Student performance is reported, using this rubric, on one of four score levels. Score point 3 indicates Proficient performance on this element of writing. The scoring rubrics and other information about scoring student writing are available at https://newmexico.onlinehelp.cognia.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/10/2020/11/NM-MSSA Writing-Assessment-Resources-for-Teachers.pdf</p>
Groups of Students	
<p>SIU statements for groups of students are applicable to aggregate reporting of school, district, and state performance and student subgroups (e.g., English learners, students with disabilities, racial/ethnic subgroups) within those levels of aggregation.</p>	
<p>Group Mean Rubric Scores</p> <p>Group mean rubric scores can be compared to other schools, districts, and the state, and for all students and student subgroups (e.g., gender, English learners, students with disabilities).</p>	<p>Mean (i.e., average) rubric scores enable comparison of performance among schools, districts, and other groupings of students. Mean rubric scores and percentages of students in each rubric score level for small groups (e.g., fewer than 25 students) are unstable and should</p>



Score Interpretation/Use Statement	Explanation/Annotation
	be interpreted with caution because of concerns about reliability and stability.
<p data-bbox="240 426 764 495">Percentages of Students in Rubric Score Levels</p> <p data-bbox="220 510 751 646">Percentages of students in the three or four rubric score levels can be compared to other schools, districts, and the state, and for all students and student subgroups.</p>	<p data-bbox="808 426 1360 495">These are the percentages of students in each Writing rubric score level.</p> <p data-bbox="808 510 1414 783">The score for each Writing rubric score level indicates the degree of mastery of the knowledge and skills needed to indicate college and career readiness in relation to the <i>New Mexico Common Core State Standards</i>. The percentages of students in each score level indicate the percentage of students who need to reach the next rubric score level.</p> <p data-bbox="808 798 1406 934">Means and percentages of students in a rubric score level for small groups should be interpreted with caution because of concerns about reliability and stability.</p>

Unintended Score Interpretations and Uses

Until the NM-MSSA is in operational use, we only can speculate on what unintended interpretations and uses of NM-MSSA scores and other information may arise. Where unintended interpretations and uses occur, it is the responsibility of that user to provide supporting evidence, and not the responsibility of PED (as specified in the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing*, 2014). The main concern for misinterpreting or misusing NM-MSSA scores is the potential negative consequences for individual students, subgroups of students, and schools, districts, and the state. If unintended interpretations and uses with potential negative consequences arise, PED will take steps to ameliorate the misinterpretations, misuses, and negative consequences. Some common misinterpretations and misuses that can arise include the following.

Interpreting Test Scores as 100% Accurate Indicators of Test Performance

All measurements in the real world, including test scores, are estimates. Test scores—for example, scale scores and rubric score levels—are estimates. Scale scores are accompanied by standard errors. Standard errors are often referred to as the “margin of error” (e.g., in political polling). Writing rubric scores typically are not accompanied by standard errors. Instead, rater disagreement may indicate an error in scoring or other interpretations. (See “Overinterpreting Subdomain Indicators and Writing Rubric Scores” below for additional details.)

Drawing Conclusions and Making Decisions Based Solely on NM-MSSA Scores

There is wide agreement that conclusions and decisions based on a single piece of evidence can be risky. The risk is that the single piece of evidence can lead to less than optimal decisions, such as students



failing to receive additional instruction based solely on their NM-MSSA score or teacher teams not being eligible for additional professional learning based solely on their students' NM-MSSA scores. Interpretations and uses of NM-MSSA scores should be supplemented with additional information.

Overinterpreting Subdomain Indicators: The Two Writing Rubric Scores

Subdomain indicators in the overall ELA assessment account for performance on the Writing assessment. The overall ELA assessment and the Reading and Writing & Language assessments are reported using scale scores. Scale scores are accompanied by standard errors.

In contrast, the two writing rubric scores are the subdomain indicators for the Writing assessment. Each student essay is scored by two raters on two rubrics (i.e., Production of Writing, 1–4 points, and Use of Conventions, 1–3 points). The student's essay score is the sum of the two rater scores. One-point differences (i.e., "disagreement") between rater scores are summed. Two- or three-point differences between rater scores are resolved by a third rater. Disagreements between rater scores may be interpreted as (a) scoring errors, or (b) indicators that the essay reflects features of two adjacent rubric score levels. In addition, because the two Writing rubric scores are correlated, differences across rubric scores may be smaller than the rubric descriptions may suggest. Interpretations and uses of rubric scores should be supplemented with additional information about students' writing experiences and performance.

Misinterpreting Current Performance as the Most Likely Predictor for Future Performance

A goal of education is to improve students' current achievement—that is, to bend their performance trajectory upward. It would be unwise to assume that students who currently are performing at the at Production of Writing rubric score 3 (out of a total possible 4 points) will continue to write at this level without sustained effort every school year. Similarly, it would be unwise—and unfair—to assume that students who currently at lower rubric score levels will perform at these levels in the future. In fact, our duty as educators is to help these students learn more and achieve higher.

Misinterpretations about students' current proficiency levels and future performance is not really a misinterpretation of NM-MSSA scores. It is a logical error in concluding that current performance determines future performance.

Overinterpreting NM-MSSA Scores as Indicators of College and Career Readiness

The New Mexico *Common Core State Standards* are designed to prepare students to be able to benefit from college study and postsecondary training. The claim that performance on NM-MSSA indicates readiness for college and career is supported only by the evidence contained in the English Language Arts content standards. NM-MSSA scores also can be interpreted as predictors of future performance, in college and career training. However, until empirical prediction studies are completed, this interpretation of NM-MSSA performance should be made with caution and with attention to the strong, but limited, evidence in the content standards.