

- ✓ New Standards
- ✓ New Tests
- ✓ New Scores

## Utah Core Standards and Spring 2014 SAGE Summative Testing Results

### SAGE Results Companion Document

<http://schools.utah.gov/assessment/Contact-Assessment>



#### 1. Why these standards and why now?

- Today's workforce requires a higher level of skill and knowledge than ever before. By 2020, 74% of jobs in Utah will require skills and knowledge beyond a high school diploma, according to Georgetown Center for Education and the Workforce. (<http://cew.georgetown.edu>)
- Today, only 43% of Utah students have post-secondary certificates or degrees. In addition, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce ranks Utah students low in post-secondary workforce readiness. (<http://prosperity2020.com/>)
- "More than ever, we must raise the skill level of our students," said Gov. Herbert. "We must not shy away from high standards or challenging exams, but work to give our students the best education possible, preparing them to lead successful lives and compete in the global marketplace. <http://utah.gov/governor/standards/>
- Utah's Prosperity 2020 and the governor agree that the goal is to raise the bar for students of all ages. Ninety percent of elementary students must achieve math and reading proficiency by the end of third grade. Additionally, two-thirds of Utah residents should achieve post-secondary training by 2020. For additional information: <http://prosperity2020.com/>
- Previous standards did not adequately prepare students for success after high school. Approximately 40% of students taught under previous standards who enrolled in higher education needed remediation or remedial courses in at least one academic subject. For additional information: <http://utah.gov/governor/standards/>

#### 2. What are Utah's new standards?

- Standards are the **expectations** for what students should know and be able to do by the end of a course or grade. They are not **curriculum** (materials) used in instruction to teach those skills and knowledge.
- Utah State Board of Education approved the Utah Core Standards for English language arts and mathematics in 2010.

- These new standards reflect the expectation that students graduating high school will be college and career-ready and nationally and internationally competitive.
- As our world changes and expectations for students change, our academic standards within schools must keep pace. By continually improving our education system, educators give students the knowledge and skills they need to have more options in life and their careers after high school.

For additional information about standards:

[Understanding the Utah Core](http://www.utahpublicschools.org/Utah-core-links.html) (<http://www.utahpublicschools.org/Utah-core-links.html>)

[Governor’s Utah Core Standards page](http://www.utah.gov/governor/standards) (<http://www.utah.gov/governor/standards>)

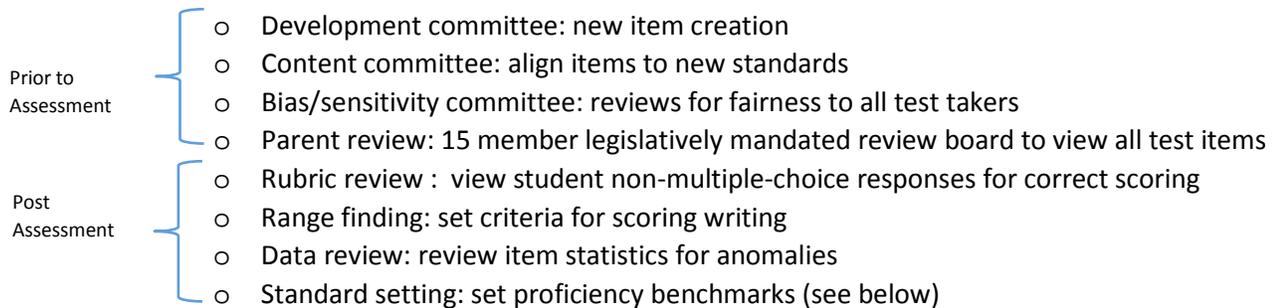
**3. What are the similarities and differences between old and new standards?**

- Previous standards reflected basic proficiency. New standards prepare students to meet the academic challenges of college and the skills-based challenges of careers.
- Utah teachers have been involved in every phase of developing the old and new standards and previous and new assessments; their direct classroom experience has always informed standards and assessments.

| New Utah Core Standards  | Old Utah Standards  |
|--|---|
| <b>English Language Arts</b>   |   |
| arguing to discover fact   | persuading to influence audiences                               |
| reading; text complexity   | understanding genre (fiction/non-fiction), historical           |
| text-based questioning   | questioning, and background knowledge-based                     |
| analyzing and applying information from multiple texts   | recognizing and identifying information in single texts         |
| <b>Mathematics</b>   |   |
| applying mathematical knowledge and skills in multiple authentic ways                          | demonstrating mathematical knowledge and skills in a single way |
| understanding based on application, analysis, synthesis of mathematical concepts and practices | understanding based on recall and memorization                  |
| justifying the solution to a problem and provide mathematical reasoning behind the solution    | producing a stand-alone solution to a problem                   |

#### 4. How are we measuring the new standards?

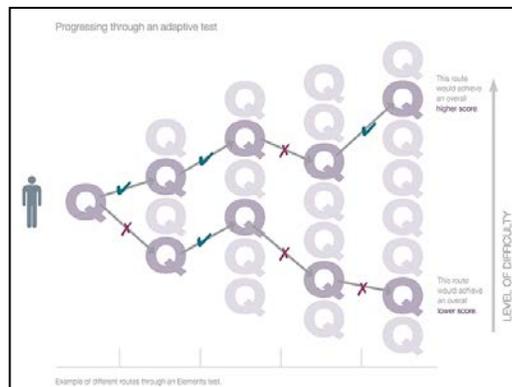
- With challenging standards, next-generation assessments are required that measure students' knowledge and skills and are more representative of the kinds of tasks and environments that students will encounter in the real world.
- In 2012, House Bill 15 required the development of computer adaptive assessment.
- In 2013, State Board of Education directed the development of the computer adaptive assessment known as the Student Assessment of Growth and Excellence (SAGE).
- 300+ Utah educators developed SAGE items with the USOE assessment team and Utah's contractor, American Institutes for Research (AIR). In order to produce an adaptive test, Utah educators developed and/or reviewed 11,773 questions for the first administration of SAGE. Each test has approximately 400-450 items. Additional item development will continue over the next three years.
- Every test question went through the following processes:



- Spring 2014 the first administration of the tests was given.

#### 5. What does it mean that the SAGE test is computer adaptive?

- In order to assess more rigorous standards, educators need to know more about what the student knows. To do this, the SAGE assessments are adaptive, meaning if a student answers questions correctly, the computer provides more challenging questions in order to measure the student's depth of understanding in his or her grade/course content. Similarly, the computer provides questions less challenging within the grade/course content when the student answers incorrectly.



- Each student’s experience with SAGE will be different depending on how she or he answers questions. By using more advanced questioning and technology-enhanced item types, the assessments can provide a snapshot of what students know in relation to the standards. Each student will see different items measuring his or her full grade or course level content depending on his or her particular path through the assessment.
- To take a training test and see questions similar to those on SAGE please visit: <http://sageportal.org/training-tests/>
- While anyone can take a training test, the actual purpose of these *Utah SAGE Training Tests* is to familiarize students and teachers with the design, format, and procedures for answering different types of items that will be included in the SAGE Summative assessments. These tests are aligned to the Utah Core Standards according to their individual grade span and represent both the variety in difficulty and item format that students may see on the SAGE Summative assessments. The training tests do not include an item for each of the aligned Core State Standards that will be measured by the operational assessments. The training tests will NOT provide scores for students and should NOT be used to measure students’ content knowledge.

For additional information about SAGE assessments:

<http://schools.utah.gov/SAGE/>

<http://sageportal.org/>

#### 6. **How did parents review the SAGE test questions?**

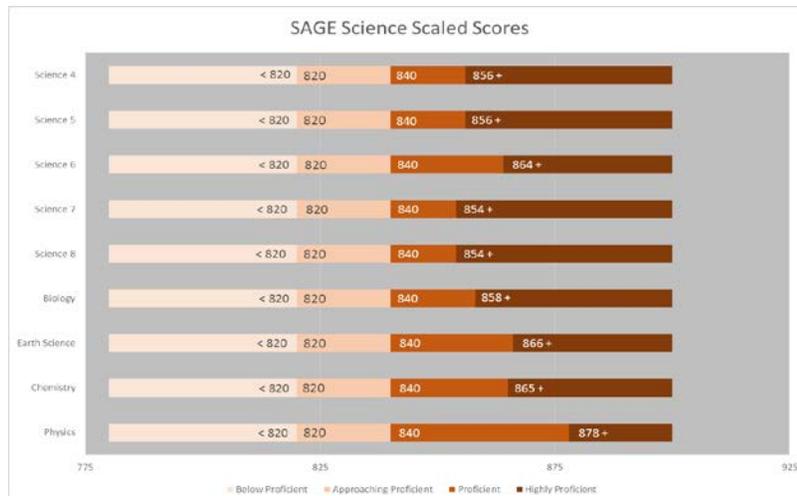
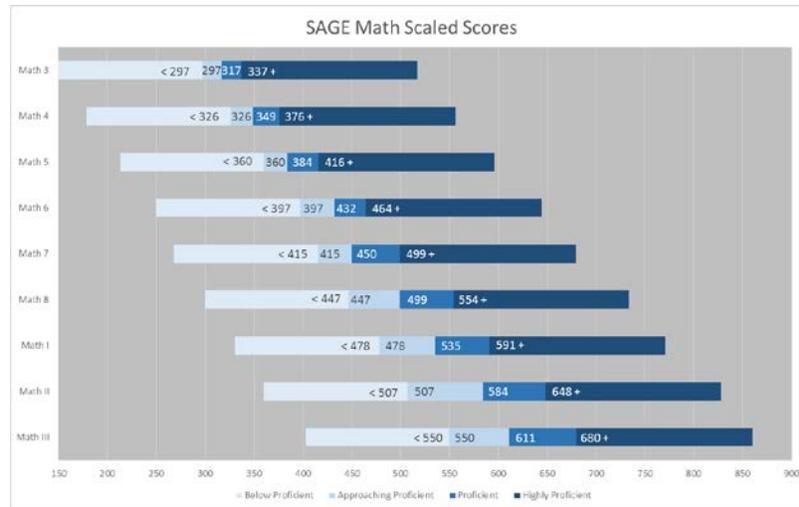
- A 15-member Parent Review Committee, as mandated by the Utah State Legislature, reviewed the 11,773 SAGE test questions.
- Each question was reviewed by at least two parents.

- **How will SAGE be reported?**

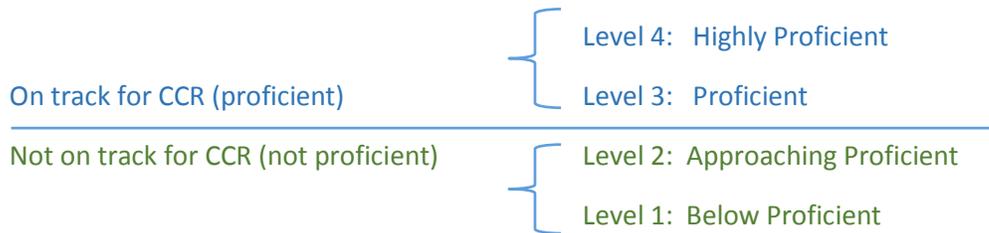
- SAGE results are reported with a **scaled score** and a **proficiency level** for each test. A scaled score represents a student’s performance on a particular test and is reported as a number from 100-900 for each test. These scaled scores (100-900) allow for consistent interpretation of the scores and a common understanding of their meaning demonstrating growth from year to year, e.g., comparing 3<sup>rd</sup> grade ELA to 4<sup>th</sup> grade ELA for each student. These scaled scores are mapped into four proficiency levels.

- SAGE was developed to include vertical scales in mathematics and English language arts. These scales link the subject-based assessments from grade to grade to provide data on student

growth over time. Vertical scales exist in mathematics and ELA because the content standards in these subjects include a meaningful progression over time. In contrast, SAGE science assessments do not include a vertical scale because proficiency in one grade or course does not necessarily rely on proficiency from the previous grade or course. In other words; course knowledge/content in Physics does not rely on course knowledge/content in Chemistry.

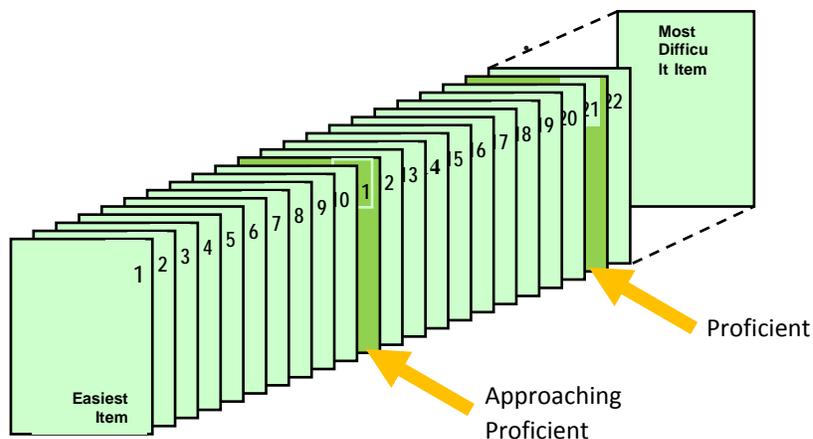


- **Proficiency levels** indicate a student’s progress towards College and Career Readiness (CCR) for a content area within the Utah Core Standards. While scaled scores indicate at an individual level what a student knows and is able to do, proficiency levels interpret that score into categories: Highly Proficient, Proficient, Approaching Proficient, and Below Proficient.

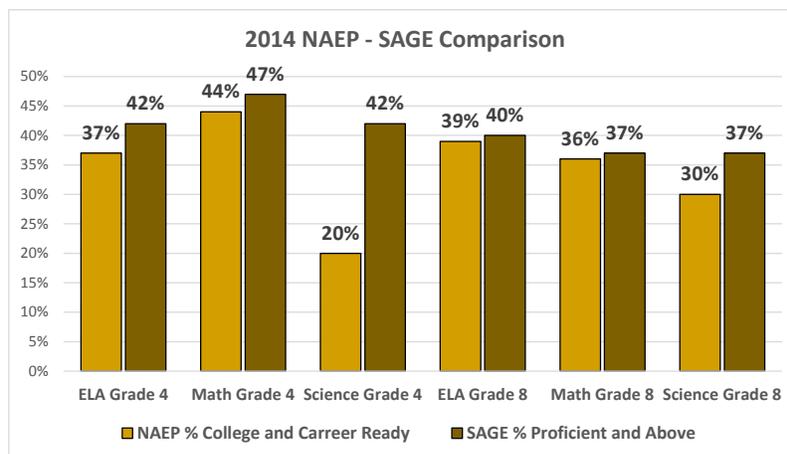
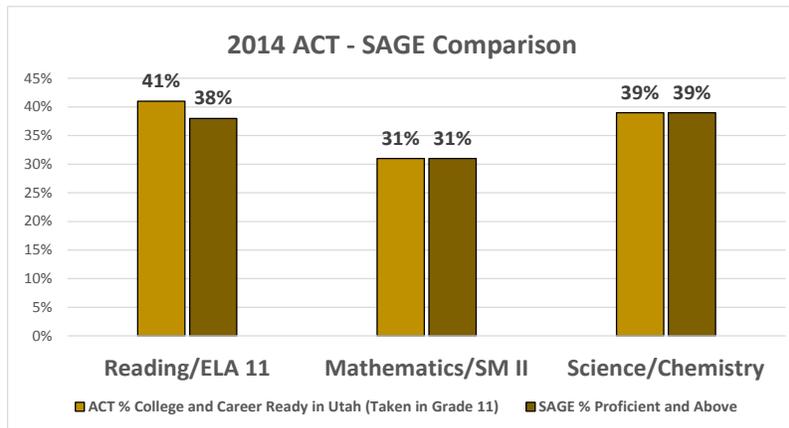


**7. How is a proficient score decided?**

- Proficient scores were determined at the culmination of a week-long “standard setting” workshop where preliminary test results were presented to over 200 educators, experts from Utah’s higher education community, and other stakeholders (UEA, state board members, etc.). These participants applied their own professional judgment, took actual tests, viewed previous performance data, and considered other performance data results to assist them in determining proficiency levels.
- **What performance data did educators use to inform the proficiency levels in SAGE?**
- Educators participated in a common “bookmark” process which is used to establish standards: Educators were given a typical test where items were ordered from least difficult to most difficult, and then used expert judgment to determine where the proficiency levels should be established.



- Another part of the generally accepted process to gauge the “reasonableness” of Utah’s standards is to consider information from national indicators.
- The standard setting group considered ACT® (American College Test) and NAEP (National Assessment of Educational Progress) data.
  - The ACT® college readiness assessment is a widely accepted curriculum- and standards-based educational assessment and career planning tool that assesses students' academic readiness for college. All 11<sup>th</sup> grade students in Utah are provided the opportunity to participate each year.
  - NAEP is a long-standing, respected, national assessment. A representative sample of Utah’s students participate each year, and state level aggregate data is published in numerous academic areas each year.



- Aligning Utah’s expectations with these nationally recognized and accepted assessments moves Utah toward the broader goal of preparing students for success in college and the workplace.
- Students who achieve proficient scores on their academic path up to grade 11 are considered to be “on track” for college and career readiness, while students who

achieve at least proficient scores in grade 11 (SAGE ELA 11 and SAGE Secondary Math III) are considered *College and Career Ready*.

- Students who do not achieve proficient scores are expected to need remediation for higher education and post-secondary success.
- The participants of a large stakeholder group that included Utah State Board members, superintendents, community advocates, parents, and the governor’s office met and reviewed the results of standard setting and supported the recommendations from educators.
- The Utah State Board of Education affirmed the proficiency levels on September 5, 2014

For more information about these assessments, please visit:

<http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/>

<http://www.act.org>

#### 8. How does SAGE compare to the old CRTs?

- They don’t! The new assessment represents a substantial departure from previous state assessments; therefore, student performance on SAGE cannot be meaningfully compared to results in prior years. This means that questions about year-to-year trends in academic performance cannot be meaningfully addressed this year. For example, SAGE scores this year do not indicate whether students improved or declined between 2013 and 2014 in sixth grade mathematics.

#### An Important Note about Comparing Performances

Comparing old test performance to new simply does not work. It is true that Utah has adopted new standards and new tests to assess knowledge and skills, but Utah also has ***changed the definition of proficiency***. This means the meaning of success is not what it used to be. Imagine a test that evaluates a student’s running speed. In the past, where we may have told a student her running was fast enough, we now have a higher expectation and a more rigorous test. The same student’s running must improve, and in addition, she must jump hurdles before we can say she is fast enough. In the academic world, “fast enough” means ready for college and career.



**9. What do the new scores look like?**

- Based on new standards and new proficiency rates, it was expected that fewer students would be proficient than in previous summative assessments in Utah (CRTs), and they are. If scores had not dropped, this would be an indication that our tests are not adequately measuring college and career readiness.
- Students do not suddenly know less. Teachers are not teaching less or “incorrectly.” The bar measuring expectations on the learning continuum moved. Teachers and students will need time to make the adjustment.
- Of course, **this is NOT an indication of decrease in student achievement; rather it reflects an increase in rigor.**
- Other states experienced downward shifts in performance when they implemented new standards and assessments. For example, in Kentucky and New York, proficiency rates for reading and math dropped sharply with the first year of implementation in 2011 and 2012, but modest gains were evident in some areas in successive years.

| Pass Rate of Summative Testing |      |      |      |
|--------------------------------|------|------|------|
| New York                       | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 |
| 3-5 Reading                    | 76%  | 48%  | 48%  |
| 3-5 Math                       | 73%  | 40%  | 44%  |
| 6-8 Reading                    | 70%  | 47%  | 51%  |
| 6-8 Math                       | 65%  | 41%  | 41%  |

| Pass Rate of Summative Testing |      |      |      |
|--------------------------------|------|------|------|
| Kentucky                       | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 |
| 3-8 ELA                        | 55%  | 31%  | 31%  |
| 3-8 Math                       | 65%  | 31%  | 36%  |

| Pass Rate of Summative Testing |      |      |
|--------------------------------|------|------|
| Utah                           | 2013 | 2014 |
| 3-8 ELA                        | 83%  | 42%  |
| 3-8 Math                       | 79%  | 42%  |

#### **10. How will teachers and schools see their test data from last spring?**

- In mid-October, teachers and principals, will be able to view student, class, and school results through the SAGE Online Reporting System. This data will be **embargoed** for public release until October 20<sup>th</sup> to allow for training and internal use. Schools and districts will begin preparing to provide individual student reports to families. Families can expect to receive their student's information sometime in the next couple of months according to school and district timelines. School representatives will be available to explain the new reports and interpretive guides will be provided. At that time, teachers will be able to distribute results to students and parents. Public aggregate totals will be available as well.

#### **11. What can teachers do with the new results?**

- View scores from the improved assessments which present a more complete and accurate picture of where students are on their path to college and career readiness. Teachers should not be discouraged; focusing on the standards is the best strategy for raising scores.
- Attend to prerequisite knowledge to build capacity for new learning.
- Use differentiated strategies for English Learners, students with disabilities, and other populations with lower scores.
- Make sure students are familiar with the technology of the assessments so that the scores are a reflection of their abilities. Practice with the training tests (see slides) use formative tools to build student capacity with online reading and writing.
- Anticipate that as students have more experience with the core standards and with the technology platform, scores will rise, leading to more students who are college and career ready. Past CRT longitudinal data tells us that scores will increase over time.

#### **12. What can Utah schools do with this data?**

- Use data to inform annual continual school improvement processes.
- Use individual SAGE results as a snapshot to inform instructional decisions in the school and classroom; implement strategies to focus on students' areas of strength and weakness.
- Compare aggregate data that provides information about classes, courses, schools, districts, and statewide performance.
- Compare results with other states and districts across the country, benchmarking student progress on a broader scale.

- Keep perspective. It is important to remember that SAGE results are one of many student performance indicators, including class quizzes, formative assessments, homework assignments, projects, and numerous other day-to-day learning activities that students are involved in daily.

### **13. How will families see their data and respond?**

- Beginning October 20<sup>th</sup>, schools and districts will begin preparing to provide individual student reports to families. Families can expect to receive their student's information sometime in the next couple of months according to school and district timelines. School representatives will be available to explain the new reports and interpretive guides will be provided. Some schools may be delivering these reports at parent teacher conferences; some will have meetings where you can learn about what results mean; others may have other or additional ways of distributing this information. If a student has moved to another Utah public school, they can contact their current school to receive those results.
- Families and Utah educators can work together using SAGE student results to improve each student's success in school. If your student is not yet proficient on one or more of the SAGE assessments, or needs additional academic support, please talk to his or her teacher to develop a plan.

The following links provide sample resources for parents that are intended to support your child's learning:

Elementary Math: <http://schools.utah.gov/CURR/mathelem/Resources.aspx>

Secondary Math: <http://schools.utah.gov/CURR/mathsec/Web-Resources.aspx>

Secondary ELA: <http://schools.utah.gov/curr/langartsec>

Science: <http://schools.utah.gov/CURR/science/default.aspx>

Additional family resources:

[http://www.pta.org/files/100Ways\\_brochure-en.pdf](http://www.pta.org/files/100Ways_brochure-en.pdf)

<http://www2.ed.gov/parents/academic/help/hyc.html>

For questions or comments: Please contact the Utah State Office of Education  
Assessment and Accountability, <http://schools.utah.gov/assessment/Contact-Assessment>