

**Nevada**

High School Proficiency Examination (HSPE)

**Part I: Policy Trends**

<b>Type of test</b>	Comprehensive standards-based exam
<b>Purpose</b>	<p>The purpose of the exam is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide schools with student academic diagnostic information</li> <li>• Determine prospective high school graduates’ knowledge and skill levels relative to those needed for entry-level employment</li> <li>• Determine prospective high school graduates’ knowledge and skill levels relative to those needed for postsecondary education</li> <li>• Determine prospective high school graduates’ mastery of the state curriculum</li> <li>• Encourage districts and schools to identify and serve students at risk of academic failure</li> <li>• Provide data to state policymakers on student attainment of state education goals to inform educational policy decisions</li> <li>• Increase alignment of local curriculum and programs of instruction with state education standards</li> <li>• Promote equity of opportunity across all student groups</li> <li>• Meet a state mandate</li> </ul>
<b>Major changes in exit exam policy since the 2007-08 school year or pending changes</b>	There have been no changes to the graduation requirements. The state board did adopt a uniform grading policy for all high schools, but due to a legislative procedural measure, the new grading policy has not been enforced.
<b>Status of state’s decision regarding the Common Core State Standards and impact of that decision on exit exam policies</b>	The CCSS for both reading and math have been approved by the Academic Standards Council and adopted by the state board of education. The expectation is that the state exit exams will be amended to reflect the changes in the content defined by the CCSS.
<b>Test used by colleges or universities for undergraduate admission?</b>	<p>Public universities and community colleges do not use the HSPE for admissions decisions or course placement. However, the Nevada Millennium Scholarship is open to students who pass all the HSPEs and meet grade point average requirements. The scholarship can be used within the Nevada state university and community college system and is worth a maximum of \$10,000.</p> <p>Students graduating in 2009 and 2010 must have a minimum GPA of 3.25 and have completed a minimum of 4 credits of English, 4 credits in Math (including Algebra II), 3 credits in science, and 3 credits in social studies &amp; history as part of their high school course work, and have passed the HSPE to be eligible for the Millennium</p>

	scholarship. The maximum amount is still \$10,000, but the program is currently underfunded and may not continue beyond the next few years.
<b>Year first administered</b>	The 1998 series exam, which is based on content standards adopted that year, was first administered in 2001.
<b>Year diplomas first withheld</b>	The class of 2003 was the first required to pass the 1998 series tests.
<b>Subjects tested</b>	Math, reading, and writing. Science was included in 2008 for 10 <sup>th</sup> grade students.
<b>Types of questions</b>	Multiple-choice, writing prompt/essay
<b>Grade first administered</b>	10 <sup>th</sup> grade in the spring semester (except writing, which is first administered in the 11 <sup>th</sup> grade)
<b>Grade(s) exam aligned to</b>	State standards for grades 9-12
<b>Number of retakes allowed before end of grade 12</b>	Six
<b>Retakes after grade 12</b>	Following the summer after their planned graduation date, students who have completed all graduation requirements except passing an exit exam may enroll in an adult education program to continue to take the tests. They may take the tests as many times as needed with no limits on age, and if they pass they will still receive a regular high school diploma.
<b>Does the state have reciprocity with other states?</b>	No
<b>Exit exam used for No Child Left Behind?</b>	Results from students' initial testing and first retest count for NCLB purposes. Nevada began using the results from the HSPE to meet NCLB requirements in 2003-04. The science test was also used for NCLB purposes in 2007-08. Science is not part of the adequate yearly progress (AYP) calculations, but the test is administered and scores are reported as required by NCLB.
<b>Same cut score for graduation and NCLB?</b>	Yes
<b>Evaluations of state exit exam</b>	The state has not done a full evaluation of the HSPE, but the Center for Assessment at the University of Nevada-Las Vegas did an alignment study of the HSPE reading and math tests in 2004. An alignment study of the science tests to the Nevada science content standards was completed in January 2009. The final report was due from the contractor, Alpine Testing Solutions, in late March 2009.

The science alignment report was submitted to U.S. Department of Education as part of the Nevada assessment system submission for final approval under NCLB Title I. A preliminary draft of the science alignment study was submitted along with other evidence to the science peer review committee at the USDE as part of the March 2009 submission. An alignment study for the math assessment was also conducted over the past year. Reports for both are available from NDE, but have not been published.

**State test contractor**

Measured Progress

**Does the state provide students with alternate paths to graduation?**

Students must pass the HSPE reading and math requirements, but may pursue the alternate route described below to demonstrate proficiency for writing and science. Students who do not demonstrate proficiency on all portions of the high school proficiency examinations can receive a certificate of attendance.

SB312 was passed by the 2007 state legislature, allowing students who meet particular criteria to submit other work completed during high school to meet the HSPE requirements. Students still must pass the HSPE reading and math tests, but may pursue the alternate route to demonstrate proficiency for writing and science. Students who successfully demonstrate proficiency in writing and science via this alternate route will receive a regular diploma.

To be eligible for this alternate route, students must have done the following by the end of the first semester of grade 12:

- a) Failed the selected test at least 2 times
- b) Earned a cumulative un-weighted GPA of at least 2.75
- c) Passed the HSPE reading and math tests
- d) Be on schedule for earning the credits required for graduation.

The state has developed guidelines for the writing test that were published for the schools and school districts in the spring of 2008. The science test was administered for the first time in 2008, so the first group of students eligible for the alternative assessment in science was in the spring of 2010.

In the spring of 2010, 28 (0.10%) students attempted the alternative HSPE science assessment. Based on reports from NV school districts, there were approximately 350 students that met the eligibility requirements, but only 28 submitted work samples for scoring. NDE conducted a standard setting at the end of the scoring session to link performance on the alternative assessment with the proficiency score on the regular assessment. Based on the recommendations of the standard-setting panel, 11 of the 28 students who attempted the alternative science assessment received passing scores.

**Alternate paths to graduation specifically for English language learners**

Slightly more students (64, 0.23%) attempted the alternative writing assessment. This was an increase of about 25 students from the 2008-09 school year for writing.

There are no alternate paths to graduation specifically for English language learners. English language learners can, however, receive a certificate of attendance if they complete the required credits for graduation but do not pass all of the high school proficiency examinations.

ELL students have access to the same accommodations that are available to all students, including extra time and any other accommodation that is listed in the state test administration manual. They can use a translation dictionary.

**Alternate paths to graduation specifically for students with disabilities**

A student with an approved individualized education program (IEP) may take the HSPE with accommodations or modifications. They may also receive an adjusted diploma if they complete the graduation requirements specified in their IEP but do not pass all portions of the HSPE.

Students with disabilities have access to any accommodations available to all students as listed in the state test administration manual. In addition they can have accommodations prescribed by their IEP committee, as long as the accommodation does not alter the construct being assessed. The use of this level of accommodation would then be considered a modification and would remove the student from the option of a regular high school diploma.

For 2008-09 1,319 students received adjusted diplomas (6.2% of the awarded diplomas).

**Decisions on whether a student is eligible to use alternate paths**

The school and district level administration certify that the student meets the requirements as outlined by state statute and regulation.

**Identification of eligible students for alternate paths to graduate**

A student who fails the HSPE writing or science test for the second time would get an application from their school administration, which would determine if they were eligible to attempt the alternative assessment. Eligible students submit their completed application along with work samples and certifications of authenticity of the work to the NDE for scoring.

Work samples submitted as part of the alternate assessments are scored at the NDE by educators provided by the school districts and trained by the state education staff.

An appeals process for students who do not meet the standards is not in place at this time. A student who is unsuccessful in the alternate assessment is still eligible to continue to attempt the regular HSPE.

Results are communicated directly to the school and school district of the students who submitted the work samples. The results are sent as soon as the scoring sessions are completed and the results entered into the student data system.

**When calculating the graduation rate for AYP purposes, does the state count students taking alternate paths together with graduates who passed the high school exit exams?**

Yes

**How many full-time equivalent staff in the state department of education are involved in implementing alternate paths?**

Because of the small numbers of students at this time, NDE has assigned the implementation of the alternate assessment to the workload of existing staff. It is estimated that 3 staff members will spend approximately 2% of their time this year on the alternate assessment program.

**Types of assistance the state provides for all districts to raise *initial* pass rates for all students on the high school exit exam**

The state offers technical assistance to help:

- Teachers administer the exam, which includes online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, train-the-trainer workshops, and fiscal resources to fund local personnel to provide assistance;
- All teachers prepare students for the exam, which includes specialist(s) in the state education agency, field-based specialists, and train-the-trainer workshops;
- Teachers become more proficient in their content area, which includes specialist(s) in the state education agency, field-based specialists, train-the-trainer workshops, and grants to districts;
- Schools implement comprehensive school reform, which includes online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, field-based specialists, train-the-trainer workshops, and fiscal resources to fund local personnel to provide assistance;
- Districts improve formative uses of assessment, online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, train-the-trainer workshops, grants to districts, and fiscal resources to fund local personnel to provide assistance;
- Districts improve professional development for teachers, which includes specialist(s) in the state education agency, train-the-trainer workshops, and grants to districts

The state also provides:

- Funding for programs specifically designed to increase initial pass rates
- Test items from prior years. (The state has released test forms and items from previous years, but not on an annual

basis.)

- Exam preparation materials for students and teachers

**Types of assistance or remediation the state provides for all districts to help students who have failed to pass the exit exam**

The state does *not* provide assistance or remediation to all districts to help students who have failed in their initial attempt to pass the exit exam. The state provides some funding to districts to develop programs for remediation of students and some for professional development, but does not directly provide the instruction or materials for these programs.

**Does the state provide funding for remediation?**

Yes, as part of the general school support funds. There are no additional special funding sources to support the basic required remediation activities.

**Are districts mandated by law to provide remediation?**

The state requires districts to provide students who fail an exit exam twice with information to help prepare them for future test administration, such as information about remediation requirements, optional remediation opportunities, future test dates, and implications for course taking.

**Are students required to participate in remediation?**

No

## Part II: Student Performance

**Initial pass rates, 2008-09  
(reading and math)**

Percentage of Students Passing on the First Try in 10 <sup>th</sup> grade, 2008-09		
Student Group	Reading	Math
All students	73.15%	45.93%
White	83.33%	59.81%
African American	59.59%	26.24%
Latino	63.18%	31.57%
Asian	80.52%	61.40%
Native American	69.94%	38.31%
English language learners	27.40%	11.37%
Students with disabilities	29.97%	9.67%
Free or reduced-price lunch eligible	62.59%	33.64%
<b>Passing score (scale of 100-500, except for writing, which has a scale of 0-12)</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>304</b>

Note: These data were retrieved from the Nevada State Report card at <http://www.nevadareportcard.com/> on June 28, 2010. Also, the above percentages reflect students that either “meet standard” (level 3) or “exceed standard” (level 4), as levels 1 and 2 are considered to be below the minimum passing score.

**Denominator used to calculate these rates:** Number of students enrolled at the beginning of 10<sup>th</sup> grade

**Initial pass rates, 2008-09  
(writing)**

<b>Percentage of Students Passing on the First Try in 11<sup>th</sup> grade, 2008-09</b>	
<b>Student Group</b>	<b>Writing</b>
All students	76.48%
White	83.22%
African American	67.75%
Latino	66.49%
Asian	82.29%
Native American	73.97%
English language learners	18.20%
Students with disabilities	29.58%
Free or reduced-price lunch eligible	68.50%
<b>Passing score (scale of 100-500, except for writing, which has a scale of 0-12)</b>	<b>7</b>

Note: These data were retrieved from the Nevada State Report card at <http://www.nevadareportcard.com/> on June 28, 2010. Also, the above percentages reflect students that either “meet standard” (level 3) or “exceed standard” (level 4), as levels 1 and 2 are considered to be below the minimum passing score.

**Denominator used to calculate these rates:** Number of students enrolled at the beginning of 11<sup>th</sup> grade

**Initial pass rates, 2009-10  
(reading and math)**

<b>Percentage of Students Passing on the First Try in 10<sup>th</sup> grade, 2009-10</b>		
<b>Student Group</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Math</b>
All students	74.91%	48.74%
White	84.38%	63.26%
African American	63.32%	31.26%
Latino	71.41%	38.76%
Asian	84.34%	63.41%
Native American	76.78%	39.27%
English language learners	31.28%	10.82%
Students with disabilities	33.89%	10.83%
Free or reduced-price lunch eligible	64.08%	34.66%
<b>Passing score (scale of 100-500, except for writing, which has a scale of 0-12)</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>304</b>

Note: Information obtained directly from NV student information system.

**Denominator used to calculate these rates:** Number of students enrolled at the beginning of 10<sup>th</sup> grade

**Initial pass rates, 2009-10  
(writing)**

<b>Percentage of Students Passing on the First Try in 11<sup>th</sup> grade, 2009-10</b>	
<b>Student Group</b>	<b>Writing</b>
All students	72.47%
White	81.22%

African American	61.53%
Latino	62.44%
Asian	79.92%
Native American	65.27%
English language learners	14.85%
Students with disabilities	22.11%
Free or reduced-price lunch eligible	61.48%
<b>Passing score (scale of 100-500, except for writing, which has a scale of 0-12)</b>	<b>7</b>

Note: Information obtained directly from NV student information system

**Denominator used to calculate these rates:** Number of students enrolled at the beginning of 11<sup>th</sup> grade

**Cumulative pass rates, 2008-09**

<b>Percentage of Students Passing by the End of 12<sup>th</sup> Grade, 2008-09</b>				
	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Writing</b>	<b>Math</b>	<b>All Subjects</b>
All students	69.55%	81.69%	58.73%	66.09%
White	80.80%	90.59%	72.09%	79.63%
African American	56.19%	71.81%	41.18%	44.55%
Latino	58.55%	71.40%	46.17%	48.62%
Asian	77.89%	86.00%	71.36%	75.37%
Native American	69.38%	76.84%	50.78%	57.41%
English language learners	43.87%	37.11%	27.08%	16.86%
Students with disabilities	39.75%	44.52%	21.38%	22.47%
Free or reduced-priced lunch eligible	60.03%	73.12%	47.45%	45.37%

Note: Information obtained directly from NV student information system

**Denominator used to calculate these rates:** Same denominator used in graduation rate calculations

**Cumulative pass rates, 2009-10**

<b>Percentage of Students Passing by the End of 12<sup>th</sup> Grade, 2009-10</b>				
	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Writing</b>	<b>Math</b>	<b>All Subjects</b>
All students	70.23%	78.41%	55.32%	62.60%
White	80.72%	87.13%	69.46%	76.09%
African American	60.43%	69.07%	42.02%	44.02%
Latino	61.81%	68.60%	44.56%	43.31%
Asian	75.40%	84.68%	64.28%	72.32%
Native American	68.27%	75.98%	51.65%	59.74%
English language learners	42.20%	28.10%	23.40%	13.53%
Students with disabilities	37.41%	38.10%	19.13%	19.38%
Free or reduced-priced lunch eligible	60.39%	59.94%	43.67%	31.93%

Note: Information obtained from NV student information system

**Denominator used to calculate these rates:** Same denominator used in graduation rate calculations



State Graduation Rates		
Student Group	2008-09	2009-10
All students	68.66%	71.38%
White	76.80%	79.41%
African American	54.45%	57.82%
Latino	56.97%	60.58%
Asian	80.73%	82.02%
Native American	58.03%	65.11%
English language learners	NA	NA
Migrant	NA	NA
Students with disabilities	NA	NA
Free or reduced-price lunch eligible	NA	NA

Note: Information obtained from NV student information system

**Current state graduation rate calculation formula for AYP purposes**

Nevada uses the Leaver Rate, and includes recipients of Adult Diplomas and Advanced Diplomas as graduates, but does not include recipients of Certificates of Attendance.